

A History of the Counts of Brienne (950 – 1210)

Dana Celest Asmoui Ismail

**Royal Holloway
University of London**

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Dana Celest Asmoui Ismail, Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London

Declaration of Authorship

I, Dana Celest Asmoui Ismail hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the counts of Brienne from the first count (950) until the departure from France of John of Brienne to claim the throne of Jerusalem (1210). The Brienne dynasty has never been subjected to an in - depth study; heretofore, the dynasty has been mentioned only in passing in both contemporary sources and more recent works. This comprehensive study of the counts of Brienne and their origins serves as an original work of scholarship on a dynasty that produced several crusaders, a champion of papal reform in Italy, a martyr at the siege of Acre and perhaps more importantly, a king of Jerusalem.

The Brienne dynasty's roots in the ideology of holy war extended back to the era of the Reconquest of Spain, which took place over twenty years before the start of the First Crusade. This thesis will use this participation in the Reconquest of Spain, the first foray into the holy warrior ethos, to establish the Brienne's familial connections to one of the oldest and most prominent families of northern France, the Roucy. And whilst crusading tradition in itself was not at all rare in French dynasties, in the case of Brienne it was coupled with marriages and an increasing profile in the 1190s. Indeed, this thesis will show that from the eleventh century onwards, the Brienne's wealth and prominence within the county of Champagne increased through a series of marriage alliances that also served to bring them closer to the nobles of the Holy Land. This thesis will examine the origins and development of pilgrimage, holy war and crusading in the Brienne dynasty and their social progression through marriage alliances during the first hundred years of crusading in order to explain how John of Brienne's eventual nomination to the throne of Jerusalem, whilst a great advancement for the family, had been made possible by a lineage of crusading precursors and advantageous marital unions.

In memory of
Jason Michael Allara

*You were always so far away
I know that pain and I won't run away
Like I used to do.*

Say goodbye, don't follow.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, James Event and Dorothy Knox Robinson,
all that I am, I owe to you.

And to my husband, Mohamed Samir Asmoui Ismail, thanks for everything.

مع كل حبي دائما

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are observed in the chapters and footnotes of this thesis for the purposes of simplification. In single volume works, cartularies and collections have been assigned acronyms followed by the charter or page number. Example: CACB,1. Primary sources and secondary works appear with their titles shortened with the page number.

In multi - volumed works, the citation is arranged as such: 1) the shortened title or abbreviation; 2) the volume number; 3) the page number. Example: DHC, I, 241. References to notes are denoted in brackets with an 'n' followed by the number which corresponds to the note as found in the Noted Section. Example: n.1. In accordance with standard practice, full references are located in the bibliography. Sources that are cited within a footnote and pertain to material located only within the footnote are denoted by [].

<i>Ann. Bened.</i>	Benedict, abbot of Monte Cassino [Saint Benedict], <i>Annales Ordinis S. Benedicti Occidentalium Monachorum Patriarchae: in quibus non modò res monasticae, sed etiam ecclesiasticae historiae non minima pars continetur</i> , ed. J. Mabillon. 6 vols. (Paris, 1768)
AVD	<i>L'Art de verifïer les dates</i> , ed. D.B. Warden, J. B. P. J. de Courcelles and F. d'Urban. 18 vols. (Paris, 1821 – 1844)
Bf	<i>Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Basse - Fontaine, Collection des principaux cartulaires du diocèse de Troyes</i> , ed. C. Lalore. 7 vols. (Paris, 1875 - 90), vol 3
CACB	Jubainville, M - H. d'Arbois. 'Catalogue d'actes des Comtes de Brienne 950 - 1356', in <i>Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes</i> 33. (Paris, 1872), 141 - 86
DHC	Roserot, A., <i>Dictionnaire historique de la Champagne méridonale (Aube) des origines à 1790</i> . 3 vols. (Langres, 1942 - 48)
<i>Opera Omnia</i>	Innocentii III, 'Epistolae', <i>Opera Omnia</i> , ed. J.P. Migne. 4 vols. (Paris, 1855)
<i>Eracles</i>	<i>L'estoire de Eracles empereur et la conquête de la terre d'outremer</i> RHC, I - II, 1 - 481

ES	<i>Europäische Stammtafeln: Stammtafeln zur Geschichte der europäischen Staaten</i> , ed. W. K. P. zu Isenburg and F. B. F. von Loringhoven. 23 vols. (Marburg, 1978 - present)
<i>Gallia Christ</i>	<i>Gallia Christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa: qua series et historia archiepiscoporum, episcoporum, et abbatum franciae vicinarumque ditionum...</i> 16 vols. (Paris, 1715 - 1865)
GND	<i>The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni</i> , ed. and trans. E.M.C. Van Houts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1995)
HCC	Jubainville, M. - H. d'Arbois, <i>Histoire de ducs et des comtes de Champagne</i> , 7 vols. (Paris, 1861 - 65)
<i>Itinerarium</i>	<i>Das itinerarium peregrinorum</i> , ed. H. E. Mayer. (Stuttgart, 1962)
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i> , ed. G.H. Pertz, et al., 32 vols (Hannover, Weimar, Stuttgart, and Cologne, 1826 - 1934)
MI	<i>Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Molesme</i> , ed. J. Laurent, 2 vols. (Paris, 1987)
MP	Matthew Paris, <i>Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora</i> , ed. H.R. Luard. 6 vols. (London, 1874)
Mt	<i>Cartulary of Montiérender, 666 - 1129</i> , ed. C. B. Bouchard. (Toronto, 2004)
Nesle	<i>Les Seigneurs de Nesle</i> , ed. W.M. Newman, 2 vols. (Paris, 1971)
OV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>The Ecclesiastical History</i> , trans and ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969 - 80)
RAP	<i>Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, roi de France (1059 – 1108)</i> , ed. M. Prou and Marie - Henry d'Arbois de Jubainville. (Paris, 1908)
RHC	<i>Recueil des historiens des Croisades</i> , published by l'Académie des inscriptions et belles - lettres. 16 vols. (Paris, 1869 -)

RHGF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de France</i> , ed. M. Bouquet, J.B. Haudiquier, C.M. Haudiquier, E. Housseau, J. Précieux, et al. 24 vols. (Paris, 1840 - 1904)
Rpr	<i>Regesta pontificum romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum....1198</i> , ed. Ph. Jaffe and S. Loewenfeld, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1885 - 88)
RRH	<i>Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani</i> , ed. R. Röhricht. (Innsbruck, 1893)
St. Etienne	<i>Cartulaire du prieure de Saint - Etienne de Vignory</i> , ed. J. Arbaumont. (Langres, 1882)
StL	<i>Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Loup de Troyes</i> , <i>Collection des principaux cartulaires du diocèse de Troyes</i> , ed. C. Lalore. 7 vols. (Paris, 1875 - 90), vol 1
WAP	William of Apulia, <i>La Geste de Robert Guiscard</i> , ed. M.Mathieu. (Palermo, 1961)
WT	William of Tyre, <i>Chronique</i> , ed. R.B.C. Huygens, H.E. Mayer and G. Rösch, 2 vols. <i>Corpus Christianorum continuatio Medievalis</i> 63 (Turnhout, 1986); translated as: William of Tyre, <i>A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea</i> , trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey (New York, 1943)

Introduction

In the late 1090s, impelled by the words of Pope Urban II many thousands of people took up arms and set out from Western Europe to reclaim Jerusalem. Jonathan Riley - Smith has identified a total of seven hundred and ninety - one individuals who participated in the First Crusade and of these one hundred and four are believed to have remained in the Holy Land after the fall of Jerusalem on 15 July 1099. Whilst some of these crusaders returned to their respective homelands, eighty - nine are known to have settled permanently in the Levant.¹ Fulcher of Chartres observed 'Duke Godfrey, keeping Tancred and several others with himself, ruled the kingdom of Jerusalem, which he had undertaken to maintain with the general consent of all'.² The ruling classes of the Latin East were formed by nobles who established themselves as kings, princes and magnates in four crusader states: Jerusalem, Edessa, Tripoli and Antioch.³ News began to spread rapidly across the West producing further waves of crusaders and in some cases settlers. Certain families seemed particularly attracted to the Holy Land and were drawn there in significant numbers.

What was it about these dynasties that encouraged the pursuit of upward mobility in the Latin East? That many of the most prominent families of the twelfth century Levant were of French origin encourages one to seek out their roots in their native land and to attempt to establish a tradition of commitment to family enhancement and commitment to the Church.

The first family to achieve prominence in the East was the Montlhéry. The Montlhéry held numerous castles in the Paris region where they often ran foul of the king of France. Bradbury noted 'Louis [VI]'s defeat of Thomas de Marle and Hugh du Puiset in the demesne was matched by his breaking of the power of the Montlhéry, Rochefort and Garlande families within the household'.⁴ However, whilst the family's influence in their native land continued to be diminished, Riley - Smith

¹ J.S.C. Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095 – 1131* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 19.

² *Dux autem Godefridus, retento sibi Tancredo, et aliis pluribus, principatum Iherosolymitanum rexit: quem consensu omnium susceperat obtinendum.* Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095 - 1127)*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 321 - 2; translated in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, ed. E. Peters (Philadelphia, 1998), p. 96.

³ A.V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History 1099 – 1125* (Oxford, 2000), p. 100.

⁴ Suger, Abbot of Saint Denis (1081 - 1151), *Vie de Louis VI le Gros*, ed. and trans. H. Waquet (Paris, 2007), p. 56; J. Bradbury, *Philip Augustus: King of France 1180 - 1223* (London, 1998), p. 15.

argued that 'by 1118, members of the Montlhéry kindred were well placed in the Latin settlements in the Levant'.⁵ The Montlhéry's participation in the First Crusade saw at least sixteen of their family journey to reclaim Jerusalem and from that initial foray into crusading the dynasty's foothold in the Levant was assured.⁶

Another family of French origin who came to assume great importance in the Holy Land was the Poitevin house of Lusignan, whose status in the Levant rose considerably with the promotion of Aimery of Lusignan to constable of Jerusalem in 1179, and most certainly reached its apogee by the marriage of Guy of Lusignan to the heiress, Sybilla of Jerusalem in the spring of 1180. This family's lineage is fully discussed in Sidney Painter's 1957 article, 'The Lords of Lusignan in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'.⁷

Like the Montlhéry, and indeed the Brienne, the Lusignan first derived their power in France from the building of a castle from which they took their name.⁸ Unlike the Montlhéry, the Lusignan were not powerful castellans. In fact, they were surrounded by lords whose military might discouraged easy expansion and thus, the Lusignan sought to increase their holdings through through bouts of aggression against their neighbours and the exploitation of the abbey of St - Maixent, for which a threat of excommunication was levied.⁹

Another worthy family to come to prominence in the Levant, this time in the early twelfth century, was the house of Montfort. In his work on this family in the *Complete Peerage*, Cokayne noted that the Montfort took their name from the castle begun by the progenitor of the family, Aimery I of Montfort (1000 – 1031), and was later completed by his son, Simon I of Montfort (1025 – 1087).¹⁰ The family's earliest brush with crusading was in an unconventional manner and through the daughter of the aforementioned Simon, Bertrade, whose bigamous relationship with King Philip I of France saw the king excommunicated and thus unable to participate in the First Crusade.¹¹ It was Fulk, later

⁵ Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, p. 173.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 169 - 89.

⁷ S. Painter, 'The Lords of Lusignan in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Speculum* 32 (1957), pp. 27 - 47.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ G.E., Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*. 13 vols (London, 1929), VII, 708.

¹¹ M.G. Bull, 'The Roots of Lay Enthusiasm for the First Crusade', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 40 (1996), pp. 24 - 45.

count of Anjou, Bertrade's son by Fulk IV, the husband she abandoned, who would be endorsed by King Louis VI of France in his marriage to the heiress to the throne of Jerusalem, Melisende in 1129 and through her that he became king of Jerusalem in 1131.¹²

Other conspicuous families, such as the Ibelin and the Le Puiset, are discussed at length in various studies of the crusades.¹³ That singular attention has been paid to the lineage of families of distinction in the Levant supports the suggestion that during the era of the crusades, the combination of one's dynastic associations and a commitment to holy war did much to increase the likelihood of ascendancy to positions as far - reaching as king. Without question, it follows that the achievements of those who rose to prominence during this era might necessitate scholarly examinations of their lives, yet the wealth of crusade historiography remains conspicuously lacking in its coverage of one dynasty, the Brienne, a family that not only provided a son who reigned as king of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople, but also had familial connections to many of the aforementioned dynasties. These were prerequisites for an ambitious and 'upwardly mobile' family. It will become evident, as this thesis will show, the Brienne too shared this pattern of dynastic advance and crusading enthusiasm.

The history of the dynasty of Brienne has been largely neglected; indeed, in her work, *Crusade Charters*, published in 2001, Slack noted, 'I am not aware of a history of the family [Brienne] with bibliography more recent than the one in the *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique* by Louis Bréhier'.¹⁴ And whilst the focus of Bréhier's essay, published in 1938, was on John of Brienne, the author did not adequately address his noble lineage or the tradition of crusading from whence John emerged. The Brienne were nobles of the blood, being distant matrilineal kinsmen of the Capetian dynasty of France through their ancestors, Ebles I of Roucy who himself was of Ottonian stock and his wife, Beatrice of Hainault, the granddaughter of Hugh Capet and Adélaïde of Poitiers.

¹² William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, H.E. Mayer and G. Röscher. 2 vols (Turnhout, 1986). {WT}, I, 618, 631 - 33.

¹³ For the Ibelin, cf. P.W. Edbury, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge, 1997); for the Le Puiset, cf. J. Laureau, 'Les seigneurs du Puiset à la croisade', *Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Eure - et - Loire* 62 (1999), pp. 23 - 35, J.L. La Monte, 'The Lords of Le Puiset on the Crusades,' *Speculum* 17 (1942), pp. 100 - 18.

¹⁴ C.K. Slack, *Crusade Charters 1138 - 1270* (Arizona, 2001), p. 113; L. Bréhier, 'Brienne', in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, ed. A. Baudrillart 29 vols (Paris, 1938 - 2008), X, 697 - 710.

This lack of scholarship is unusual for such an illustrious dynasty. Arguably, until the completion in 2009 of Guy Perry's Oxford doctoral thesis on John of Brienne and this present work, no other family as visibly active and titled in the Levant has been as neglected or discounted as that of the Brienne.¹⁵

Recent works on the crusades and medieval France reinforce this suggestion. For example, Theodore Evergates' well-researched monograph on the aristocracy of Champagne, published in 2007, barely gives the Brienne family a mention with the exception of Erard of Brienne - Ramerut, the nephew of John of Brienne who was embroiled in a struggle for control of the county of Champagne in the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁶ Christopher Tyerman's recent monograph on the crusades entitled *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, published in 2006, noted that John was a nobleman from Champagne, but did not delve into the lineage of the king of Jerusalem.¹⁷

An earlier work, Powell's study of the Fifth Crusade (1986), admirably defends John's tenure as king of Jerusalem and yet his chief interest was the expedition itself. The work is not concerned with John's lineage and his family ties to some of the most powerful nobles of France, Germany, Sicily, Spain and the Latin East. For a more severe treatment of John, Abulafia's study of Frederick II (2002) claimed 'although distinguished western princes had been recruited as husbands for the queens of Jerusalem and had become thereby titular kings of Jerusalem, it would be hard to say that John of Brienne was in the same league as some of his predecessors'.¹⁸ His denunciation continued with the remark that 'his [John's] redeeming feature, in the planning of a new crusade, was his daughter, Isabella or Yolande'. And in what amounts to little more than a parting shot, Abulafia concluded, 'Frederick would gain the title king of Jerusalem; Jerusalem would at last have the protector it needed - - - not a tin-pot ruler from Champagne, like John of Brienne'.¹⁹ The truth of the matter is that Frederick II owed the preservation of his interests in Sicily and Southern Italy to a son of the Brienne who had acted as the emperor's protector during his minority and was killed for his efforts.

¹⁵ G.J.M. Perry, 'The Career and Significance of John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople'. Unpublished thesis. (Oxford University, 2009).

¹⁶ T. Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100 - 1300* (Philadelphia, 2007).

¹⁷ C. J. Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London, 2006), p. 632.

¹⁸ D. Abulafia, *Frederick II* (London, 1992), p. 149.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 150.

The statements that John was less worthy of the throne of Jerusalem than his predecessors suggests an element of arbitrary conjecture by scholars and is an issue that will be fully discussed in chapter five. In truth, scholars of the crusades seem ambivalent toward the Brienne. Mayer noted, 'He [John of Brienne] was brave and energetic, but by no means a statesman or diplomat of the first rank. His career was remarkable for his continual attempts to obtain one crown after another'. Conversely, Powell writes of the Brienne with a confidence that suggests a familiarity with the family's lineage. 'A member of the noble Briennes of Champagne, with a tradition of participation in the crusades and of loyalty to the papacy, John was a figure of greater substance than some accounts have depicted'.²⁰ Richard's succinct assessment, 'he was a brave knight and a poet, but poor,' is indicative of what is generally held to be true of John of Brienne.²¹ This evaluation probably derives from the *Chronicle of Burchard von Ursberg*, which addresses Walter III and John of Brienne as *nobiles quidem, sed pauperes*.²² Perhaps the most striking misconception about John, and one widely believed prior to Buckley's publication in 1957 of an article in *Speculum*, 'The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne', was that John of Brienne was at least sixty years of age when he arrived in the Levant.²³ In attestation of the influence of Buckley's article scholars no longer erroneously believe that John was sixty when he arrived in the Holy Land. Riley - Smith wrote in his short history of the crusades that 'John had been born c.1170, the third son of the count of Brienne, and he had spent most of his life in relative obscurity as a vassal of Champagne before being selected in 1210 to be the husband for Maria, the young heiress of Jerusalem'.²⁴ Although he incorrectly identified John as the third son of the count of Brienne here, when in fact, John was the fourth son, Riley - Smith was clearly influenced by the works of both Buckley and Powell when he wrote this sketch of John of Brienne, these two sources being the only 'modern' texts that have sought to shed some light upon the shadowy past of the Brienne. Buckley and Powell's works have been assimilated into recent texts on the crusades; thus modern historians continue to erroneously classify the Brienne as poor upstarts; for example,

²⁰ J.M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213 - 1221* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 114.

²¹ J. Richard, *The Crusades* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 240.

²² *Burchardi praepositi Urspergensis Chronicon*, ed. O. Holder - Egger and B. von Simon (Hannover and Leipzig, 1916), p. 86.

²³ J.M. Buckley, 'The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne', *Speculum* 32 (1957), 315 - 22.

²⁴ J.S.C. Riley - Smith, *The Crusades* (London, 1987), p. 184.

Asbridge's *The Crusades* (2010) noted that John of Brienne 'lacked wealth and royal connections in the West'.²⁵ Such stereotyping gives this present work an opportunity to make an original contribution to the study of France, the crusades and the Latin East.

A contemporary view of the Brienne, seemingly lost on modern historians and which served as this author's impetus, can be found in Joinville's *Life of Saint Louis*. He wrote '....count Erard of Brienne, from whom a noble line was sprung, as everyone in France or Champagne knows'.²⁶ The assertion that everyone in Champagne had knowledge of the Brienne lineage can be supported by a further near - contemporary text that originates from the region. This text is the ancient genealogy of the families of Champagne written by the anonymous of Foligny, who composed his work in the mid - twelfth century and whose efforts were later adopted and copied into the chronicle of Alberic of Trois Fontaines who wrote in the thirteenth century.²⁷ Alberic of Trois Fontaines's manuscript is the only extant text containing the lineage of the Brienne and it is likely that the family's history was confined to these two manuscripts. The evidence suggests that given the number of extant copies available, Alberic's manuscript was widely circulated at the time, which would have made the family history available to much of France.²⁸ The wider assertion that 'everyone' in France had knowledge of the Brienne is further supported by the *Eracles*, a source that will be discussed in greater detail in the 'Sources' section of this introduction and later in chapters four and five. However, it will suffice to note that the lineage of Walter IV of Brienne is remarked upon in this source when the case is made for his candidacy for the hand of the heiress of Sicily, Elvira.²⁹

Thus, in order to address the shortcomings of the existing historiography, this thesis will examine the dynastic advancement through marriage of the Brienne dynasty during the first hundred years of crusading and the origins and development of pilgrimage, holy war and crusading in the Brienne

²⁵ T.S. Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land* (London, 2011), p. 539.

²⁶ Joinville, Jean de. *Vie de St Louis*, ed. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1998), p. 40: Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. C. Smith (London, 2008), p. 165.

²⁷ *Documents relatifs au comté de Champagne et de Brie (1172 - 1361)*, ed. A. Longnon. 3 vols (Paris, 1901), I, 454.

²⁸ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', MGH XXIII, 631 - 950, for the Brienne, see pp. 790, 799 n.20, 818 n.5, 864 n.5, 874 n.40, 879 n.5, 890 n.20, 895 n.30, 903 n.15, 907 n.1, 911 n.45, 913, 919 n.1, 925 n.20, 933 n.40, 938, 939 n.1, 941 n.45, 942 n.30. For a discussion on Alberic's text cf. M.Schmidt - Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois - Fontaines, un historien entre la France et l'Empire', *Annales de l'Est* 36 (1984), pp. 163 - 92.

²⁹ *Eracles*, 234.

dynasty. And thus this thesis will address the longstanding question: How did a 'tin - pot ruler from Champagne' emerge from relative obscurity to secure arguably one of the most prestigious titles in the Christian world? It does not lie within the scope of this study to evaluate the successes and failures of John of Brienne in his capacity as king of Jerusalem or emperor of Constantinople. Nor is its aim to examine the history of the Brienne subsequent to John's departure for Jerusalem in 1210; indeed, during the course of completing this work, Guy Perry of Lincoln College, Oxford began work on a thesis on John of Brienne's reign. Moreover, it is not in the scope of this thesis to evaluate this era of medieval history in its relation to subsequent crusades and the history of the Holy Land. For those seeking a thorough examination of John's reign, until the publication of Perry's work, Powell's book on the Fifth Crusade offers the most modern study on John's effectiveness in his role as king. This thesis, however, is primarily concerned with filling a void in crusade scholarship for historians of Capetian France, scholars of the crusades, students of the history of Champagne, and those who have wondered at the heights reached by John of Brienne in the Levant, a man whom most believe rose from the dust without name or blood, wealth or land, to achieve his elevated status.

Chapter one of this thesis is devoted to the development of the county of Brienne as it emerged from the shadow of the counts of Blois. This thesis shall examine the county from its inception in the ninth century to the excommunication of the first count of Brienne with particular focus on his advantageous marriage alliance, a move that set the family on the path of prominence. Chapter two is devoted to the count of Brienne on the First Crusade. This thesis shall explore the holy warrior *ethos* established by the Brienne participation in the Holy Wars of Spain, as well as the familial ties of the early counts to several more illustrious families and even more distantly to the kings of France and Germany. In Chapter three, this thesis shall examine the Brienne on the Second and Third Crusades and their emerging familial links to the ruling classes of the Holy Land. Chapter four will deal with the career of Walter of Brienne, champion of Pope Innocent III and protector of the future Emperor Frederick II. And finally, in chapter five, this thesis shall examine the early career of John of Brienne from childhood to regent of Brienne; the influence of his family's history; consider how kinship and kinsmen enabled him to ascend the throne of Jerusalem; note his life as a young student of a monastic school and outline the events leading up to his nomination to the throne of Jerusalem. Following

chapter five, this examination shall end with an overview of the history of the lineage of Brienne to robustly counter the suggestion that the Brienne were unworthy of the throne of Jerusalem.

Sources

In his description of the existing castle of Brienne, a structure built in the seventeenth century after the ancient castle was demolished on the succession of the Loménie family to the county of Brienne, Martin noted that the château contained a library that held 10,000 volumes and manuscripts relating to the history of Brienne.³⁰ Upon visiting the village of Brienne in 2006 and meeting with the honourable Monsieur Nicholas Dhuicq, the mayor of Brienne at the time, it was discovered that the library was lost when the château was sold.

Thus, the main sources of information for the Brienne are found in charters, especially those that originated from the religious houses and abbeys surrounding the region and in almost every case only when the acts of the counts of Brienne directly affected the house(s) in question. As noted by Myers in his work, *Medieval Kingship*, monasteries tended to hold on to their grants more successfully than other recipients of documents. A large number of donations and privileges accorded to monastic houses have remained intact.³¹ Documents outside the prerogative of the church would have been (and continue to be) subjected to a changing of hands or sold into private collections, as was the case with those contained within the library of Brienne. That is not to say the surviving charters from religious houses were the only documents of importance relating to the county of Brienne. Evergates argued that by the end of the twelfth century, the chanceries of the most powerful princes were keeping internal administrative records on fiefs, homages and military services, as well as financial accounts. These men were also increasingly resorting to written records for their own personal affairs.³² It is, therefore, likely that the documents contained within the library of the château of Brienne were composed on site for the counts and dealt with personal affairs. It is in consequence of the loss of these records that older sources written in the nineteenth century by local historians, sources that

³⁰ E. Martin, *Brienne - le - Château : notice historique sur les comtes, le château, l'église, l'ancienne école militaire, rendue célèbre par le séjour de Napoléon I* (Mayenne, 1905), p. 8.

³¹ H. A. Myers, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago, 1982), p. 93.

³² T. Evergates, *Feudal Society in the Balliage of Troyes Under the Counts of Champagne, 1152 - 1284* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. xviii – xix.

allude to information concerning the formation of the county of Brienne that have since been lost, have not been not discounted and excluded from this work. In the face of this difficulty, these sources have been noted accordingly.

Ancillary to the extant charters emanating from the religious houses of the diocese of Troyes are others in which the lords of Brienne were present as witnesses. These charters do much to assist in tracing the movements of the Brienne throughout the region in addition to disclosing their alliances and associations.

Chronicles and documents contained in various French and German collections of crusader history have also been relied upon. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [MGH] was founded by Baron Karl von Stein in 1818 - 19. A German nationalist, Baron von Stein was devoted to the editing and publication of medieval texts, specifically texts that concerned German history to the year 1500.³³ Another series of documents used in this study is the *Recueil des historiens des croisades* (1844 – 1906) [RHC], a series created by French scholars in an attempt to confirm a national identity whilst the Germans had attempted to create a national identity by (amongst other things) focusing on the German experience during the crusades in the MGH.³⁴ The RHC emerged from a bid to create a collection of crusade sources and as a revision of the *Assises de Jérusalem* (1841 - 1843). What was conceived as a monument to French supremacy in the course of the history of the crusades became a source that included Latin, French, Greek, Arabic, Syriac and Armenian sources.³⁵

The most important Latin narrative from the Holy Land covered the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem from the First Crusade down to 1184 and was written in the late 1170s or early 1180s by William of Tyre. As noted by Edbury, this chronicle was translated from the Latin into Old French in the early decades of the thirteenth century and many of these translations included continuations of the text.³⁶ The Old French Continuation of William, archbishop of Tyre is of use when researching the counts of Brienne along with their brothers and vassals who were active in the Levant and Italy. The name *L'estoire de Eracles* [Eracles], contained within volumes one and two of the *Recueil des historiens*

³³ C. J. Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester, 2011), p. 128.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 142 - 3.

³⁶ P. W. Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation* (Brookfield, 1996), p. 3.

des croisades, is taken from the first line of the manuscript whereby William of Tyre noted that the seventh - century Byzantine emperor, Heraklios, returned the relic of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. The Lyon manuscript, termed the 'Lyon Eracles', continues from 1184 to 1248 and while the section from 1197 to 1248 can be found in other manuscripts, the years 1184 to 1197 are unique to this manuscript. However, when compiling sources for a series of volumes on the crusades, the editors of the *Recueil des historiens des croisades* used a different version for the principal text of the *Eracles* that came to form volumes one and two of their work. This text is known as the 'Colbert - Fontainebleu Eracles' [Colbert - Fontainebleu] after its owners. There is also a shorter manuscript, known as the 'abrégé' and a single extant manuscript known as the 'Florentine Eracles'. Edbury noted 'All these versions are broadly similar in content and tone, but the relationship between them for the period 1184 - 1197 is nevertheless complex'.³⁷ Moreover, this complexity is exacerbated by a separate narrative which owes 'nothing to William's work and which in the nineteenth century was edited as *La Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard Le Trésorier*'.³⁸ The author of this text is generally believed to have been a squire of Balian of Ibelin known by that name.³⁹ The other name associated with this source, Bernard the Treasurer, was affixed at the end of two manuscripts that comprise the chronicle and these documents recount events that do not lie within the scope of this study. Each of these texts are used throughout the relevant sections in this thesis and their reliability for the events within that section will be discussed at that time.

In 1869, Count Fernand of Sassenay completed his poorly annotated history of the counts of Brienne, focusing mainly on the later counts who were active in Greece and Italy. This renewed interest in the Brienne can be directly attributed to Napoleon's presence in the county for he was enrolled at the military academy of Brienne on 15 May 1779.⁴⁰ Three years after Fernand's effort, Marie - Henri d'Arbois Jubainville, head archivist of the Aube, attempted to write a complete history of the county and the counts of Brienne. He compiled extant charters from the region dating from Englebert I in 950 to the last count, Walter IV, in 1355. Jubainville's assistant in the archives of the

³⁷ Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem*, p. 4.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ M.R. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuations of William of Tyre* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 41 - 6.

⁴⁰ *Napoleon's Memoirs*, ed. S. de Chair (London, 1948), p. 6.

Aube, Alphonse Roserot, noted in the preface of his authoritative work, *Dictionnaire historique de la Champagne méridionale (Aube) des origines à 1790*, that Jubainville also amassed a collection of abstracts from chroniclers and older authors regarding the history of Brienne.⁴¹

Unfortunately, Jubainville never fully completed his work on the Brienne; however, he did publish the *Catalogue d'actes des comtes de Brienne 950 - 1356*, in 1872, devoid of the carefully collected abstracts.⁴² This catalogue has been used for the provision of general knowledge on the Brienne, particularly when the family is absent from contemporary chronicles and annals. Jubainville's work is, precisely as its title suggests, a compilation of charters categorised by date and presented in summary. He provides the main objective of each charter, the most important names found therein and the references whereby the charter may be located. After his death, Jubainville's unedited manuscripts were bequeathed to the library in Troyes. With the assistance of Monsieur Geoffrey Grassin, supervisor of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Médiathèque in Troyes, these documents were reviewed; however, they revealed very little unpublished information.

Another important source is the work of Jubainville's assistant, Roserot's aforementioned *Dictionnaire historique de la Champagne méridionale (Aube) des origines à 1790*. Roserot undertook the arduous task of composing the histories of the counties, principalities, abbeys, chapters, cathedrals and churches within the region through which runs the river Aube. This work has been mentioned in several works of crusade scholarship and as a result of its wide usage, it must be awarded a significant importance for one seeking to carry out research on this region.

Jubainville's multi - volumed work, *Histoire des ducs et des comtes de Champagne*, must also be mentioned as an authoritative source.⁴³ His work is particularly important to the portions of this study that concern the first counts of Champagne. In conjunction with this source is Michel Bur's *Le formation du comté du Champagne v. 950 – 1150* (1977).⁴⁴ Bur's work is an updated, single - volume

⁴¹ A. Roserot, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Champagne Méridonale (Aube) des Origines à 1790*. 3 vols (Langres, 1942 - 8), {DHC}, I, 127.

⁴² CACB

⁴³ M. - H. d'Arbois, Jubainville, *Histoire de Ducs et Des Comtes de Champagne*, 7 vols (Paris, 1861 - 5). {HCC}

⁴⁴ M. Bur, *Le Formation du Comte du Champagne v. 950 - 1150* (Nancy, 1977).

monograph that takes from Jubainville's earlier text. The most discernible substantiation of *Le formation's* preponderance over the *Histoire* is the former's extensive and then - current bibliography.

Finally, quite arguably the most important of the three sources to this study is Lalore's *Collection des principaux cartulaires du diocese de Troyes*, published between the years 1875 - 1890, which contains many complete charters in which the Brienne are featured or mentioned as cited in summary in the *Catalogue d'actes des comtes de Brienne 950 - 1356*.⁴⁵ Lalore's collection consists of 7 volumes and includes extant charters from several abbeys and a few chapter houses. These abbeys and chapters are: Saint Loup (t.1), Paraclet (t.2), Basse - fontaine (t.3), Notre - Dame de Beaulieu and Chappelle - aux - Planches (t.4), Saint - Pierre de Troyes (t.5), Montier - la - Celle (t.6) and Montiéramey (t.7).

Two additional cartularies are also of great importance, *The Cartulary of Montier - en - Der, 666 - 1129*, edited by Constance Bouchard (2004) and the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Molesme* edited by James Laurent (1987).⁴⁶ Montiérender is important because the history of the counts of Brienne is linked very closely with this monastery from the time of the first count. The latter cartulary from the abbey of Molesme is also of great note as this abbey received numerous donations from the counts of Brienne. For charters on the county of Champagne during the lordship of Henry the Liberal (1152 - 1181), the recently edited *Recueil des actes d'Henri le Libéral* by Benton and Bur is used.⁴⁷

The method of research employed for this section of the study, particularly as concerns the Brienne during the tenth and eleventh centuries, is to begin by extracting as much information as possible from the charters, starting with the attributed year of composition.

Events taking place within the charter are then contextualise by assimilating the characters and proceedings into the socio - political events occurring in the region at the time. Next, the language of the charter is examined, particularly the name of the king or noble employed to date the charter in accordance with the year of their tenure as king or overlord.

⁴⁵ *Collection des Principaux Cartulaires du Diocese de Troyes*, ed. C. Lalore. 7 vols (Paris, 1875 - 90).

⁴⁶ *The Cartulary of Montier - en - Der, 666 - 1129*, ed. C. B. Bouchard (Toronto, 2004). {Mt} *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Molesme*, ed. J. Laurent. 2 vols (Paris, 1987).{MI}

⁴⁷ *Recueil des Actes d'Henri le Libéral: Comte de Champagne (1152 - 1181)*, ed. J. Benton (Paris, 2009).

THE ORIGINS OF ECCLESIASTICAL HOUSES IN THE BALLIAGE OF TROYES			
House		Foundation Year	Order
<i>6th – 9th century</i>			
Nesle - la - Reposte		6th c.	Benedictine
St.Loup Montier - la - Celle		ca. 600 ca. 650	Benedictine Benedictine
N - D - aux - Nonnains		c.a. 650	Benedictine
Montier - en - Der		673	Benedictine
St.Pierre		ca. 750	(chapter)
Montiéramey		837	Benedictine
<i>12th century</i>			
Molesme		1075	Benedictine
St.Martin - ès - Aires		1104	Augustinian
Beaulieu		1112	Premonstratensian
Clairvaux Paraclet		1115 1129	Cistercian Benedictine
Vauluisant		1129	Cistercian
Larrivour		1139	Cistercian
Bassefontaine		1143	Premonstratensian
Chapelle - aux - Planches		1145	Premonstratensian
Boulancourt		1152	Cistercian
Mores		1153	Cistercian
Hôtel - Dieu - le - Comte		1157	Augustinian
St.Etienne Sellières		1157 1168	(chapter) Cistercian
<i>13th century</i>			
Beauvois N - D - des - Prés Dominicans		1219 1231 1232	Teutonic Knights Cistercian
Franciscans Trinitarians St.Urbain		1233 1213/60 1262	(chapter)

Table 1: Ecclesiastical Houses in the Balliage of Troyes (taken from Evergates, *Feudal Society in the Balliage of Troyes*, p. 8)

Close attention is also paid to the deeds enacted therein, as well as the other persons named in the charter. Often, those individuals involved will be distinguished by their position and status and this serves to direct in cross - referencing their charters and history.

In order to better understand the early stages of the development of the county of Brienne and the various roles of the first counts of Brienne, this thesis will briefly examine the history of the closing

era of the Carolingians with special attention paid to the kingdom of West Francia. The first chapter will serve to provide a foundation for the main study of the history of the counts of Brienne.

Chapter One

The Formation of the County of Brienne

A Wider Context

Frankish Europe, defined by Bartlett as the territory ruled by the Carolingians, was a land in turmoil at the end of the ninth century.¹ The death of Charlemagne in 814 had cast the once - united Empire into chaos; this gave rise to unrest which in turn led to violence as the nobility struggled to establish order. Despite the fragmentation of Charlemagne's Empire, what survived the early Middle Ages was an understanding, or even an ideal, of the nature of order and the hierarchy of power. This derived in part from biblical interpretation and in part from memory and practice.² In his work, 'The Old Testament Image and the Rise of Crusader Culture in France', Weiss noted that a community's reliance on biblical reference points can be directly attributed to 'an increasingly enfeebled and vulnerable military enterprise', more exactly, a lack of security.³ Whilst Bisson noted that 'counts, kings, even bishops might be murdered, catastrophic defeats might overturn dynastic and cultural traditions, but the structures of prelacy, kingship, and princely lordship persisted'.⁴

Although it has been suggested that in the ninth century the threat of invasion and hostile neighbours brought about a need for protection and lordship that had been absent during the era of the Carolingians, there is evidence that the population of Frankish Europe had been seeking lordship and protection since the ninth century.⁵ Moreover, whilst lordship and protection had previously been a royal responsibility, by the end of the ninth century, power had begun to trickle down to lesser lords and nobility and would continue to do so for the next three centuries in what Bisson terms the 'age of lordship'.⁶

¹ R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change (950 - 1350)* (London, 1993), pp. 20 - 1.

² D. Weiss, 'The Old Testament Image and the Rise of Crusader Culture in France', in *France and the Holy Land – Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*, ed. D. H. Weiss (Baltimore, 2004), p. 3.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ T.N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century* (Princeton, 2008), p. 25.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ For a discussion on the 'age of lordship' in full, cf. Bisson, *Crisis*, pp. 22 – 83.

Much of this fragmentation can be attributed to the fact that in these lands, royal order had been very rarely centralised. And whilst Charlemagne was an exception, his reign was most certainly not the norm as evidenced by the speed in which his Empire fell into disarray upon his death.

More widespread was the 'associative life of villages and valleys'; communities which sought lordship closer to home by one who was directly invested in agrarian custom and rights.⁷ It has been suggested that the desire for a more localised power gave rise to feudalism which ultimately killed the 'state', but Bisson argued that 'lordship, vassalage, and the fief - - - were originally elements *of*, and supports *for*, the regime they are held to have subverted'.⁸

Bartlett observed, 'one of the most striking aspects of the expansionary activity of the tenth to thirteenth centuries was the movement of western European aristocrats from their homelands into new areas where they settled and, if successful, augmented their fortunes'.⁹ Castles began to dot the landscape and around these castles formed lordships with knights and peasants who had little to offer but their labour, which is where the development of Brienne may have its origins. This phenomenon has been labelled 'feudal revolution', which Bisson defined as 'a demonstrably massive multiplication of lay lords and fiefs (*feuda, feva*) in the years 950 to 1150'.¹⁰ He went on to note that 'this was to transform the map of power almost everywhere. It put thousands of peasants under the lordship of untitled masters, many whom tried to impose servile obligations on them'.¹¹

What is evident from this period is that as violence spread, there arose a need for lordship from whom the common people could seek protection, and lordships, despite their originally just purpose, created a warrior class that begat violence; what began as an answer soon became the problem. Bisson noted, '...lords had retinues of armed men sometimes, and already since the ninth century, described as 'violent' (*violentia*); men who shared in the lord's take and aspired to fiefs or lordships themselves'.¹² He continued, 'the abrasive self - assertion of castellans and knights became virtually a

⁷ Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 27.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹ Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, p. 24.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹² Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 45.

method of lordship. Violence was nurtured in the economy and sociability of castles'.¹³ Indeed, the large - scale encastellation that took place in Europe between the tenth and thirteenth centuries coincided with the rise in lordships.¹⁴

With the expansion of lordships, came the expansion of Latin Christendom, lands that fell under the aegis of papal authority and the Latin liturgy.¹⁵ Just as bishoprics were territorial, so too were castles. Indeed, where bishoprics were established around villages and the people within, villages and communities were created in the shadows of fortified castles built by lords and manned by those who aspired to be lords. Bartlett remarked, '...defensive structures required labour and foodstuffs that could be supplied most conveniently by a nearby population of cultivators, while, of course, they simultaneously offered protection to such a population'.¹⁶

The County of Champagne

It was during this time that the formation of Champagne began to take root in what Evergates calls the 'rise of the comital state'.¹⁷ He observed that 'the rise of the comital state, in fact, played a determining role in forging a disparate collection of virtually independent barons and knights into a regional aristocracy with shared customs, institutions, and identity'.¹⁸

The formation of Champagne was a 'long and fitful process that began in the eleventh century'.¹⁹ In 1027, after a long struggle with King Robert the Pious, Odo II of Blois was granted the county of Troyes, which lay to the east of the royal demesne in the kingdom of West Francia.²⁰ Evergates noted that these lands east of Paris were amongst the last regions of medieval France to acquire territorial

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁴ Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, p. 65.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁷ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 5.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰ For a study on the kingdom of West Francia, cf. J. Dunbabin, 'West Francia: The kingdom,' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History* v. III c. 900/1024, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 372 - 97. Robert the Pious, king of France had invested Odo II, count of Blois, with Stephen of Troyes's inheritance shortly after Stephen's death, only to change his mind when Odo became embroiled in conflict with Ebles (perhaps of Roucy, cf. pp. 43 - 46 of this thesis), archbishop of Rheims, in 1021 when the former refused to yield his ancestral rights to the abbey. After considerable political maneuvering, Odo was able to negotiate his rights to his inheritance and he was placed in full possession of Troyes and other lands in 1027 [Bur, *Champagne*, p. 170].

cohesion.²¹ He further noted that this lack of cohesion was in consequence of the region's resilience to the threat of territorial domination by its neighbours because the largest urban centres and the counties that surrounded them had become episcopal principalities during the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries. However, unlike Rheims, Châlons, Langres and other principalities, Troyes and its counties remained under a 'firm lay hand'.²² Indeed, Troyes's importance was owed to its strategic location. Interposed between the royal lands and the ecclesiastical principalities, Troyes's proximity to the king's administrative centre provided an opportunity for the magnates of Blois to increase their political power through the acquisition of that most elusive yet important commodity: land.

Land was the scarcest resource and thus the most valued; and had been so from as early as the eighth century. By the ninth century, lordship and the quest for land had become a preoccupation of both the nobility and the lesser lords of the Frankish West. Whilst lordships continued to expand and order was slowly restored as the citizens fell under localised protection, it did so at the expense of 'obligations to regalia courts and armies'.²³

The possibility of recapturing the centralised royal power that came to define Charlemagne's reign grew even less likely as the century progressed. It was during this time that lesser men came to expect rewards of land and titles for service, whilst magnates sought to expand their lands and rule by allocating responsibility to them. Bisson describes this phenomenon as being a twofold dynamic 'with lesser men commending themselves for the rewards of service even as magnates strove to remodel territorial power by imposing fidelity on a lesser elite'.²⁴

When Odo II died in 1037, the agnatic inheritance of the county of Blois went to the eldest heir, Thibaut, whilst the land grant of the county of Troyes went to the youngest heir, Stephen.²⁵ The comital family of Champagne offers a clear example of the rise in lordships which led to a rise in homages, the ceremonial pledging of one's service to a lord in exchange for lands, fiefs or protection.

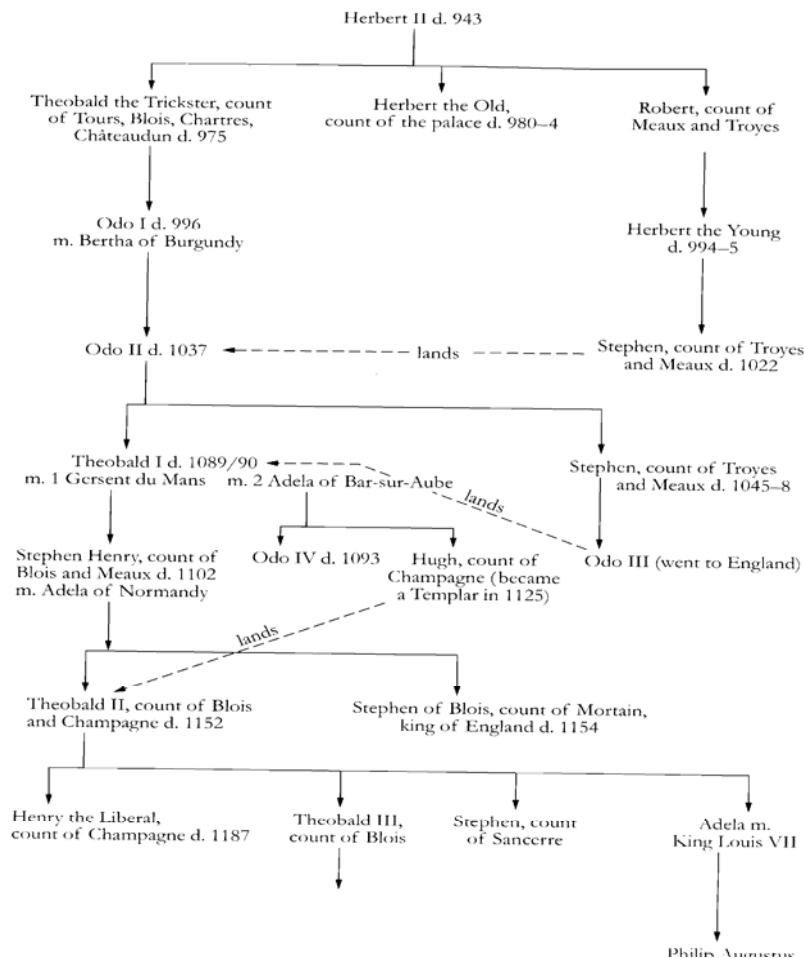
²¹ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 5.

²² *ibid.*

²³ Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 36.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Benedict, abbot of Monte Cassino, *Les Miracles de Saint Benoît*, ed. A.A. Aimoin (Paris, 1858), p. 251.



The House of Blois - Champagne (taken from Hallam, p.46)

Bisson likens this exchange to ‘the Christian experience of prayer whereby humility in dependence was promoted’.²⁶

Another vestige of lordship was the creation of knights to safeguard lands and people. Bartlett noted ‘the more land one had, the more knights one could enfeoff and the more knights one had, the easier it was to conquer new lands’.²⁷ These growing lordships bore little resemblance to the old guard of kings, bishops and princes.

When Stephen died (1045 x 1048), he left the inheritance of Troyes to his young son, Odo III.²⁸ In 1065, Odo came into conflict with his uncle, Thibaut, count of Blois, who was charged with serving

²⁶ Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 38.

²⁷ Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, p. 8.

²⁸ Odo II died on 15 November 1037. For his death cf. HCC, I, 313: *Chronicon Lobiensi*, in *Recueil des Historiens de Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet, et al. (Paris, 1840 – 1904) {RHGF}, XI, 415B. The date of Stephen’s death remains uncertain, he had wed Adèle, sister of Richard II, Duke of Normandy, and from this

as regent for the duration of Odo's minority.²⁹ Odo soon departed his county to join the army of Duke William of Normandy, who was at this time intent upon the conquest of England.³⁰ Odo would not return to Troyes/Champagne.

As was the case with several members of the French nobility, particularly the Norman nobility, who had joined with William the Conqueror to pursue lands and wealth, Odo III was destined for a career in England. Indeed, Odo did much to secure his future when he married Adélaïde, William's sister. By this time William was king of England and he invested Odo with the counties of Aumâle and Holderness.³¹ Odo's French lands, namely the county of Troyes, then fell to his uncle Thibaut, either through neglect of his interests there or through grant, the details of which remain unclear.³² Upon possession of the title and lands, Thibaut began a campaign of unification (by force where necessary) throughout the region of Champagne, which would last for fifty - two years, the length of his tenure as lord of Blois.³³ He died on 29 or 30 September 1089.³⁴

The rule of primogeniture was upheld for several generations subsequent to Thibaut's rule.³⁵

marriage had a son, Odo, who would succeed as Odo III. For Stephen's marriage, cf. *L'Art de Verifier les Dates*, ed. D.B. Warden, et al.. 18 vols (Paris, 1821 - 1844), {AVD}, II, 614, 837.

²⁹ *Historiae Francicae Fragmentum*, RHGF, XI, 160D.

³⁰ As proof of his presence in England at this time, Odo stood as witness to a charter issued of the monastery of Durham, dated 1081, which confirmed the freedoms and possessions of the monks [W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, et al. 6 vols (London, 1817 - 30), I, 237].

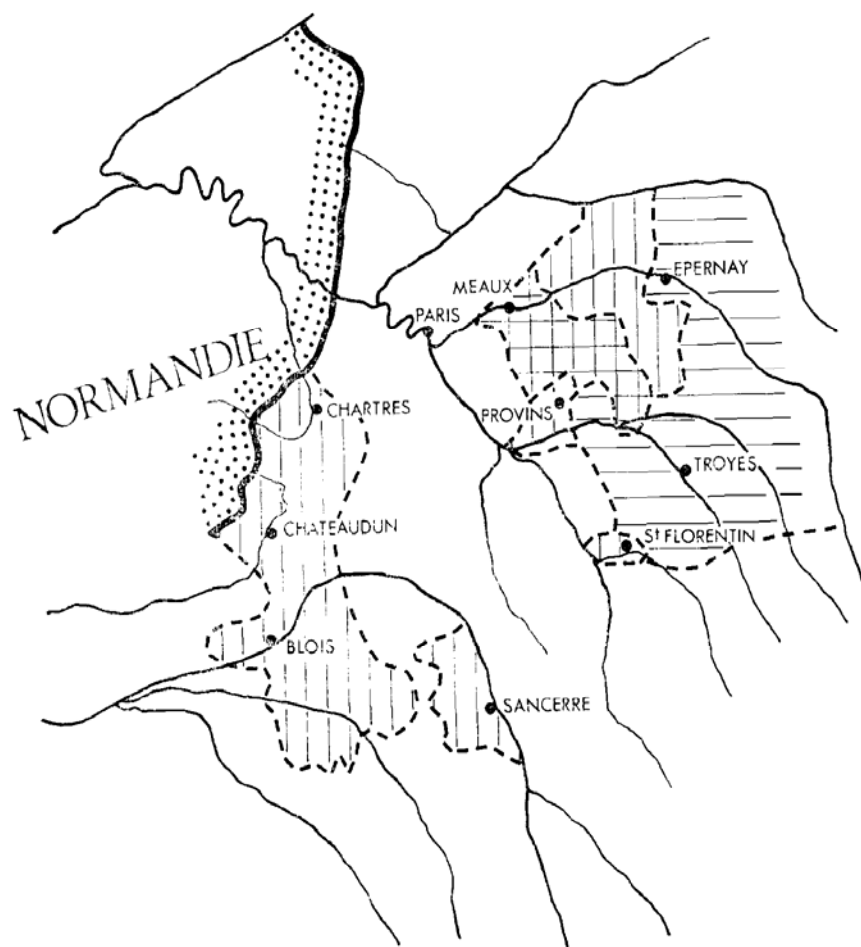
³¹ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall. 6 vols (Oxford, 1969 - 80) {OV}, II, 265.

³² *Chronicon Lobiensi*, RHGF, XI, 160. As discussed later in this study, Odo had an interesting career after he departed Troyes. After the death of William the Conqueror, he was involved in a plot to elevate his and Adélaïde's son, Stephen of Aumâle to the throne of England in opposition to his nephew, William Rufus. He was condemned to prison for his troubles, where he died [HCC, I, 377].

³³ Bur noted that Thibaut's war of unification, which involved the houses of Vermandois and Valois, escalated after the departure of his nephew for England. For a full account, cf. Bur, *Champagne*, p. 216. Thibaut was also involved in papal reform. Bur suggests that on the 12 May 1077, Gregory VII nominated Hugh of Die to the position of papal legate in France specifically to assist Thibaut against Phillippe I. However, Hugh took it upon himself to depose the archbishop of Rheims whom Thibaut recognised as a vassal, thus proving himself to be a man ruled by his conscience and not by the whims of the count of Blois. For Bur's recounting, cf. Bur, *Champagne*, p. 222. Concerning the nomination of Hugh of Die, cf. *Epistolae Gregorii Papae VII*, RHGF, XIV, 605, D & E. Concerning Thibaut's relationship with Manasses, cf. *Recueil des Actes de Philippe I, Roi de France (1059 - 1108)*, ed. M. Prou and M. - H. d'Arbois de Jubainville (Paris, 1908) {RAP}, p. 26.

³⁴ *Europäische Stammtafeln: Stammtafeln zur Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten*, ed. W. K. P. zu Isenburg, F. B. F. von Loringhoven. 23 vols (Marburg, 1978 -) {ES}, II, 46.

³⁵ For a recent, detailed discussion on the formation of the county at this time, cf. K.A. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord (c. 1067 - 1137)* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 60 - 70.



Map 1. Territories held by the house of Blois c.1100. Horizontal lines indicate territory held by Hugh, count of Troyes. Vertical lines indicate territory held by Stephen - Henry, count of Blois. (taken from Bur, 232)

His eldest heir, the First Crusader, Stephen - Henry (d.1102), inherited the county of Blois whilst after the death of the second - born son, Odo IV in 1093, Troyes eventually passed to the youngest son, Hugh (1097 - 1125), identified by Evergates as the first 'authentic' count of Champagne in the sense that his holdings were commonly identified with the region called Champagne.³⁶ Of the next several years, Evergates noted, 'the county of Troyes and its appendages would have remained a

³⁶ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 7. For Stephen - Henry's death, cf. *Obituaires de Sens*, in *Recueil des Historiens de la France Obituaires*. 4 vols (Paris, 1902 - 23), III, 13. For Hugh's death, cf. Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 826. For Odo IV's death, cf. A. Lesort, *Les Chartres de fondation du preuré de Sermaize (Marne)*, in *Bulletin Philologique et Historique* (1924), p. 104, n°1.

minor territorial unit in the twelfth century if Hugh had not transferred them back to the main line to his nephew Thibaut II (Thibaut IV of Blois, 1102 - 52) in 1125'.

It was this Thibaut who oversaw the agricultural and financial development of the region during his twenty - seven year reign. The tenure of his successor, Henry the Liberal (1152 - 1181), witnessed the full realisation of Thibaut's efforts and Troyes thrived.³⁷ Demonstrative of this success, Henry the Liberal abandoned the traditional seat of the counts of Blois to his younger brothers and relocated to Troyes, effectively making Troyes the administrative seat of his county. In consequence of this relocation and the importance placed upon the county, over an indeterminate period of time, Troyes and its lands coalesced into the county of Champagne.³⁸

Formation of the County of Brienne

Before the consolidation of the territory, there is no evidence to suggest that the region that would become known as Champagne had escaped the violence that plagued the land during the early Middle Ages. Indeed, if Émile Martin, a notary clerk of Brienne writing at the beginning of the twentieth century and citing the life of Saint Loup who died in 478, is to be believed, then around the middle of the fifth century, the Germans, having arrived before the armies of Attila, king of the Huns, ravaged the land and took prisoner the inhabitants called 'Brions' or in Latin *Brionnenses*.³⁹ This story is also recounted in a manuscript by Saint Berchère who wrote in the seventh century.⁴⁰

Brienne lies thirty - five kilometres to the northeast of Troyes and it is from this region that hailed the eponymous dynasty with whom this thesis is concerned. Today, Brienne - le - Château is a small village at the foot of a hill upon which once stood the fortress of Brienne and is now home to the château built by the Loménie family in the seventeenth century. The castle of Brienne now serves as a psychiatric facility.

It is not known if the establishment of a village at Brienne was a result of migration or if it was the natural development of a community around a fortification, a community in need of protecting:

³⁷ In his comments on the economic history of the region, Pounds noted that it was during the twelfth century that market fairs began to flourish in Champagne, this would give some indication to the prosperity of the region. N.J.G. Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe* (London, 1994), p. 354.

³⁸ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 2.

³⁹ Martin, *Brienne - le - Château*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

perhaps it was a bit of both. Bartlett argued that ‘fortifications were often located in wild places, either to gain the defensive advantage of inaccessibility or because they were on dangerous frontiers’.⁴¹

Brienne is situated in an area of Champagne described by Benton as ‘Humid Champagne’.⁴² Bur noted that Brienne lies on the ancient Roman road that runs between Langres and Rheims; a road that was crucial to the survival of trade during the era of the Carolingian Empire.⁴³ In this region, the quality of the soil changes from that of the barren band of chalky soil that stretches from Rheims to Troyes to a region set apart by streams, marshes, pools, dense forests and flat plains. In spite of the forest, the rivers Seine and Aube wind a route through the countryside to the plateau of Langres and Burgundy.

By the year 837, Brienne was an established village.⁴⁴ Martin noted that in 832, Louis ‘le Débonnaire’, then king of France, designated Brienne a county and gave it in keeping to Hisembert who served as governor of the region.⁴⁵ However, in his history of the counts of Brienne, Bourgeois, a former student of the military school of Brienne *cum* historian, asserted that it was Hugh Capet who established Brienne as a hereditary county in the tenth century.⁴⁶ Brienne would go on to become part of the territory that Louis ‘le Débonnaire’ gave to his son, Charles the Bald. In 851, an act that confirmed donations made to the canons of Orléans was signed ‘in *villa Briona*’ by this son, who was at this time king of West Francia.⁴⁷ By 853, the land was bisected ‘in *duobus Brionisiis*’, one half retained the name Brienne and the other became Rosnay.⁴⁸ Prior to, or *circa* 1143, the old village settlement of Brienne became known as ‘Brienne la Vieille’ to distinguish it from the larger, more prosperous village, ‘Brienne le Château’, (referred to henceforth in this thesis as ‘Brienne’) which had become the administrative seat of the counts of Brienne.⁴⁹

⁴¹ Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, p. 134.

⁴² J. Benton, ‘Court of Champagne under Henry the Liberal and Countess Marie’. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Princeton, 1956), p. 1.

⁴³ Bur, *Champagne*, p. 144.

⁴⁴ *Historiae Liber*, RHGF, VI, 70. Here, Brienne is listed along with several other villages.

⁴⁵ Martin, *Brienne - le - Château*, p. 3.

⁴⁶ M. Bourgeois, *Histoire des Comtes de Brienne* (Troyes, 1848), p. 19.

⁴⁷ A. E. Prévost, *Souverains, Princes, et Hôtes Illustres à Brienne* (Troyes, 1916), p. 7: *Caroli Calvi, Ludovici pii filii, Diplomata*, RHGF, VIII, 517.

⁴⁸ DHC, I, 242.

⁴⁹ The date 1143 is noted because the charter evidence stated that during this year, the count of Brienne had a mayor who was from Brienne the Old: *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Basse - Fontaine et Beaulieu*, vol 4 in *Collection des Principaux Cartulaires du Diocese du Troyes*, ed. C. Lalore. {Bf}, 1143, 1.

Brienne in the Ninth Century under Charles the Bald

In the year 814, Charlemagne died and left his Empire to fragment under the considerable weight of incessant feuding amongst his grandchildren. The hostilities were tempered by the Treaty of Verdun in 837 with West Francia going to Charles the Bald, the Rhineland area (also called Lotharingia) going to the emperor Lothar and East Francia awarded to Louis the German.⁵⁰

It is difficult to deduce with absolute certainty the nature of the people who inhabited Brienne when an act was issued there in 851 by Charles the Bald. In the ninth century, within the larger territory of West Francia, Brienne was located in the region of Francia, the tiny bit of land interposed between Neustria and Austrasia. It is therefore likely that the people of Brienne identified themselves as Franks, regardless of how long ago their particular racial distinctiveness was lost.⁵¹ Indeed, Schneidmüller noted that 'Frankish kingdoms had emerged out of the Frankish Empire, and each preserved the traditions of the Frankish past and present'.⁵² He continued, 'historians nowadays, when writing about the ninth and early tenth centuries, often use the designation 'West Francia' in order to register the fact that people long continued to regard it as part of the larger Frankish realm'.⁵³ The Brionese likely observed the tradition and ancient law of the Franks, which was the Salic law established and implemented by the Merovingian kings.

That is not to say that the people of the region immediately recognised the sovereignty of Charles the Bald. Schneidmüller noted that after 843 the kings demanded that their nobility should give them exclusive loyalty, but the nobles insisted upon their rights, even going so far as to invite other kings of neighbouring kingdoms to become their ruler in the West.⁵⁴

Notwithstanding the fragmentation of the Empire, the basic structure of Carolingian government and administration was continuously implemented throughout the region in the tenth century. In order to understand the character of the first counts of Brienne, it is necessary to examine the nature of the politics of this era.

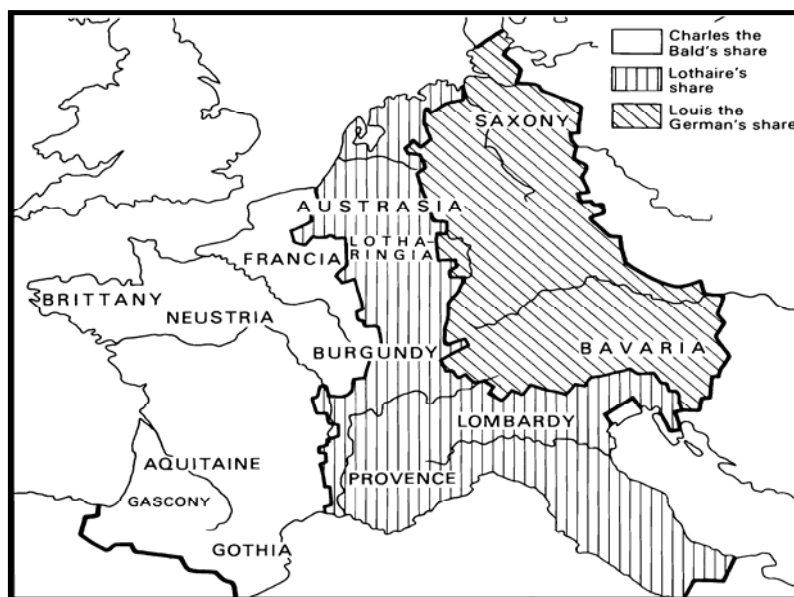
⁵⁰ R. M. McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 102 - 3.

⁵¹ J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843 - 1180*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2000), p. 2.

⁵² B. Schneidmüller, 'Constructing Identities of Medieval France', *France in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. M. G. Bull (Oxford, 2002), p. 19.

⁵³ *ibid.* Also, for a study on the development of the Frankish nobility, cf. *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins and Transformations*, ed. A. J. Duggan (Woodbridge, 2000).

⁵⁴ Schneidmüller, 'Constructing', p. 20.



Map 2. France after the Treaty of Verdun, 843 (taken from Dunbabin, *France In the Making*, p.3)

Five academic works have been of great value to this section on the formation of the county of Brienne; Michel Bur, *La formation du comté de Champagne v. 950 - 1150*; Jean Dunbabin's *France in the Making, 843 - 1180*; Elizabeth M. Hallam's *Capetian France 987 - 1328*, Theodore Evergates's *Feudal Society in the Balliage of Troyes under the Counts of Champagne, 1152 - 1284* and his most recent work *The Aristocracy of the county of Champagne, 1100 - 1300*.⁵⁵

Brienne in the Tenth Century: The Role of the Counts under Carolingian Law

The archetypal Carolingian king was charged with multitudinous duties as overlord of his subjects. He was to defend his people, fairly adjudicate disputes and legislate and implement laws to keep his kingdom reasonably well pacified.⁵⁶ In addition to these responsibilities, he protected and showed beneficence to the poor and the church. It was due in no small part to these multifarious obligations that the king was forced to delegate some of the duties to noblemen at the local level. He did so by appointing those whom he believed would be loyal and who possessed a strong disposition, essentially enabling them to exert authority in the king's name.

⁵⁵ Bur, *Champagne*; Dunbabin, *France in the Making*; E. Hallam and J. Everard, *Capetian France, 987 – 1328*, 2nd edn (London, 2001); Evergates, *Troyes*; Evergates, *Aristocracy*.

⁵⁶ Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, p. 5.

During the tenure of the first recorded count of Brienne in the mid - tenth century, Englebert I, the count or duke was considered to be the linchpin of the Carolingian administration. The king depended upon individuals of these ranks to such a degree that the origins of the decline of royal power can be directly attributed to this relationship. For as long as the count performed his duties and upheld the oath of fidelity to the king, he was rewarded with a principality or county to provide for expenses incurred in this role.⁵⁷

It would have been Englebert's duty to preside over the *mallus* or county court. He would also have been responsible for the defence of his territory and its boundaries, and he would have been required to give military support to the king. He would have collected taxes on roads, bridges and markets within his domain, and he would have called upon the residents of his territory to pay tax for defence of the county. By the tenth century, the count's main responsibility was tax collection on behalf of the king.⁵⁸

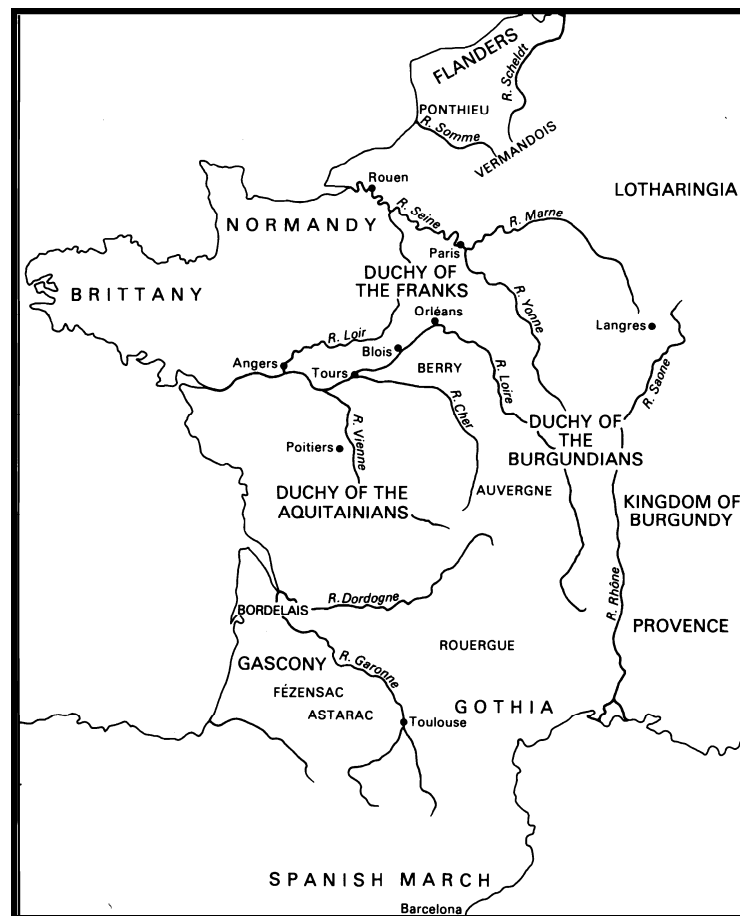
He was not expected to perform these tasks alone. He would have been encouraged to appoint auxiliaries in the form of viscounts who would serve as proxy agents. The viscount too was allowed his agents known as *vicarii* or *centenarii*.⁵⁹ Although these men were empowered to act on behalf of their liege lord, if there was trouble within the county it would have ultimately fallen to Englebert, not his vassals, to answer to the king. There had to have been a considerable amount of trust between the king and the counts. These relationships were not without risk. Indeed, the most discernible outcome of this relationship was the eventual autonomy the counts came to enjoy over the next two centuries. Without question, these magnates owed their titles, prestige and socio - political mobility to the age of the Carolingians.

The growth, and eventual abuse, of power was not something that took the Carolingians by surprise. In fact, they initiated several measures to halt the progress of this phenomenon, which had been a cause of growing concern to them.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 6.



Map 3. West Francia circa 970 (taken from Dunbabin, *France In The Making* p.45)

The checks and balances system implemented by the king would have demanded several services from Englebert; he would have been obligated to entertain the king when the latter was present within his county, he would have attended royal councils and been expected to answer the king's summons in a timely fashion.

However well - intended, this pre - emptive measure was incapable of restraining the over - reaching ambitions of the counts and inevitably failed. Moreover, the noble families of the counties began to observe continuous heredity succession that thereby excluded the king from the right to selectively choose those he desired to rule in his name. Englebert's son, Englebert II, succeeded him and was the first count to establish the general rule of primogeniture within the county of Brienne. Perhaps the most influential and far - reaching royal exercise, the calling of the royal ban or the *bannus regnum*, a right nominally held by the king, but sometimes mandated to a lesser power, in

which that person ordered or forbade something, was issued less often and the king became less itinerant.⁶⁰ Thus, not only was the king ignorant of what was happening within his kingdom, but he had ceased to exercise effective sovereignty over his subjects.

According to Jean Dunbabin, 'recent study of the various French principalities and of Lotharingia has recast our historical perspective, forcing us to rethink the role of kings, now that they are no longer seen as isolated figures representing legitimate authority on a stage otherwise occupied by bold, bad men intent on self - aggrandisement. The princes were entitled to act as partners in ruling'.⁶¹

The shift in power from the king to his counts is likely why the first recorded count of Brienne, Englebert I, allied himself with the powerful count of Paris in rebellion against the king, Louis d'Outremer in 961.⁶² Indeed, it can be convincingly argued that the decline of royal authority had made clear the path to dissent and that the eventual power enjoyed by the counts and dukes was simply the natural progression of ambition inadvertently fostered by the Carolingians.

Englebert's rebellion against the king's authority may have lasted for a long period of time given that his chosen ally, Hugh the Great (father of Hugh Capet, progenitor of the Capetian dynasty) had been feuding with Louis d'Outremer since the second year of Louis's reign.⁶³ For his part in the campaign, Englebert I constructed a fortress in Brienne for the purposes of defending his lands against the king.⁶⁴ According to the Edict of Pîtres in 864, which was enacted by King Charles the Simple (879 - 929), counts were granted the right to construct castles providing they had direct royal authorisation.⁶⁵ Evidently, Engelbert did not seek to obtain permission for the construction of the castle or the king revoked his grant for Louis launched an attack against the count and his brother,

⁶⁰ The *bannus regnum* is mentioned throughout the *Ewa a Amorem* (perhaps better known as the *Lex Francorum Chamavorum*), which was a document of Germanic laws supplemented by Frankish laws and codified during the reign of either Charlemagne or his successor, Louis the Pious. For more information on the *bannus regnum* and the text of the document, cf. N.E. Algra, *Oudfries recht 800 - 1256* (Leeuwarden, 2000) and K.A. Eckhardt, *Lex Ribvaria II: Text und Lex Francorum Chamavorum* (Hannover, 1966).

⁶¹ Dunbabin, 'West Francia', pp. 375 - 6.

⁶² Ph. Lauer, *Le Règne de Louis IV d'Outre - Mer*, in *Annales de l'Histoire de France à l'époque carolingienne* (Paris, 1900), pp. 17 - 8, 26 - 9.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Lauer, *Louis IV*, p. 218. 'Deux seigneurs pillards (prædones), les frères Joubert et Anjoubert, avaient élevé une forteresse à Brienne'. Cf. C. Kalkstein, *Geschichte des Französischen Königthums Unter den Ersten Capetingern* (Leipzig. 1877), p. 277, n. 3.

⁶⁵ MGH Legum II, 328. For the Edict of Pîtres in its entirety, cf. MGH Legum II, 312 - 28.

Gobert, both whom had sought shelter behind the walls of Englebert's adulterine fortress.⁶⁶ The castle was eventually taken through methods of siege and starvation.⁶⁷

Charters from the tenure of the second count of Brienne suggest that the land continued to be held direct from the king because the documents tend to record the dates of the reign of Robert the Pious. Few charters survive from this era in the CACB and the presence of a charter issued by the second count is not sufficient evidence to infer the year of death for the first count. However, based upon the charter evidence, it seems that Engelbert II was a more pious man than his father had been. His first charter is dated from 24 October 996 and therein he made amends to the abbey of Montiérender for the wrongs committed against it by his father.⁶⁸ Also, in a show of generosity and filial obligation, Englebert II went on to provide a generous dowry for his sister who was married into the house of Joinville.⁶⁹

Brienne in the Eleventh Century: Becoming a Politically Significant County in Champagne

Dunbabin convincingly argued that the recognition of the king's name in charters was an indicator of the area in which royal power was observed.⁷⁰ Charters can also give important, though inevitably rather random, indications of the area in which a ruler's power was recognized; for if two parties sought confirmation of their transaction, they did so because they thought the agreement would gain force thereby. Occasionally, a charter makes recognition quite explicit; some from Aquitaine, for example, give the date by the royal regnal year, and then add the year of the duke of Aquitaine's rule. Other charters indicate local attitudes to royal government. Catalan charters continued to date by the regnal years of Charles the Simple, ignoring King Raoul, until Charles's death in 929; and some

⁶⁶ *Louis vint les assiéger* [Lauer, *Louis IV*, p. 218]. Cf. Richer of Saint Rheims, *Histoire de France* (888 - 995), ed. R. Latouche. 2 vols (Paris, 1964), II, 168, c.100. Cf. H. Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen des 10. Jahrhunderts. Studien über Denkart und Existenz im Einstigen Karolingerreich* (Stuttgart, 1984), II, p. 559.

⁶⁷ Flodoard, *Les Annales de Flodoard*, ed. J.P. Lauer (Paris, 1905), p. 131; Richer, *Histoire*, II, 168, c.100; Kalckstein, *Geschichte*, p. 276, n. 1.

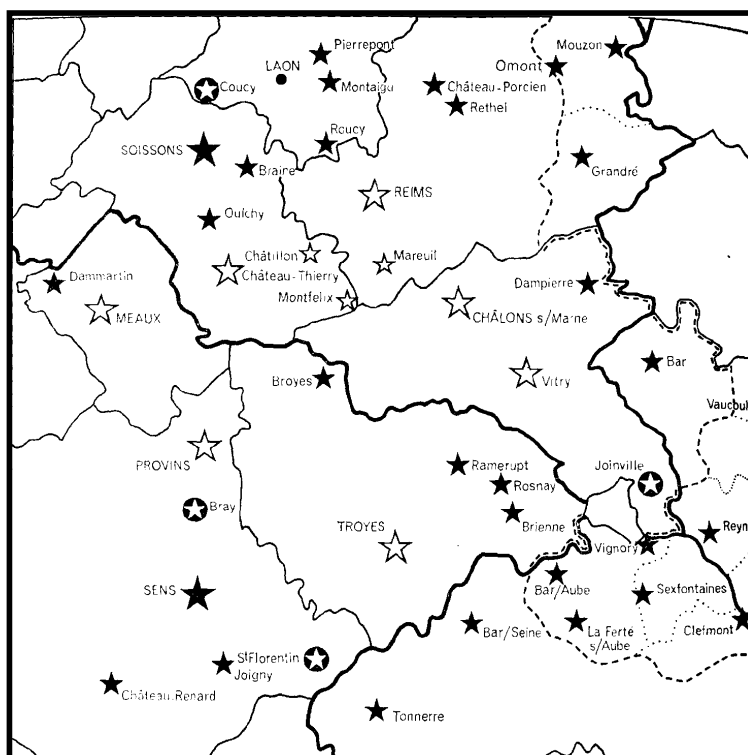
⁶⁸ *Englebert, comte de Brienne, rappelle qu'Engelbert I, son prédécesseur, a relevé l'abbaye de Montiérender de ses ruines* [CACB, 3]. *Roberti Regis Diplomata*, RHGF, X, 613 - 614n. Cf. *Gallia*, IX, 916. Cf. *Ann. Bened.*, IV, 268.

⁶⁹ CACB, 51. *Ann. Bened.*, IV, 712.

⁷⁰ Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, pp. 24 - 6.

refused recognition of the Burgundian king even after that. Similarly there are Catalan charters dated by the reign of Charles of Lorraine after 987, ignoring the election of Hugh Capet.⁷¹

From 1031 onwards, charters issued by, or on behalf of the counts continued to observe the reign of the king, this could suggest that the Brienne were loyal to the king during the conflict between Robert the Pious and the count of Blois, which took place within the county of Troyes and the surrounding regions. Or perhaps they were not called upon to choose sides between the two warring factions. The latter seems the most likely scenario.⁷²



Map 4. Castles and Strongholds in the region of Troyes circa 1025 (Bur, *Formation of the County of Champagne*, p.145).

- ★ seigneuries
- ☆ counties
- ⊙ vassals of the count
- borders of the diocese and provinces
- - - borders of the land and frontier of the empire

The evidence suggests that this count of Brienne, Walter I (1035 - 1089), who was likely the son of Englebert II, came to be regarded as one of the more powerful lords in northern France. During

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷² This rebellion took place because King Robert the Pious fell in love with the widow of the count of Blois and desired to marry her. Although the relationship between Robert and his stepsons was amicable even after the divorce of their mother from the king, hostilities quickly erupted, seemingly over a land dispute or perhaps over control of the archbishopric of Rheims.

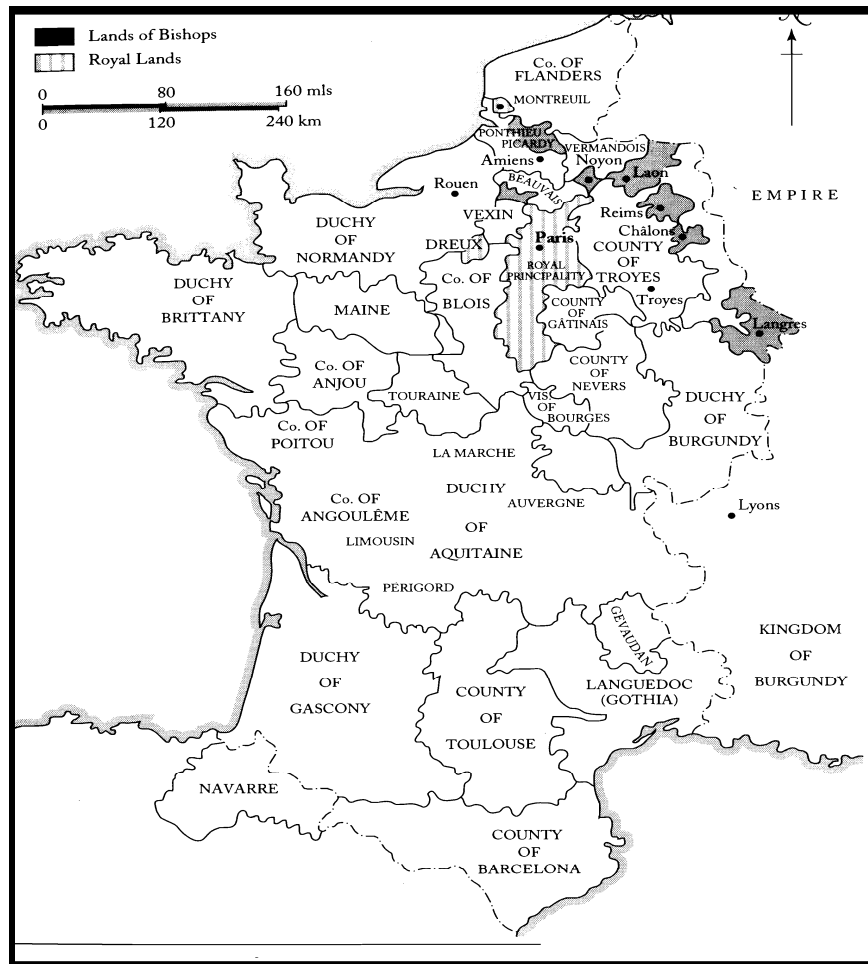
Walter's tenure, the county of Brienne became firmly established as a prosperous territory. As previously discussed, the Brienne had not always been loyal vassals of the crown. However, by the eleventh century they appear to have acknowledged the benefits of loyalty to the king and this new approach may have resulted in an invitation to Walter I to attend the Council of Senlis in 1048. This convocation, whilst successful in its intent to raise aid for the beleaguered duke of Normandy, also served to bring Walter together with the great lords of northern France. It may also have led to the formation of an alliance between the house of Brienne and the house of Roucy, an event which would have significant impact on the lineage of the crusaders of Brienne. Amongst the lords at the council of Senlis were Walter of Brienne and Hilduin IV, count of Ramerupt, Montdidier and Roucy.⁷³ The political implications of Walter's presence at this meeting are significant. The fact that he was one of only a few nobles summoned to a council where the king undoubtedly requested his aid may speak of the value that was placed on both the count and his county. Conversely, it may also speak of a broader lack of support proffered by the nobles of France to their king.

What was required of a vassal of the king of France at this time? Certainly an adequate amount of men - at - arms, perhaps archers, knights, enough wealth as to ensure the ability to feed and clothe oneself and one's men - at - arms, pack horses, destriers and all other necessary accoutrements commensurate with the duties of a powerful noble. If nothing else, Walter's attendance at this meeting attests that the county was no insignificant fief in the region of Champagne. In times of war against a coalition of the most powerful nobles in the kingdom one might assume that the threatened king would not send forth or summon those but the strongest, the most loyal and the best suited to deal with the threat.

Walter's role in the campaign and the subsequent political conflict provoked by the Normans remains obscure. It is possible that Walter of Brienne took part in the Norman conquest of England. At the risk of arguing *ex silencio*, the extant charters might support this suggestion as he disappears

⁷³Scholarship on the Council of Senlis 1048 is lacking. Recent scholarship on William the Conqueror mentions the council briefly in passing. Only two sources have been found by the author on Senlis, that of Jubainville and a primary source taken from the *Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum Historicorum*, ed. E. Martene and U. Durand (Paris, 1724 - 33), VII, col. 58 - 9. Cf. HCC, I, 373.

from the record for the duration of the Conquest, indeed he is absent from the charters from 1050 until 1070, a long absence of twenty years.⁷⁴



Map 5. France in the Mid - Eleventh Century (taken from Hallam, *Capetian France*)

Vassalage and the Excommunication of Walter I of Brienne

By the late eleventh century, it appears that the counts of Brienne had become vassals to the counts of Blois providing one of the few examples in medieval France where counts were vassals of other counts.⁷⁵ This delicate situation came about in direct consequence of the late development of a centralized county of Champagne, which allowed for other noble families to emerge within the territory with the title 'count'.

⁷⁴ The last extant charter that cites Walter in Brienne before the Conquest is CACB, 10 dated 1050. He does not appear again until 1070, CACB, 11, a gap of twenty years.

⁷⁵ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 1.

Bourgeois argued that in the early history of the county of Brienne, the counts were given as vassals by the king to the counts of Champagne by Hugh Capet.⁷⁶ Indeed, he suggested that the Brienne swore liege homage. However, it is difficult to say with certainty that the transition from holding the county directly from the king to becoming a vassal of the count of Champagne occurred as early as Bourgeois suggests. Evergates argued that during the early to mid - eleventh century, the nobles of Champagne were ranked amongst the wealthiest and most powerful local lords. He went on to note that in consequence of their status, the relationship between the count and these nobles would have been one of mutual respect. In evidence of this relationship, he observed 'not a single document before 1125 mentions a castle lord doing homage to the count or surrendering his castle for the count's use, as was the case later in the century. In fact, several barons who frequented Hugh's court held primary castles from the bishop of Langres'.⁷⁷ In truth, the conflict between the count of Brienne and the count of Champagne that occurred in the eleventh century remains the first extant instance whereby the counts of Brienne were forced to concede to the authority of the count of Champagne.

When surveying recent scholarship on feudalism in France, particularly the work of Susan Reynolds, it is clear that some historians are not convinced that the lord/vassal/serf relationship was an established, systematic and/or standard form of administration throughout France.⁷⁸ However, as Evergates argued in his work *Feudal Society in Medieval France*, the usage of the term 'feudal' links a complex of terms such as 'homage', 'fidelity', and 'liegiance' (which related to persons) with 'mouvance', 'escheat', and 'relief' (which relates to property).⁷⁹ He continued, 'these were not abstract concepts; they described specific practices and relationships deriving from feudal tenure'.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the terms of fidelity and the enactment of these terms between the counts of Brienne and the counts of Blois remain unclear.

The reasons behind the diminished standing of the counts of Brienne are manifold. Their lack of participation in the administration of the county of Champagne may be due, in no small part to

⁷⁶ Bourgeois, *Brienne*, pp. 20 - 1.

⁷⁷ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 115 - 80.

⁷⁹ *Feudal Society in Medieval France: Documents from the County of Champagne*, ed. T. Evergates (Philadelphia, 1992), p. xviii.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

periods of conflict with the counts of Champagne as this thesis will examine below. It was, after all, in consequence of the count of Champagne's encouragement that the stain of excommunication had touched the Brienne dynasty. Undoubtedly, this would have served to cool relations between the two houses. Evergates went even further to note that the lack of involvement in the affairs of the count of Champagne might also be attributed to their proximity to the count of Champagne's family seat of Troyes, which placed them directly beneath the watching eye of their overlord.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the count of Brienne maintained his right to govern his estates as a sovereign entity and was subjugated to the count of Champagne only as his lord required political and military aid.

Evergates noted that there were three counts ancillary to the count of Champagne in the Balliage in the eleventh century; the Brienne, Bar - sur - Seine and Ramerupt.⁸² In testament to their effective use of marriage as a way of developing their power, it is important to note that within a century, both the houses of Bar - sur - Seine and Ramerupt would be ruled by a son of the house of Brienne.

It is possible that Walter was forced to recognise the authority of the counts of Blois and it is equally possible that he submitted to Thibaut's overlordship willingly. However, the events that followed would indicate that Walter and Thibaut found themselves facing difficulties that were perhaps brought about by the former suggestion of assimilation by force. The conflict reached its peak in 1082, when Thibaut ordered Walter I (1035 – 1097) to yield his rights to the abbey of Montiérender.⁸³ Bouchard has recently extensively researched Montiérender and it would be prudent at this point in the thesis to remark upon this significant monastery.

Der was situated in what became in the twelfth century, the region of Champagne. It was located in the diocese of Châlons - sur - Marne, yet it was close to the border of the diocese of Troyes as well as the dioceses of Langres and Toul.⁸⁴ (see Map.1) The bishop of Rheims assisted in the foundation of the abbey in 666 and bishops from Langres, Toul and Troyes appear in the cartularies as regularly as the bishop of Châlons.

⁸¹ Evergates, *Troyes*, p. 102.

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸³ CACB, 13: HCC, I, 400 - 1.

⁸⁴ Bouchard, *Montiér - en - Der*, p. 3.

The abbey was one of the most important of the Merovingian monastic houses in the area. In the first centuries of its foundation, Montiérender received gifts from kings and lords. Bouchard dates the foundation of the abbey to 666 when a hermit in the wood of Der announced that he was giving his hereditary lands to a *monasterium* he had founded there.⁸⁵ Montiérender continued to be an important abbey in the area until the mid - twelfth century when that most famous Cistercian house, Clairvaux, located only thirty - seven kilometres south of Montiérender, cast a shadow over the older Benedictine house.⁸⁶

Although the counts of Brienne had designated Montiérender as the family mausoleum, there were times when they came into conflict with the monks.⁸⁷ It was in consequence of these disputes between the count and the monastery, the earliest one dating from 950, that in c.1080 Count Thibaut asserted his status over Walter. There can be little doubt of Thibaut's intention to establish his power over the count of Brienne. Having inherited the title from his uncle Hugh, Thibaut treated his paternal inheritance centred around Brie and his uncle's gift of the counties in southern Champagne as one cohesive unit without borders or separate identities.⁸⁸ As overlord of all lands and subjects within this region, Thibaut fiercely protected the rights of the monks of Montiérender and other religious communities. Therefore, Walter was not entirely without privilege. Thibaut's judgment allowed for Walter to have work from the serfs of the abbey on the fortifications of the castle of Brienne for one week each year, he was also entitled to have the serfs work his lands once a year on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the same week, with the choice of week being his prerogative. However, within the terms and conditions of the agreement was the stipulation that if Walter was to be found in violation of the agreement to render monetary dues to the abbey for this service, the provost of the abbey would be allowed to tally the cost of the arrears and this sum, known as *frescenna* would be owed to the religious house. Furthermore, each time Walter and his escort passed

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁷ CACB, 3.

⁸⁸ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 9.

near to Montiérender, he had the right to acquire supplies in sufficient quantity for himself and his guard, on the condition that the guard did not exceed fifteen knights.⁸⁹

Given the munificence of this judgment levied against him, Walter's subsequent actions seem to be little more than a by - product of his avarice. Indeed, in what could only have been a bid to establish his dominance, Walter refused to uphold the tenets of Thibaut's ruling. Had the count of Champagne been inclined to do battle on behalf of the monks of Montiérender, Walter may have successfully established his position of power within the region. But, Thibaut would not be goaded into taking up arms against the seditious count. He chose, instead, to bring the power of the Church down upon Walter and his lands and he did so by encouraging Hugh of Die, the papal legate, to impose a sentence of excommunication.⁹⁰ What did this mean for the count and his county?

Unfortunately for Walter, the excommunication was enacted at a time when Pope Gregory VII had only recently unleashed the full power of the sanctions of the church against the Emperor Henry IV of Germany. In the Lenten synod of 1078, Pope Gregory established the official papal stance on excommunication. He wrote, 'By the statutes of our holy predecessors and by apostolic authority we absolve those bound by fealty or oath to excommunicates and forbid them to observe their obligations in any way'.⁹¹ As Vodola noted in her work on medieval excommunication, this charter was amended shortly thereafter to avoid the almost certain chaos which would have ensued.⁹² In fact, the papacy's concern was not so much the repercussions of this pronouncement at the local level, but rather how this charter would affect the ability of the ruler of Germany to protect his realm from harm should the need arise to call on his vassals for support. By the time excommunication was pronounced against Walter, the admission, 'until they have made amends,' had been tacked on after 'absolve,' which should have served as motivation for Walter to have the ban raised as quickly as possible if he wished

⁸⁹ Mt, 82. For a discussion on the usage of the term 'frescenna' or 'friscinga' cf. HCC, I, 401.

⁹⁰ Hugh was appointed papal legate of France in 1077 [Bur, *Champagne*, p. 222]. cf. *Epistolae Gregorii Papae VII* in RHGF, XIV, 605 D & E: T. Schieffer, *Die Päpstlichen Legaten in Frankreich vom Verträge von Meersen (870) bis zum Schisma von 1130* (Berlin, 1935). Regarding the excommunication, cf. CACB, 14: *Ann. Bened.*, V, 641. Cf. *Epistolae Hugonis Diensis Episcopi*, in RHGF, XIV, 787 - 788.

⁹¹ E. Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 22: *Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. E. Caspar, in MGH Epp. Sel.10 (Berlin, 1920 - 23), I, 4, c.15. Cf. *Gregorii VII Epistolae Collectae.*, ed. P. Jaffe, *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum* (Berlin, 1865). For further discussion on the Lenten Synod cf. R. Schieffer, *Die Entstehung des Päpstlichen Investiturverbots für den Deutschen König*. MGH Schriften 28 (Stuttgart, 1981), 168 - 72.

⁹² Vodola, *Excommunication*, p. 22.

to ensure the salvation of his soul and perhaps more immediately, the defense of his lands. It was also at this time that the first papal law regarding the widespread effects of excommunication was published. *Quoniam multos* of 1078 granted permission to the excommunicated lord's wife and children, as well as any servants or dependants (*mancipia, ancillae, servi, servientes, rustici*), and his *curiales* to associate with the count without risk of excommunication. Only those whose counsel contributed to the excommunication directly could not associate with the lord.⁹³

The length of the sentence placed on Walter is unknown. It is possible that it lasted for at least three years because it is not until the year 1085 that the extant charters suggest a resumption of donations to abbeys under his authorisation and these grants were to continue until his death.⁹⁴ These subsequent charters suggest that Walter was repentant and anxious to compensate for his sins against the church. Not surprisingly, Montiérender was not mentioned in his charters again.

Advances by Marriage

Walter I was arguably the first of the counts of Brienne to make an advantageous marriage and through a series of such arrangements, especially during the late eleventh and into the twelfth century, the family began to advance its status. For certain, it was not until Walter's marriage that the count of Brienne inherited additional titles and counties. Indeed, the exploitation of marriage alliances, familial relationships and inheritance claims was abundant in the Middle Ages, an era when power was derived as much from marriage as from armed struggle.

Walter wed Eustachie, daughter of Miles III, count of Bar - sur - Seine. Eustachie's brother, Rainard, sometimes called Hugh - Rainard, was the heir apparent to the county of Bar - sur - Seine, but in 1065, he became bishop of Langres.⁹⁵ In 1072, Hugh - Rainard surrendered his title and his rights to the county of Bar - sur - Seine to his sister, Eustachie, who passed the title on to her sons

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 24. 'In emphasizing that *Quoniam* conforms to canonical tradition in this respect, Gilchrist ('Sources' 13 - 14 and 28) might be overlooking those aspects of the canon that are radically new'. Cf. J.T. Gilchrist, 'Gregory VII and the Juristic Sources of his Ideology' in *Studia Gratiana* 12 (1967), pp. 3 - 37.

⁹⁴ CACB, 19.

⁹⁵ DHC, I, 108 - 9.

with Walter of Brienne. This agreement was sealed with the granting of a moiety to the abbey of Montiérender.⁹⁶

Charter evidence suggests that Walter may have died *c.* 1089.⁹⁷ His second son, the heir by default after the eldest, Englebert, chose the life of a coenobite, would go on to wed the daughter of Andrew of Ramerupt, whose family had been, and would continue to be, of great significance in the world of holy war. As this thesis will show shortly, Walter's wife's ancestor, Ebles of Roucy, had fought the Muslims of northern Spain a full twenty years before Pope Urban II preached the crusade at Clermont.⁹⁸

By the onset of the First Crusade, the Brienne dynasty was well - established and the growing significance of the count and his territory affirmed. The long arm of papal reform had swept the lands of Brienne, a brush with excommunication and the implications that resulted likely made a strong impression on Erard, the heir to the county. This experience may have served as one impetus for his taking of the cross in 1097. In sum, at this point in the family's history their profile was becoming elevated enough to ensure that their future marriages would likely further their noble standing. The next generation of Brienne counts would continue the practice of making advantageous alliances through marriage as their limited financial and military means meant that they had to employ other methods of advancement. Indeed, within the span of two further generations, they would no longer be upstarts without a lineage to warrant such a position, but rather a family with an increasing crusading profile, a family of noble blood worthy of the throne of the kingdom of Jerusalem. This thesis will now delineate their rise.

⁹⁶ CACB, 11: *Gallia Christ Nov.* IV, instr. 147 - 148: *Gallia Christ Vev.* II, 638 - 659. Cf. *Ann. Bened.*, V, 54. *Gallia Christ Nov.* IV, 562.

⁹⁷ CACB, 19.

⁹⁸ Suger, Abbot of Saint Denis, *Oeuvres Complètes de Suger*, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Hildesheim, 1979), p. 19. For Urban's speech at Clermont, cf. Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, in *Recueil des Historiens de Croisades*, Historiens Orientaux. 16 vols (Paris, 1869 -), {RHC}, III, 727 - 8: *Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. R. Hill (London, 1962), p. 7.

Chapter Two

Erard I, Count of Brienne and the First Crusade

In this chapter and the next, this thesis will examine the transition of the Brienne from a family of relative importance in the region of Champagne to that of committed crusader. Blood ties to several of the ruling families of France and the Latin East will be established in an attempt to better understand and set the stage for the later ascendancy of the counts of Brienne in the Holy Land, Sicily and Frankish Greece. These relationships will be examined, the lines of succession delineated and the implications of these relationships and events brought together in an effort to illustrate and perhaps explain why, eventually, the house of Brienne was able to ascend to the rule of Christ's patrimony.

The Brienne Dynasty at the Start of the Twelfth Century

In 1097, when the leaders of the First Crusade were preparing to leave for the Holy Land, not unlike many lords who were putting their affairs in order, raising money and making provisions for their return or death in the Holy Land, Walter I's successor, Erard I (1097 – 1114), enters the written record.

Erard was the second surviving son of Walter I who, fifteen years before, had incurred the wrath of the papal legate Hugh of Die and Thibaut, count of Champagne by violating the rights of the abbey of Montiérender and was excommunicated as a result. Through circumstances that remain obscure, Erard's eldest brother, Englebert III, who was by right the heir to the county, chose a monastic life and was, by the time of Walter's death c.1089, installed as a coenobite at the monastery of Molesme.¹ Walter's youngest surviving son, Miles, inherited the title 'count' and the county of Bar - sur - Seine,

¹ This charter, which mentions Englebert as being the son and heir of Walter I, is the foundation charter of the priory of Radonvilliers enacted by Walter of the Donjon of Brienne 1076 – 1082, MI, II, 80. Englebert is mentioned again in the later foundation charter of the priory of Merry as his father's witness. MI, II, 91. Given the uncertainty of dates, it is difficult to deduce with surety that Englebert was moved to take the cloth by the excommunication visited upon his family. He may have had monastic inclinations as a child. Cf. CACB, 12: CACB, 17: *Gallia Christ* IV, 562. For a study on the nobility's relationship with the church, cf. C. B. Bouchard, *"Strong of Body, Brave and Noble": Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 147 - 71.

which effectively positioned the Brienne as the heads of two substantial counties within the region of Champagne.²

In the previous chapter, it was noted that Erard's taking of the cross may have been influenced by experiences in his childhood, more exactly, the excommunication pronounced against his father, yet there were undoubtedly other perhaps more immediate factors. By this time, following the example of his father, Erard too had been found guilty of violating the rights of Montier  nder. He may have journeyed to the Holy Land to make good his misdeeds against the abbey.³

*Mortuo itaque patre meo, et eodem comite Gualtero, Airardus filius eius quod instituerat pater meus dirupit, res eiusdem æcclesiæ cepit diripere, uillas incendere, et patre deterior a quibus pater meus patrem illius cessare coegerat ab hominibus sanctorum omnia exigebat. Monachi ergo cum abbate suo Nochero malitiam eius non ferentes me adierunt, et ut desolationi æcclesiæ subuenirem satis humiliter orauerunt. Ego comitem Breonensem ut ab iniusta exactione cessaret ammonui, recusantem uero bellis et obsidionibus constrictum cessare coegi, et quicquid a patribus nostris super hac re institutum fuerat cum iuramento tenere feci, sicque pacem æcclesiæ reddidi.*⁴

Given the general fervour for crusade which swept France, it is also likely that he was caught up in the religiosity of the time and desired to take part in a spiritually beneficial act, aware that a successful crusade could clear his conscience and enhance his standing further. As Riley - Smith has shown, this was a course of action followed by a number of French nobles who had committed such misdeeds.⁵

Marriage Alliance and Children

In 1108, Erard married Alice of Montdidier, daughter of Andrew, lord of Ramerupt and Arcis - sur - Aube.⁶ Alice was also the niece of Ebles II, count of Roucy who came to be one of the most

² DHC, I, 109.

³ Mt, 134.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 82 - 3.

⁶ *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis*, MGH XIII, 254.

prominent figures in the region.⁷ Alice's family had been involved in the Holy Wars against the Moors in Spain and as Riley - Smith has shown that women could transmit the crusading impulse; Erard's relationship with his wife seems an early example of such a connection.⁸ Alice's uncle, Ebles, had participated in the wars against the Muslims in Spain; her aunt, Felicia, had married the king of Aragon (and was the mother of three future kings of that region) and her first cousin, Rotrou, would later journey to Spain to fight for his cousin, Alphonso the Battler, king of Aragon (1105 - 1134).⁹ It was through this advantageous match that Erard was able to claim kinship to some of the most distinguished kings and holy warriors of the age. Moreover, this holy warrior ethos fostered within the Ramerupt family early on would manifest itself in the children of this marriage, as it would several other notable First Crusaders whose ancestors had also participated in the conflict in Spain.

The House of Ramerupt - Roucy

The house of Ramerupt - Roucy had been one of the most illustrious families in northern France. The origins of the lineage date from the early tenth century and it would continue to be of importance for the next two centuries.¹⁰ Alice was the great - great - great granddaughter of Ebles I (997 - 1023?) who was of Ottonian stock and Beatrice of Hainault, the granddaughter of Hugh Capet and Adélaïde of Poitiers.¹¹

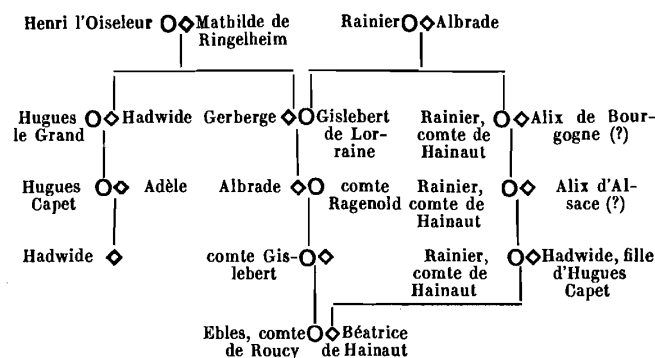
⁷ Of Andrew, lord of Ramerupt, Jubainville noted that he stood as witness to a charter issued by Hugh, count of Champagne after the year 1100 [M.H. d'Arbois Jubainville, 'Les Premiers Seigneurs de Ramerupt', in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de Chartes*, 1860 - 1861. p. 444 and HCC, I, 508]. Andrew also participated in the council of Troyes in 1104. Cf. *Gallia Christ*, XII, 256.

⁸ Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 97 - 100.

⁹ OV, VI, 394 - 6: 401.

¹⁰ With the death of Ebles II c.1103, the main branch of the house of Roucy ceased to be dominant figures in the politics of the kingdom of France. Although the eldest heir of the main branch of the house of Ramerupt - Roucy, Hugh Cholet, would make an advantageous second marriage to the daughter of the founder of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, his descendants would not go on to achieve the same prominence as their grandfather, Ebles of Roucy. Indeed, their son, Guiscard, named after his matrilineal grandfather, appears to have confined his activities to the county of Roucy. However, his sister, Mabile, would go on to marry into the nobility of the Holy Land.

¹¹ Regarding Ebles's illustrious ancestry, in his work, 'Les Généalogies entre l'histoire et la politique: La fierté d'être Capétien, en France, au Moyen Age', B. Guenée delineates the lineage of the family Roucy. Of Ebles, he remarked: *Ebles n'était pas un petit personnage. Il avait du sang ottonien dans les veines. Le comte Renaud, son grand - père, constructeur du château de Roucy, avait épousé, peu avant 950, Albrade, fille de Gislebert, duc de Lorraine, et de Gerberge, fille d'Henry I l'Oiseleur. La soeur de Gerberge, Hauvide, avait épousé Hugues le Grand. Gerberge elle - même, veuve de Gislebert, avait épousé Louis IV d'Outre - Mer. Si bien que le comte Renaud était, par alliance, le petit - fils d'Henry I, le neveu d'Otton I, le neveu d'Hugues le Grand, et le beau - fils de Louis IV d'Outre - Mer* [B. Guenée, 'Les Généalogies Entre l'Histoire et la Politique: La Fierté d'Etre Capétien, en France, au Moyen Age' in *Annales economies, societes, civilisations* 33 (1978), 450 - 77, p. 453]. Concerning Beatrice's lineage, in his work on the origins of the house of Roucy, Moranvillé noted, *Elle était*



Ebles I, count of Roucy and Beatrice of Hainault (taken from Moranvillé, *Origine de la maison de Roucy*, p.38)

Ebles and Beatrice had two children, Adela and Havide.¹² Adela was likely the eldest child, as she inherited the county of Roucy and she transferred this title to her husband, Hilduin III.¹³ It is from this union that Alice's father, Andrew of Ramerupt and her uncle, Ebles II of Roucy were born.¹⁴ After Ebles I's death or their separation,¹⁵ Beatrice was wed to Manasses Calva Asina, *vidame* of Rheims,

*fille de Rainier V, comte de Hainaut, vainqueur avec son frère Lambert, comte de Louvain, au combat de Péronnes - lez - Binche (15 mars 973), mentionné plus haut à la fin de la notice relative au comte Ragenold. Rainier V [Rainier, son grand - père, était frère de Gislebert de Lorraine] était petit - neveu de Gislebert de Lorraine et de Gerberge, arrière - grands - parents d'Ebles: lui - même avait épousé Hadwide, fille de Hughes Capet, et d'autre part Hugues Capet était fils d'une soeur de gerberge: en sorte qu'Hadwide était fils d'une soeur de Gerberge: en sorte qu'Hadwide était cousine issue de germain du comte Gislebert, père d'Ebles [H. Moranvillé, 'Origine de la maison de Roucy', in *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 83 (1922), 12 - 42. p. 38]. Hadevidis, comitissa Hainonensium, soror roberti Regis, peperit Beatricem quam duxit Ebalus de Roceo, cujus frater fuit Letaldus de Malla et soror Iveta, comitissa de Rottest [Genealogia regum Francorum tertiae stockis in RHGF, XIV, 3].*

¹² These are the first names of their maternal grandmother and great - grandmother. Moranvillé, 'Roucy', p. 39: *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 4: Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 783: Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452.

¹³ Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452. Of Hilduin's lineage, Guenée remarked: *Celui - ci était un plus modest personnage que les Roucy. Hilduin I probablement issu de la famille comtale de Montdidier, avait épousé la comtesse d'Arcis - Ramerupt et il était allé mourir en Palestin à la fin du X siècle. Son fils Hilduin II, comte d'Arcis - Ramerupt après lui, avait passé sa vie à l'ombre d'Odo, comte de Blois. C'est le fils de celui - ci, Hilduin III, qui épousa Adèle de Roucy* [Guenée, 'Les Généalogies', p. 454]. Cf. H. Moranvillé, 'Origine de la Maison de Ramerupt - Roucy', in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* 83 (1925), 168 - 84.

¹⁴ Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452.

¹⁵ In the *Archives Legislatives de la Ville de Rheims*, the date of his death is listed as being 11 May 1103. *Archives Legislatives de la Ville de Rheims*, ed. by P. Varin (Paris, 1840), 2nd part: *Statuts*, I, 116: *Gallia Christ*, IX, 64. Moranvillé does not believe that Ebles I, count of Roucy was the archbishop of Rheims. He noted that some believe that Ebles separated from his wife, Beatrice, in order to become archbishop in consequence to a statement made by Alberic of Trois - Fontaines in the year 1023 following the death of Arnoul, archbishop of Rheims: *Succedit ei archiepiscopus Ebalus annis 12, qui fuit comes de Roseio [De Roicio in RHGF, X, 288], qui comitatum Remensem per industriam suam, sicut de eo vulgatum est, adquisivit*. And later, Alberic noted, *De quo supra notavimus quod a comite Odone comitatum Remensem adquisivit* [Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 784]. Moranvillé then sets out to discredit Alberic of Trois Fontaines's statement by pointing out that he was in fact writing during the second quarter of the thirteenth century and that he perhaps styled the archbishop as 'Count of Roucy'. Moranvillé goes on to state that in the history of the church of Rheims, the 6th of

vidame being a class of temporal rulers who represented the bishops.¹⁶ From him, she had a son, Manasses, the cousin of Alice of Ramerupt and archbishop of Rheims who in 1098 - 9 corresponded with several First Crusaders during the course of the campaign.¹⁷

These relationships are of great importance to this study of the Brienne, due in no small part to the fact that it was through Alice of Montdidier that the family could later claim some kinship to the powerful and influential archbishop of Rheims, the Capetian kings of France, and the houses of Aquitaine and later Antioch, respectively.¹⁸ In another advantageous marriage, Alice's uncle, Ebles, wed Sibylla of Apulia in 1089. She was the daughter of Duke Robert Guiscard, the great Norman warrior who had conquered Sicily, and sister of Bohemond of Taranto, arguably the foremost military leader of the First Crusade.¹⁹ Other illustrious additions to this lineage were Andrew and Ebles II's sisters: Felicity, queen of Aragon,²⁰ (whose sons would succeed their half - brother Pedro to the throne of Aragon and subsequently draw on familial support from France to aid them in their wars against the Muslims in Spain) and Beatrice of Perche whose son, Rotrou, soon to be discussed, was one of the most celebrated knights of his age.²¹

the calendar of August noted: *Odo Fortis frater domini Ebali archiepiscopi* [Archives Legislatives de la Ville de Rheims, *Statuts*, I, 90, note, col. I, in fine]. Moranvillé believes that there was never an Odo Fortis in the house of Roucy [Moranvillé, 'Roucy', pp. 39 - 40]. Conversely, using the aforementioned quotes from Alberic of Trois Fontaines, Michel Bur is convinced that Ebles, archbishop of Rheims and Ebles I, count of Roucy were the same person. He further suggests that Ebles I, count of Roucy was separated from his wife, Beatrice due to consanguinity and once separated, he became archbishop of Rheims and entrusted the castle of Roucy and his daughters to his brother, Odo, until the daughters had reached their majority [Bur, *Champagne*, p. 161].

¹⁶ *Item supradicta Beatrix, comitissa de roceio, de secundo marito filium habuit Manassem, archiepiscopum postmodum Remensem, de quo evidentius suo loco declarabimus* [Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452]. Moranvillé noted that 'Calva Asina' was a sobriquet [Moranville, 'Ramerupt - Roucy', p. 168]. Adela had three children of this union, the above mentioned Manasses who was archbishop of Rheims from 1096 - 1106, Guy of Neufchâtel and Adèle who became an abbess. Cf. *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 4.

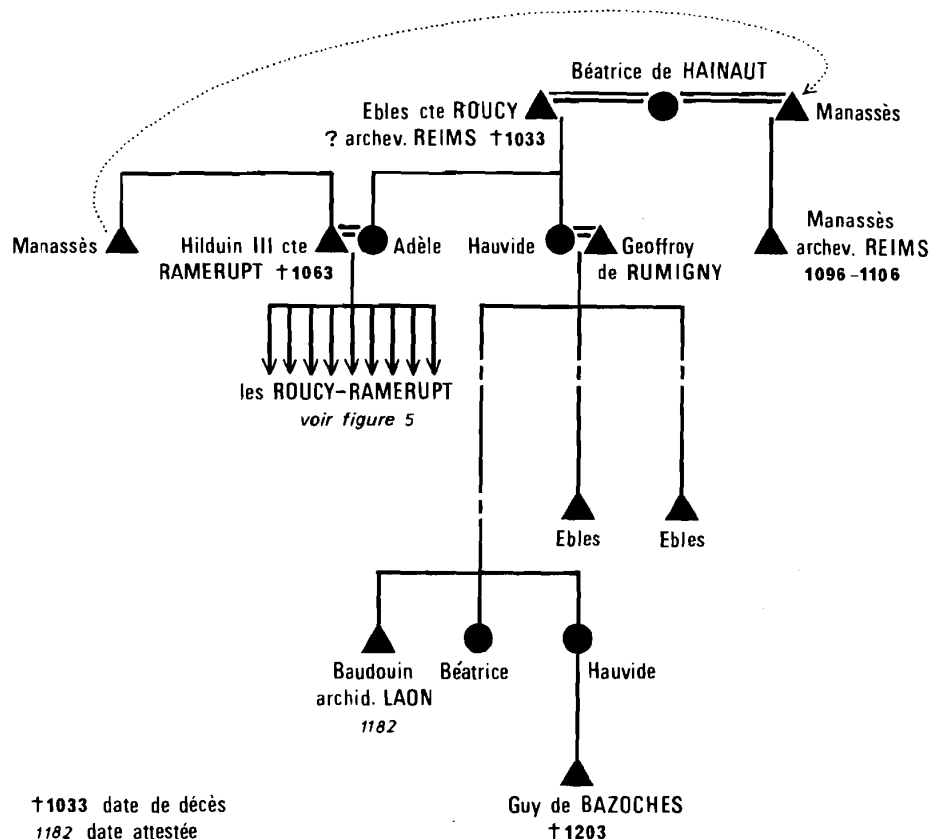
¹⁷ *Defuncto Ebalo de Roceio, prædicti Ebali uxorem dictam Beatricem, socrum videlicet suam, dedit Manasæ fratri suo uxorem...*[*Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis*, in RHGF, XIV, 5]. *Item supradicta Beatrix, comitissa de Roceio, de secundo marito filium habuit Manassem, archiepiscopum postmodum Remensem* [Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 783]. Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 72 - 3. For letters between crusaders and Manasses, cf. H. Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088 - 1100* (Innsbruck, 1901), pp. 144 - 6: 157 - 60; Peters, *The First Crusade*, pp. 293 - 97.

¹⁸ See the section on Felicia of Roucy, queen of Aragon in this thesis, p.65.

¹⁹ WAP, IV, 8 - 15, 204: Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (New York, 2003), pp. 42 - 3: ES, III, 677.

²⁰ Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452.

²¹ *Secunda soror Beatrix nomine Rotroldo comiti de Pertico...*[Longnon, *Documents*, I, 452].



The descendants of Ebles I, count of Roucy and Beatrice of Hainault. (Taken from Guenée, *Généalogies*, p. 472)

In order to assess the importance of these relationships and the influence they may have had on Erard's decision to take the cross, the Reconquest of Spain and the kingdom of Aragon must be examined.

Holy Warriors: Ethos and Influence Within the Brienne and Other Crusade Dynasties

At the time of this study, O'Callaghan had produced the most recent monograph on the holy wars of Spain, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (2003), a suggestive title that flies in the face of the most popular current crusade theories.²² Perhaps no other study disputes O'Callaghan's claim that the holy wars in Spain were in fact crusades more than Bull's *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade* (1993).²³

The classification of the holy wars in Spain is outside the scope of this study. Although Bull's work is contentious, the disagreement lies not with his refusal to classify the holy wars in Spain as

²² J.F. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, 2003).

²³ M.G. Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade c.970 – 1130* (Oxford, 1993).

crusades, but rather his reluctance to acknowledge the full importance of the influence that the French who participated in the holy wars in Spain had on the First Crusaders, many whom were direct descendants of those who participate in the Reconquest.²⁴ Contrary to Bull's argument, namely that the influence of these proto - crusaders on the first crusades was minimal at best, in fact, the holy warrior *ethos* and traditions established by those French nobles who fought in Spain contributed to the ongoing crusading commitment in these lineages.

The Reconquest of Spain

The Spanish frontier had been resisting the advancement of the Saracen Moors of Africa long before the start of the First Crusade. Indeed, O'Callaghan noted that by the onset of the First Crusade, the struggle between Christians and Muslims in Spain had been in progress for nearly four hundred years.²⁵

In 1063, the reconquest of Spain captured the interest of Pope Alexander II (1062 - 73). Flori stated 'La reconquista, dès lors, va prendre sa place dans une nouvelle perspective globale de reconquête chrétienne, avec un appui de plus en plus marquée de la papauté'.²⁶ As suggested by a letter addressed to the clerus Vulturensis, Alexander encouraged French knights to take up arms and aid their fellow Christians in the Spanish kingdoms.²⁷ Both Bull and O'Callaghan agree that the pope offered these knights a limited remission of sins and relief from penance.²⁸ This is the first time that indulgences had been granted to Christian knights for the purposes of taking up arms against an enemy and because Ebles II fought under the protection and with the righteous justification of the papacy, he is the first holy warrior from the Brienne dynasty.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 86 - 96.

²⁵ O'Callaghan, *Reconquest*, p. 1.

²⁶ J. Flori, *La Guerre Sainte: La Formation de l'Idée de Croisade dans l'Occident Chrétien* (Paris, 2001), p. 277.

²⁷ *Epistolae Pontificum Romanorum Ineditae*, ed. S. Lowenfeld (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 43, 82.

²⁸ Bull, *Knightly Piety*, p. 73; O'Callaghan, *Reconquest*, p. 24. In truth, these historians differ only on their understanding of the pope's intent and motives, which may or may not have anticipated the First Crusade. See both works for the arguments in full.

Ebles II of Roucy (1063 – 1103)

Ebles II, count of Roucy was a dynamic figure. William of Apulia remarked ‘Ebalus hic dictus, subcombere nescius hosti, beligeras acies ad proelia ducere doctus et facundus erat, linguaque manuque vigebat’.²⁹ Ebles is described by Suger in his work, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, as a powerful and turbulent baron who during the last years of his life (c. 1102 - 1103), along with his eldest son, Guiscard, attacked and robbed of their possessions both the church of Rheims and its dependants.³⁰ Suger also remarked that it was Ebles’s arrogance that had incited him to set out years before for Spain with an army fit for a king.³¹

Suger’s antagonism, which is laced throughout the narrative, makes it difficult to truly ascertain Ebles’s motives for involving himself in Spain. And although the very nature of the campaign in Spain would lead one to the obvious suggestion that Ebles pledged himself for religious reasons, it is a matter of historical fact that he pillaged the church of Rheims; manifestly, he was not a consistently pious man. Ebles’s motives in undertaking the Spanish campaign in 1073 were directly attributed to the provisions made for him by Popes Alexander II and Gregory VII, provisions which smoothed the way for a successful campaign in a country of cultural and material wealth. Whilst Ebles’s character remains to question, it is without doubt that he was a proven military leader.³² As demonstrated in the letter below addressed to his papal legates in France; cardinal - bishop Gerald of Ostia and the subdeacon, Rainbald, at the onset of his participation in the Spanish campaign, Pope Gregory VII held Ebles in some regard:

Besides these things, you should remember that in the letter of our lord Alexander of blessed memory and also in our own legislation, you were besought and urged to be zealous in gaining support for the enterprises of Count Ebolus of Roucy through yourself and through the above - named abbot; with knowledge of the treaty which he made with us about the land of Spain in the charter that we gave to him, in concert with the abbot’s advice you were to arrange for such

²⁹ Guillaume de Pouille, *Geste*, pp. 204 - 5.

³⁰ Suger, *Vita*, pp. 251 - 7.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *The Register of Pope Gregory VII 1073 - 1085*, ed. H.E.J. Cowdrey (Oxford, 2002), pp. 5 - 7.

persons to be sent to that land as would both know in spiritual matters how to correct the error of the Christians who are to be found there and also be competent to attend to the interests of St Peter according to the tenor of the treaty, if all should go well.³³

This correspondence from the register of Gregory VII, controversially dated 1073,³⁴ brings back the question of Ebles's character and his motives in Spain. That he was once the agent of the pope there may seem anomalous given his future transgressions against the church of Rheims, moreover, for several years beforehand, accompanied by a band of knights, Ebles had terrorised the Île de France. The bounty he acquired from his exploits in France at the expense of the king served only to make him greedy for more. Suger remarked that he pursued 'every wickedness'.³⁵ Whilst Ebles's offences against the church of Rheims are undeniable, whether or not he was acting alone and in his own interests or those of another are not as clear. In a letter dated 22 August 1078 to the papal legates, Bishop Hugh of Die and Abbot Hugh of Cluny, Gregory VII wrote:

Now concerning Manasses, about whom he [the bishop of Amiens] likewise complains, who does not cease to vex him and his church with the shelter and help of Ebolus and his men, do you take steps that he should return to peaceful ways and refrain from harassment of the church and persecution of the archbishop.³⁶

Evidently from this correspondence, Ebles and his men had been receiving shelter and provisions from Manasses and in consequence of harbouring the count of Roucy, Manasses had run foul of the bishop of Amiens. Indeed, it is possible that Ebles extended his unwelcome attention not only to the church of Rheims but also the lands of the bishop of Amiens and those within his diocese. Two years later, in another letter from the pope, it becomes evident that Ebles carried out these deeds against the church of Rheims and its archbishop at the behest of the papal see. In a letter dated 27 December 1080

³³ Translation taken from Cowdrey, *Register*, p. 6.

³⁴ There is some debate over the dating of this letter. Cf. Bull, *Knightly Piety*, pp. 70 - 5 and O'Callaghan, *Reconquest*, pp. 23 - 6 for the arguments in full.

³⁵ Suger, *Vita*, pp. 26 - 7.

³⁶ *Das Register Gregors VII*, in MGH Epistolae II, 395. Cowdrey, *Register*, p. 278 According to Bur, Hugh pronounced judgment against Manasses on 29 September. He continues, *Manassès ayant dédaigné cette chance de salut, le pape confirma la sentence le 27 décembre et, dans une lettre au comte Ebles de Roucy, invita le clergé et le peuple de Rheims à se choisir un nouveau pasteur* [Bur, *Champagne*, p. 222]. Rpr, 5193 (3914): Rpr, 5194 (3915).

from the pope's register to the count of Roucy, cited in full below, the pope makes clear his intention for Ebles to withdraw support of Manasses:

As your [Ebles'] wisdom can remember, against the will of yourself and of religious men who know him, we have for a long time turned a blind eye to Manasses, the so - called archbishop of Rheims, and thinking that he was taking heed for his own amendment, we have indeed for long borne with him. In truth, having abused our patience and, as it clearly appears, by reason of a bad conscience having fallen into the depth of despair, not only has he shown himself ungrateful for the mildness extended to him but also on top of this he has made himself undeserving of the mercy of St Peter, in that we deferred for a time the sentence of deposition of our vicar Hugh, bishop of Die, as passed and approved in the council of Lyon, but thereafter we adjudge it to be confirmed and ratified in perpetuity and he himself to be deposed without hope of restoration. Wherefore, in announcing to your Excellency that he has by an irrevocable judgment been deprived of the rule of his Episcopal see, we urge and on behalf of Peter command that from now on you withdraw yourself from his pestiferous friendship and that you teach others whom you are able to keep themselves from him. Now in order that you may duly be able more amply to hope for the favour of God and of blessed Peter, let the ardour of your diligence not be wanting in resisting according to your might the aforesaid deposed man as well through yourself as through whomever you are able, and by all means to assist the archbishop whom by wiser counsel the better part of the clergy shall elect for this see with the consent of our aforesaid legate, that is, Hugh, the bishop of Die. In this matter, therefore, you should clearly show yourself to be as devoted and serviceable to apostolic directions as you would wish your own faithful followers you would not suffer default of service to you in major matters to go unpunished, so from respect for blessed Peter, to whom belongs the cause of the whole church, you should go pursue the matter with your whole heart that you may deserve by debt to have him both here as a protector and hereafter as a patron.³⁷

³⁷ Translation from Cowdrey, *Register*, pp. 383 - 84. *Gregorii VII Registrum*, MGH Legum II, 539 - 40.

This letter reflects a trend begun by Alexander to encourage the use of arms to further papal interests. A startling and disconcerting change from the early message of the Catholic Church, but a very real trend in the late eleventh century as evidenced by the text above.

‘A hundred complaints’, Suger quantifies, had been lodged against Ebles before King Philip of France was moved to action. The king assembled a purported seven hundred brave and powerful knights selected from the nobility of the Île de France to set off in pursuit of the roguish count.³⁸ Whilst there is little doubt that medieval chronicles cannot be relied upon to provide accurate numbers when assessing armies or gatherings, seven hundred knights, even when taking into consideration the margin of error, remains a very large number of men to pit against one rebellious count. Perhaps this is indicative of the measure of power Ebles wielded in the Île de France, for Suger noted that it took the king two months before he brought the count to heel.³⁹ Whilst Suger expressed his exasperation at Ebles’s perceived transgressions against the church, historiography allows for an alternative interpretation, that of the reluctant advocate of papal reform.

Unfortunately, the course of Ebles’s campaign in Spain in 1073 is unknown, but shortly after his return from the peninsula, he was dispatched to Italy, likely by the pope.⁴⁰ Whilst in Italy, in 1082, Ebles married the daughter of his enemy, Robert Guiscard.⁴¹ This union is striking in that one must consider the circumstances by which Robert Guiscard, who himself displayed such intransigence towards the papacy and was so bold as to rebel against papal reform under threat of excommunication, would allow for a union between his daughter and Ebles of Roucy, who had proven himself both duplicitous and an agent of the pope when necessary.

³⁸ *Et modo apud filium bis aut ter lugubri querela deposita* [Suger, *Vita*, pp. 26 - 7].

³⁹ *Remis festinate, pene per duos menses multo conflictu praeteritas punit ecclesiarum molestias...*[ibid.].

⁴⁰ Stalls’ work on the campaigns of the kings of Aragon make no direct mention of Ebles, saying simply that his sister’s marriage to Sancho brought several relatives to the region. C. Stalls, *Possessing the Land: Aragon’s Expansion into Islam’s Ebro Frontier under Alfonso the Battler, 1104 – 34* (Leiden, 1995), p. 21. cf. ES, III, 677.

⁴¹ *Arnulfus comes Chisniaci et uxor ejus Adala de Roceo quedam [bona] contulerunt ecclesiis. Fuit etiam idem Arnulfus comes de Givel et de Warc, et ejus uxor Adala soror fuit comitis Ebali de Rocio et uxor ejusdem Ebali dicta est Sybilla* [Longnon, *Documents*, I, 453]. WAP, IV, 8 - 15, 204: *La seconde épousa un fameux comte français, d’une famille illustre, nommé Ebles: incapable de céder à l’ennemi, il était habile à mener les armées au combat, et éloquent: il maniait la parole aussi bien que les armes* [Alexiad I, VII, 46 - 7].

Given the timing of Ebles and Sybilla's marriage, purported to have taken place in 1082, the explanation may lie in the reconciliation between Ebles and the pope on the matter of Manasses, which had taken place in 1080. Ebles's participation in the reforms taking place in Italy was not noted by Cowdrey in either of his works on Pope Gregory VII; in fact, Ebles' presence in Italy is not remarked upon at all. But, primary sources attest to Ebles' marriage to the daughter of Robert Guiscard and neither Robert Guiscard nor his heir were in France at this time, which further supports the suggestion that Ebles of Roucy was active in Italy when he married Robert's daughter, Sybilla. Perhaps Robert Guiscard, if he had not directly sought this union, demurred to the suggestion of a union of diplomacy between his daughter and Ebles II of Roucy.⁴² Or, perhaps more boldly, Ebles may be placed fighting alongside Robert Guiscard before the gates of Durrazo.

This is not an implausible suggestion. In June 1080, Robert Guiscard met with Gregory VII on the border between the principality of Capua and the Roman Campagna to seal a truce in which Robert was freed from excommunication. Indeed, Guiscard swore fealty to the papacy and was re-invested with his lands.⁴³ He had, in effect, done as Ebles of Roucy himself had done when it suited his purposes Guiscard had provisionally become Gregory VII's man at this time of conquest against Byzantium.

The concurrence of papal and Norman interest was short-lived, however, when Alexius Comnenus seized the Byzantine throne. Robert Guiscard saw an opportunity to further his interest and he invaded Byzantium and defeated Alexius at the battle of Durrazo (1081). Because the city fell, with some importance to this argument, on 21 February 1082, the supposed year of Ebles's marriage, Ebles may have been fighting in Italy at this time, perhaps even at Durrazo.⁴⁴

Surprisingly, in 1096, when others, such as his niece's husband, Erard of Brienne, and his nephew, Rotrou of Perche, were making arrangements to embark upon crusade, Ebles did not take up the cross. Given his career in distant lands, it would be logical to assume that this aging knight was no longer willing or able to journey so far from home. That is not to say that he retired and resigned himself to dotage. In 1103, Ebles was to be found at the side of his brother, Andrew of Ramerupt, as part of a

⁴² Bur, *Champagne*, p. 253.

⁴³ G.A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard* (Harlow, 2000), p. 218.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 218.

coalition that joined forces with Enguerrand of Coucy to lay siege to the castle of the latter's son, Thomas of Marle.⁴⁵

Ebles disappears from written record around this time. It is likely that his death occurred either in 1103 or shortly thereafter.

Establishing Key Familial Connections

At this time, a number of other important familial connections were made by the Brienne. Ebles II and Sybilla of Apulia's eldest son, Hugh Cholet, count of Roucy, lord of Nizy - Le - Comte and of Seigny, also elevated the lineage of the Brienne. After 1117, he took as his second wife Richilde (Ricantia) of Swabia (Staufer), daughter of Fredrick I, first duke of Swabia and founder of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. She was also the sister of the future king of Germany, Conrad III (1138 - 53), half - sister of the renowned chronicler, Otto of Freising, and the aunt of Frederick Barbarossa.⁴⁶

The Roucy line continued through Hugh Cholet and in consequence, the county was lost to the Brienne. It is through this line that the Brienne were distant relatives of the Hohenstaufen Holy Roman Emperors. Although a direct blood link to the Hohenstaufen dynasty has not been determined, Alice's cousins were directly related to the future emperors, Erard was linked to the emperors through his marriage and his children with Alice of Ramerupt were distant blood relatives of the Hohenstaufen.

Connections were also made with the Le Puiset family. Mabile, the daughter of Ebles II of Roucy and Sybilla of Apulia, married Hugh II lord of Puiset, count of Jaffa who died in 1112.⁴⁷ Hugh II was

⁴⁵ D.J.A. Luchaire, *Louis VI le Gros, Annales de sa Vie et de son Regne* (Paris, 1890), n°26. Suger noted that Thomas of Marle was a despicable character and in this instance, he speaks favourably of Ebles and his companions. King Louis VI of France defeated the castle and forced the errant knights to submit to him [Suger, *Vita*, pp. 30 - 1].

⁴⁶ According to Bur, *Aux dires de Alberic de Troisfontaines, Hugues Cholet, fils d'Ebles et de Sibylle de pouille, aurait épousé Richilde de Souabe, soeur de Conrad III et tante de Barberousse* [Bur, *Champagne*, p. 412]. Longnon, *Documents*, I, 455. Cf. Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 823.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Hallam noted that Hugh posed a threat to the stability of King Louis VI's realm. He terrorised the area of the Beauce and around Chartres. In 1111 the king was holding court at Melun when Thibaut, count of Blois, the archbishop of Sens, the bishops of Chartres and Orléans and various abbots laid such strong charges against him that the king ordered him to appear before the royal court. Hugh refused to do so, and the king declared his lands forfeit, besieged and took Le Puiset and captured Hugh. But, again mistakenly, he released him in 1112 and Hugh began to terrorise the area. He soon joined the ranks of men being recruited by Bohemond for the Holy Land [Hallam, *Capetian France*, p. 151]. Cf. WT, II, 651 and *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 6. Hugh I of Jaffa (II of Puiset) was the son of Hugh I 'Blavons' and Alice de Montlhéry, in 1106, he was one of several French nobles who was recruited by Bohemond of Taranto

one of numerous nobles who joined the crusaders when Bohemond I of Antioch was recruiting in France in 1106.⁴⁸ William of Tyre noted that it was in Apulia that Mabile gave birth to their son, the future Hugh II lord of Jaffa. The same Hugh II of Jaffa who would go on to rebel against Fulk, king of Jerusalem and erstwhile count of Anjou.⁴⁹

Hugh was the third cousin of Alice, the wife of Erard I, and the second cousin of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem through his grandmother, Alice of Montlhéry, who had been the sister of King Baldwin II's mother, Melisende.⁵⁰ Although this does not establish a blood connection to the Montlhéry, the existence of a common ancestor is another link to the Holy Land.

In the foundation charter of the Abbey - sous - Plancy, Walter I, count of Brienne served as lord of the goods of one 'Gililde' of Plancy, who was his daughter. Indeed, in another charter of the *Cartularies of Molesme*, his son, Erard I, count of Brienne, confirmed a gift made to the abbey with the approval of his two sisters, one of which was likely Gililde of Plancy.⁵¹

Gilide took for her first husband Ascelin of Chappes, lord of a small village located 20km south of Troyes.⁵² Gilide's son from this first marriage, Walter, would go on to become lord of Chappes upon his father's death.⁵³ Walter married Flandine, a woman of unknown origin, and their son, Clarembaud

to join his crusading army. Cf. OV, VI, 100. He was accompanied by Mabile when he journeyed to Apulia and he was one of the commanders of the crusader army in the invasion of Greece, where he distinguished himself in battle. He then went on to Byzantium and from there he departed for the Holy Land. Cf. *Narratio Floriacensis* in RHC, *Historiens Occidentaux*, V, 361.

⁴⁸ La Monte, 'Le Puiset', p. 104.

⁴⁹ WT, II, 651. Mabile remained in the Holy Land after the death of her husband and by King Fulk's design, she married Albert of Namur, count of Jaffa who was killed in 1122.⁴⁹ Albert of Namur held Jaffa until his death with his wife following him to the grave shortly thereafter. Upon their demise, their son, Hugh II came from Apulia to Jaffa to claim his inheritance [H.E. Mayer, 'The Origins of the County of Jaffa', in *Israel Exploration Journal* 35 (1985), p. 43: RRH, n° 36c.

⁵⁰ ES III, 660, 624 and La Monte, 'Le Puiset', pp. 3 - 4: Murray, *Crusader Kingdom*, p. 124.

⁵¹ She is unnamed in the extant charters [MI, I, 83]. Donation made by Walter I, count of Brienne of the mill of La Roche [MI, II, 117].

⁵² Gilide's husband is not named in any charter: however, Roserot is of the opinion (as am I) that perhaps as early as 1050 or even as late as 1080, Gililde married Ascelin of Chappes who was witness in 1081, with his wife and his children and in conjunction with Walter of Montigny, to the donation of the priory of Sèchefontaine which was dependant on the abbey of Molesme. *Quam donationem similiter ex sua parte fecerunt illi qui inde casati fuerant, scilicet Acelinus de Cappis et Walterius de Montiniaco, uxoris eorum hereditibusque ceteris laudantibus...* [MI, I, 138]

⁵³ The date of Ascelin's death is unknown: however, Roserot believes that Walter died around 1114 [DHC, I, 329].

I, married the daughter of a *domici* of Brienne.⁵⁴ Clarembaud and Alice, the daughter of the *domici*, had a son, Clarembaud II, who would go on to take his father's title after his death.⁵⁵

Felicia of Roucy, Queen of Aragon

Felicia of Roucy was the sister of Ebles of Roucy, Andrew of Ramerupt and Beatrice of Perche. Her marriage to the king of Aragon was likely part of the negotiations between Pope Alexander II, Ebles and King Sancho regarding Ebles's participation in the holy wars in Spain. Sancho Ramirez was the son of Ramiro I (1035 – 1063) who had been killed at the Battle of Graus in 1063.⁵⁶ Sancho's kingdom was in desperate need of outside assistance if it was to survive the constant threat of Muslims advancing from the south and his hostile noble kinsmen who ruled the neighbouring kingdoms.

It is possible that Ebles's involvement in Felicia's betrothal was minimal and she wed Sancho prior to her brother's participation in the Reconquest of 1073 and shortly after the death of his first wife, Isabel, daughter of count Ermengel of Urgel in 1068.⁵⁷ The exact date of this marriage is unknown; however, her eldest son, Fernando, had reached maturity by November of 1086 when he signed a letter of exchange with his brother, the young king Pedro, whereby he delivered his mother's bride -

⁵⁴ *D'après la Gallia Christiana, elle [Clarembaud's wife] aurait été de la maison de Brienne. Peut-être était-elle fille de Gautier du Donjon de Brienne, chevalier, et d'Adeline* [DHC, I, 329]. *Clariss admodum parentibus editum, patre Milone II Nucieriarum urbis Lingonensis dioecesis ad Serenum fluen fitae dynasta, matre Odelina Gessiae domina Clarembaldi de Cappis dioecesis Trecentensis castridomini filia ex Adelaid Briennensi, Clarembaldum Nucieriarum dynastam germanium, Guidonem Senonesem archiepiscopum patrum habuit* [Gallia Christ, XII, 297].

⁵⁵ Evergates suggests that Clarembaud II and Clarembaud III were quite possibly the same person, however, this is untrue. There was, in fact, a Clarembaud II who died of leprosy. He likely contracted the deadly disease later in life as he had a son from his wife, Mathilde, who would go on to succeed him [Evergates observed 'Clarembaud II – III (likely a single person, not two as indicated by Roserot)...'. [Evergates, *Troyes*, 169]. *Verum quia mentionem fecimus Adelelini Comitis et abbatis, sciendum quia Comites multis temporibus abbates S. Lupi fuerunt et datores praebendarum, et post Comites castellani de Capis, usque ad Clarembaudum virum Aalidis, patrem Calrembaudi leprosi* [Guitheri Abbatis S. Lupi Trecentensis Memorialis Libellus in RHGF, XIV, 491E]. This son, Clarembaud III, would marry Ermenjart, daughter of Milo I, lord of Monthléry, yet another Brienne relation to marry into the house of Monthléry. Their son, Clarembaud IV would take part in the Third Crusade and his grandson, Clarembaud V would participate in the Fourth Crusade. Gilidie was also the mother of Hugh I, lord and founder of the house of Plancy, and the grandmother of Miles of Plancy who would become seneschal of Jerusalem in 1169 [DHC, I, 330: Joffroi de Villehardouin, *De la Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. M. P. Paris (Paris, 1838), p. 2: translated in: Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. C. Smith (London, 2008), p. 6].

⁵⁶ J.M. Lacarra, *Vida de Alfonso el Batallador* (Zaragoza, 1971), p. 15.

⁵⁷ B.F. Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain 1031 – 1157* (Oxford, 1992), p. 107.

gift from his father, the territory of Ribagorza, to Pedro in return for goods in order that the kingdom remain united under one sovereign.⁵⁸

Felicia's sons, Alphonso 'the Battler' and Ramiro II 'the Monk' would succeed their half - brother, Pedro, to the throne of Aragon. Alphonso 'the Battler' is often considered one of the greatest kings of the Spanish Reconquest. Bisson suggests that 'his victories substantially defined the medieval realm of Aragon'.⁵⁹

Indeed, he would campaign with a fervour that impressed all of those around him and encouraged the participation of his relatives in France, most notably, his first cousin, Rotrou of Perche, the son of his mother's sister.⁶⁰ In his work, *Possessing the Land*, Stalls observed 'What was new about the French in Alfonso's Ebro conquests was the presence of northern French, especially Normans. This partly resulted from Sancho I's marriage to Felicia, daughter of Hilduin of Roucy, which would draw her relatives to the Ebro'.⁶¹

When Alphonso died childless in 1134 he bequeathed his kingdom to the Military Orders of the Holy Land.⁶² Whilst he achieved success on the battlefield, it was his brother, Ramiro, who established the continuous line of Aragonese kings throughout the twelfth and thirteenth century. In 1134, in the shadows of his brother's death, Ramiro was taken from his monastery of Saint Pons de Tomiers and placed upon the throne.⁶³ He wed Agnès, the daughter of William IX, duke of Aquitaine and it was their daughter, Petronilla, who would birth the future kings of Aragon.⁶⁴

These Aragonese kings, with their descent from the house of Aquitaine and their blood relationship to the future queen of England, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and her crusader son, Richard the Lionheart, were also the blood relatives of the Brienne crusader dynasty.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ A.U. Aieta, 'La politica matrimonial de Aragon en la segunda mitad del siglo XI' in *Coleccion Diplomatica de Pedro I de Aragon y Navarra* (Zaragoza, 1951), p. 29.

⁵⁹ T.N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Oxford, 1991), p. 16.

⁶⁰ The most recent monograph on Alphonso's military activity is Stalls, *Possessing the Land* cited in full earlier.

⁶¹ Stalls, *Possessing the Land*, p. 21: *The Chronicle of San Juan de la Pena. A Fourteenth - Century Official History of the Crown of Aragon*, trans. L. Nelson (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 112, n. 69.

⁶² *Liber Feudorum Maior: Cartulario Real que se Conserva en el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon*, ed. F. M. Rosell, 2 vols (Barcelona, 1945 - 7), I, 10 - 2, no. 6.

⁶³ AVD, II, 679.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ For a more thorough treatment of the genealogy of Felicia of Roucy's family, cf. Lacarra, *Vida de Alfonso el Batallador*.

Rotrou of Perche (II Count of Perche)

By reason of his depiction in the epic poem, *La Chanson d'Antioche*, Rotrou of Perche, the son of Beatrice of Roucy, is firmly enshrined in historiography as a knight of great courage.⁶⁶ The *Chanson d'Antioche* was one of several vernacular epics of the crusades that circulated medieval Europe in the twelfth century; indeed, the chronicle of Lambert of Ardres bears vivid testimony to its popularity, describing how knights enjoyed gathering to listen to such tales and how one's presence in such epics was so highly valued.⁶⁷

Perche was located some 150 kilometres southwest of Paris, midway between the famous cathedral city of Chartres and the city of Alençon on the southern edge of Normandy.⁶⁸ According to Thompson in her monograph on the county of Perche, the evidence for the origins of the Rotrou family is 'fragmentary and speculative'.⁶⁹ She continued, 'the family enjoyed a tradition of power in the area between the rivers Eure, Huisne and Loire that it was to exploit during the eleventh and twelfth centuries'.⁷⁰ Rotrou's father, Geoffrey II, count of Perche, vicomte of Châteaudun and count of Mortagne succeeded his grandfather, Rotrou I, to the county c. 1079.⁷¹ Rotrou II took the title after his

⁶⁶ Rotrou was married three times and had children from them all. One of his wives, Havis, daughter of Walter of Évreux, baron of Salisbury in England and sister of Patrick, count of Salisbury, was the first wife of Robert I, count of Dreux, son of King Louis VI and Adèle de Savoie and brother of Louis VII. His first wife, Mathilda, was the daughter of King Henry I of France. Cf. A. Duchesne, 'Prevues de l'histoire de la maison de Broyes et de Chateau - villain', *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Dreux et de quelques autres famille*. (Paris, 1631), pp. 15 - 6 and O. de Romanet, *Géographie du Perche et Chronologie de ses Comtes* (Mortagne, 1890 - 1902), pp. 50 - 1. Cf. R. Courtin, *Histoire du Perche* (Marseille, 1980). P. J. Odolant - Desnos, *Mémoires Historiques sur la Ville d'Alençon et sur ses Seigneurs* (Alençon, 1787), I, 294. For more on the *Chanson d'Antioche*, cf. *La chanson d'Antioche*, ed. S. Duparc - Quioc. 2 vols (Paris, 1976 - 78) and the translation *The Chanson d'Antioche : An Old French Account of the First Crusade*, trans. S. B. Edgington and C. Sweetenham (Farnham, 2011).

⁶⁷ Lambert, curé of Ardres, *Chronicon Ghisnense et Ardense (918 - 1204)*. (Paris, 1855): translated in Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, trans. Leah Shopkow. (Philadelphia, 2001)

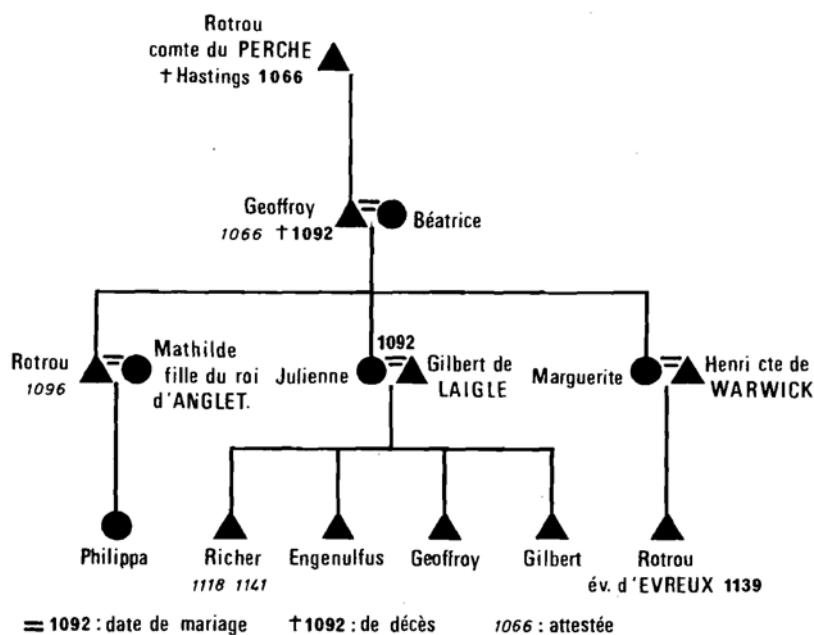
⁶⁸ K. Thompson, *Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France: The County of Perche, 1000 - 1226* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 9 - 11. In his book on the First Crusaders, Riley - Smith noted that once returned from crusade in 1107, Rotrou constructed a castle on a 'partly allodial, partly a tenancy in his lordship' estate which belonged to Hugh II of Le Puiset, the husband of his first cousin, Mabile. The castle was erected in consequence of a dispute between Rotrou and Hugh, whereby Rotrou challenged Hugh's rights over the property. It was turned over to the court of the county of Blois, Hugh lost the case but he apparently would not accept this and the disagreement became violent. The matter was transferred several times between ecclesiastical and lay courts [Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 136: Ivo of Chartes, *Epistolae*, RHGF, XV, cols. 170 - 4, 176 - 7]. Cf. *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, I. 729. For a description of Perche, see J. Goering, *The Virgin and the Grail* (New Haven, 2005), p. 149.

⁶⁹ Thompson, *Perche*, p. 32.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ AVD, II, 878 : Thompson, *Perche*, pp. 45 - 53.

father's death. As early as 1097, he had began making a name for himself as Albert of Aachen lists him amongst the knights who fought at the siege of Nicaea in mid - 1097, *Rothardus filius Gosfridi, iuuenis clarissimus*.⁷² He was one of the first knights to brave the walls of Antioch on 3 June 1098.⁷³ Three weeks later, he was a line commander at the battle of Antioch.⁷⁴



(taken from Guenée, *Généalogies*, p. 459)

Thompson remarked that 'It was however the participation of Geoffrey's son, Rotrou, in the First Crusade which established definitively the reputation of the dynasty'.⁷⁵ In her article on Rotrou of Perche, Lynn Nelson noted that 'he gained such glory through his deeds in Spain that he has become almost a national hero of the Reconquest, and at least one scholar has seen in him a prototype for the figure of the greatest champion of Christendom, Roland himself'.⁷⁶ Nelson went on to note that Rotrou featured heavily in the earliest extant Aragonese narratives as well as the work of the Anglo -

⁷² Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. S.B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007), p. 98; Thompson, *Perche*, p. 51.

⁷³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 134 - 5; *La Chanson d'Antioche*, II, 160; Thompson, *Perche*, p. 51. For more on Rotrou's crusading career, cf. K. Thompson, 'Family tradition', 1 - 33.

⁷⁴ WT, I, 330.

⁷⁵ Thompson, *Perche*, p. 50.

⁷⁶ L.H. Nelson, 'Rotrou of Perche and the Aragonese Reconquest', in *Traditio* 26 (1970), pp. 114 - 5. For examples of the admiration shown to Rotrou by Spanish historians, cf. J. R. Castro, 'La conquista de las tierras del Ebro,' *Principe de Viana* 7 (1946), p. 682. On Rotrou being fashioned after Roland, cf. P. Boissonade, *Du Nouveau sur la Chanson de Roland* (Paris, 1923), p. 321.

Norman writer Orderic Vitalis and several legal documents from Spain and France.⁷⁷ Yet, she makes no mention of Rotrou's depiction in the *Chanson d'Antioche*, which would have served to better delineate Rotrou's career as a holy warrior. Indeed, his career and reputation spanned France, Spain and the Holy Land.

Nevertheless, she convincingly argued that contrary to contemporary sources, Rotrou was not involved in the campaign in which King Alphonso the Battler gained control of the valley of the Ebro. The details of Rotrou's exploits in Spain are of no concern here, but it is important to note that Rotrou of Perche serves to add yet another stellar example of how the Holy Warrior *ethos* was manifested in the Brienne crusader dynasty. He was killed at the siege of Rouen in January 1144.⁷⁸

Related to Erard by marriage, Rotrou was presumably aware of his Brienne kinsmen at Antioch.⁷⁹ Whilst Orderic Vitalis noted that Alphonse the Battler tempted his cousin to Spain by promising generous wages to the French auxiliaries and rich estates to any who decided to remain with him, it is also true that blood ties certainly appear to have been of some significance to Rotrou.⁸⁰ Perhaps Guenée said it best when he observed '*on objectera que beaucoup d'autres seigneurs champenois ou normands allèrent batailler dans la péninsule Ibérique, mais ils y allèrent le plus souvent à la suite d'Ebles, de Rotrou et de Bertrand,*⁸¹ *et pour ceux - ci c'était une affaire de famille*'.⁸²

Rotrou's fame remains such that in 1992 he became the focus of a thesis by the Swiss scholar André de Mandach, who suggested that Rotrou was the inspiration for Chrétien de Troyes's epic romance, *Perceval*.⁸³ In sum, de Mandach's argument stems from the fact that Rotrou married Matilda, daughter of King Henry I of England, and in doing so became the brother - in - law of

⁷⁷ Nelson, 'Rotrou', p. 115. For the Aragonese narratives, cf. Nelson, *San Juan de la Pena*.

⁷⁸ Robert de Torigni, abbot of Mont - Saint - Michel, *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ed. L. Delisle (Rouen, 1872 - 3), I, 234. J. Chartrou - Charbonnel, *L'Anjou de 1109 à 1151: Foulque de Jerusalem et Geoffroi Plantagenet* (Paris, 1928), p. 64.

⁷⁹ Rotrou travelled to the Holy Land in the company of Robert Curthose, duke of Normandy, he was married to Robert's niece, the daughter of King Henry I of England.

⁸⁰ OV, VI, 396.

⁸¹ Guenée speaks of Bertrand of Laon, the grandson of Thibaut of Reynel and of Ermentrude of Roucy, the third daughter of Hilduin and Adele of Ramerupt, sister of Ebles II of Roucy and Andrew of Ramerupt. Therefore, Bertrand was the first cousin of Alice of Ramerupt and Rotrou of Perche. Cf. Guenée, 'Généalogies', p. 454.

⁸² Guenée, 'Généalogies', p. 456. Rotrou appears to have continued to been involved in disputes of the realm after his conflict with Hugh Le Puiset. Cf. *The Gesta Normanorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. and trans. E.M.C. Van Houts. 2 vols (Oxford, 1995), {GND}, II, 264.

⁸³ A. de Mandach, *Le "Roman du Graal" originaire: Sur les traces du modèle commun "en code transpyrénaïque" de Chrétien de Troyes et Wolfram von Eschenbach* (Göppingen, 1992), pp. 11 - 8: 35 - 9.

Robert, earl of Gloucester, who had commissioned copies of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth. In Rotrou, de Mandach believes he has found the link between the Aragonese/Catalonia family and the Arthurian legend.⁸⁴

Erard, Count of Brienne, First Crusader and Pilgrim

Erard's motivation for taking the cross is not recorded in the sources but, his pattern of behaviour during the final three decades of his life strongly suggest that spiritual matters were of considerable importance to him. Equally, there are indications that his financial situation was reasonably secure, a factor which may point to limited interest in monetary and territorial gain as his reasons for going to the Levant. By the end of the eleventh century he was the count of a prosperous and increasingly significant region in Champagne; the castle of Brienne guarded the road that joined the important ecclesiastical seats of Rheims and Langres. As Slack noted 'the few charters for these great men [Flanders, Brienne, Champagne] do not seem to have much to do with financial loss or gain'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the charters 'fit a long - standing pattern of patronage for a variety of religious institutions, including new ones, where the famous patron could establish a "fashion" of donation to a particular house or order'.⁸⁶ This is particularly true of the Brienne with their longstanding ties to the abbey of Montiérender, by this time the burial place of the Brienne.

That is not to say that relations between the count and the abbey were not, at times, fraught.

There is some question as to whether Erard I participated in the First Crusade. In a charter of dubious date, Roger of Montiérender reported that Erard, intent upon leaving for the Holy Land, *Qui cum iturus esset Iherosolimam*, returned the church of Ceffonds (Haute - Marne), which he held unjustly, to the abbey of Montiérender.⁸⁷ In her translation of the charters of Montiérender, Bouchard dates this charter at 1114, whilst the CACB has this charter dated at 1097.⁸⁸ The most likely date is 1097, not least because a subsequent charter of Molesme, also located in the CACB, suggests that at

⁸⁴ For the full argument, see de Mandach's work. For the county of Perche and the counts of Perche, see Thompson, *Perche*.

⁸⁵ Slack, *Crusade Charters*, p. xxix.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ Mt, 146: CACB, 21.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

least one of Erard's nobles was preparing to leave for Jerusalem in 1097. It is likely that he would have done so in the company of his liege lord.⁸⁹

In further support of the 1097 date, Erard is later found in Hugh of Champagne's company when the latter was known to be returning from the crusade in 1101.⁹⁰ Indeed, the charter in question serves as evidence that in further preparation for his departure on crusade and, as so many crusaders down the ages did, Erard chose to conclude matters in dispute. Thus, it was in 1097 that he ceded to Philip, bishop of Troyes (1083-1121), the four prebends of the church of Brienne that he had taken from him to give to Montiérender.⁹¹

As previously mentioned, it is likely that his men - at - arms prepared themselves by raising funds for the expedition with their lord's blessing as demonstrated by Erard's presence as witness to a charter in which Hugh of Merrey mortgaged his freehold land of Rosnay to the abbey of Molesme for sixteen (16) livres.⁹²

Hugh seemingly had no intention of settling in the Levant because the charter stipulated that should he or his brother return and render to the abbey sixteen (16) livres, they would be allowed to reclaim the land. Ostensibly, Hugh of Merrey intended to leave for the Holy Land in the company of Erard.⁹³

Unfortunately, beyond the preparatory measures noted above, there survives no evidence of Erard's journey to the Holy Land. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is possible that he did not make the

⁸⁹ MI, 245: CACB, 22.

⁹⁰ CACB, 23.

⁹¹ CACB, 36; *Gallia Christ*, XII, 499. A note on mistaken identity involving Erard — in Dawes's widely used translation of Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*, gives an erroneous identification of Bohemond's champion, 'Byrennius', who served as the right hand to Bohemond during the latter's wars against Byzantium, as Erard, count of Brienne. On p. 129, in FN 1, she specifically identifies 'Bryennius' as the 'count of Brienne, constable of Apulia' in the older translation, *Anna Comnena*, trans. by E.A.S. Dawes. (London, 1967). The most recent translation by Penguin does not attempt to identify Bryennius, cf. Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*. (London, 2009). This is an error on the translator's part, for Anna Comnena herself never identified 'Byrennius' as the count of Brienne and we know for certain that it was not Erard. Perhaps at the time of translation, Dawes was not aware of a charter in Scandone's *Profili* that identifies 'Byrennius' as the count of Saint Mango sul Calore. *Act of September 1112, of Orabilis.....uxor quae fuit Brenni connestabuli, domina castelli S. Magni*. (*S. Magni* = S. mango sul calore). F. Scandone, *F. Profili di Storia Feudale dei Comuni Compersi nell'Antica Contea di Avellino*. (Avenlino, 1951), p. 40, no. 1.

⁹¹ MI, II, 141. CACB, 35.

⁹² CACB, 21. MI, 245.

⁹³ *ibid.*

journey but, in conjunction with his absence from the charter evidence between 1097 and 1101, it seems highly likely that he was on the crusade.

As noted above, relations between the Brienne and Montiérender were difficult. On 3 May 1114, Hugh took steps to further reduce Erard's power over Montiérender when, following in the footsteps of his father Thibaut, he chose the interests of the abbey over those of Erard. It appears that Hugh raised an army and marched against the count of Brienne; the charter noted that Hugh had to resort to arms and by battles and sieges Erard was forced to abandon his unjust pretensions.⁹⁴

The evidence further suggests that Erard may have also journeyed to both Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostella as a pilgrim, possibly to atone for this and similar transgressions. Indeed, a charter from the abbey of Molesme indicates that Erard may have joined Count Hugh on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land c.1104 to c.1108.⁹⁵ Hugh returned to France in 1108 and whilst passing through Champagne, he halted at Châtillon - sur - Seine and renewed all past gifts and those of his house.⁹⁶ This charter reveals that Erard and his brother, Miles II of Bar - sur - Seine, were in Hugh's party although whether they had returned from the Holy Land with him or whether they met him once he reached Champagne is uncertain. The charters in the CACB might suggest that Erard did in fact travel from the Holy Land in Hugh's company as it was around the year 1108 that the count of Brienne reappears on record, having seemingly been absent since 1104.⁹⁷

It is possible that in 1119 Erard undertook a second pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the company of a Henry of Brienne.⁹⁸ Henry of Brienne remains a shadowy figure, and only one charter from the abbey

⁹⁴ Mt, 134.

⁹⁵ MI, II, 321 - 3. The language in this charter is confusing, in that reference is made to 'the latter' person, whom one could take to mean the latter named in which case that would be Hugh of Champagne as he is the last person mentioned and thus the intended pilgrim to Santiago. However, mention of the pilgrimage comes after the list of Erard's deeds and thus one may also deduce that it may have been Erard's intention to leave for Santiago. Whether or not Erard intended or ever went on pilgrimage to Santiago will thus have to remain to question.

⁹⁶ Erard and his brother are listed along with Hugo Britto and others [MI, II, 173].

⁹⁷ CACB, 26 - 7.

⁹⁸ Riley - Smith suggests that it may have been Erard's son, Walter, who possibly journeyed to Jerusalem with Henry of Brienne, but Walter did not become count until 1125 upon his father's death. Therefore, it is likely that if the count of Brienne did accompany Henry of Brienne, it was Erard and not Walter [Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 167 - 8.] RRH, p. 20. *Chartes de la Terre Sainte Provenant de l'Abbaye de Notre - Dame de Josaphat*, ed. H.F. Delaborde. *Bibliothèque des Ecoles Français d'Athènes et de Rome* (Paris, 1880), pp. 32 - 3, n. 7.

of Notre Dame de Josaphat indicates his existence. If this text is accurate then it is another early, albeit fleeting, indication of Brienne presence in the East.

The implications must be considered of the suggestion resulting from the dating of the only extant charter that specifically mention's Erard's journey to the Holy Land at 1114 and not 1097, namely that Erard of Brienne was not a First Crusader, but rather a pilgrim to the Holy Land. If this is true, what does it mean for the argument that the Brienne were a 'crusading' dynasty? There is evidence to suggest that one's status as a pilgrim was equally important as that of 'crusader'. In his work on the Second Crusade, Phillips cites a number of examples whereby nobles undertook 'fighting pilgrimages' to the Holy Land. Perhaps the most notable example is that of Charles, later Count Charles the Good of Flanders, who journeyed as a pilgrim to Jerusalem at the same time that Erard journeyed there with Hugh of Champagne, namely c.1108.⁹⁹ Phillips quotes Galbert of Bruges who remarked that Charles undertook 'a holy pilgrimage to Jerusalem...[where] he also fought strenuously against the enemies of the Christian faith'.¹⁰⁰ Other examples of nobles journeying to the Holy Land as 'fighting pilgrims' include Conrad of Staufen, later King Conrad II of Germany, in 1124 and Fulk V of Anjou in 1120.¹⁰¹ These pilgrimages were instrumental to the ability of the crusaders to maintain their hold on the Holy Land and served to remind those in the West that the commitment to the Holy Land was one that should be sustained outside of the larger, organised crusades. Moreover the fact that westerners continued to arrive in the Holy Land in waves subsequent to the First Crusade stands as testament to the equal importance of 'fighting pilgrims' and crusaders. Thus, in the event that Erard was not a First Crusader, his journeys to the Holy Land should serve as confirmation of the dynasty's commitment to the crusading cause in the Levant and that is the key point.

Erard died around 1125.¹⁰² He fell gravely ill at Avenay and asked his brother, Miles to have him buried at Montiérender and to give to the monks there the appropriate remuneration. His wishes were

⁹⁹ J.P. Phillips, *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom* (New Haven, 2007), p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Galbert of Bruges, *De Multro, Traditione et Occisione Gloriosi Karoli Comitis Flandriarum*, ed. J. Rider, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 131 (Turnhout, 1994), p. 31: translated as *The Murder of Count Charles the Good*, trans. J.B. Ross (New York, 1958), p. 113: Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 2.

¹⁰² Riley - Smith offers two charters to support the suggestion that Erard journeyed to the Holy Land as a pilgrim perhaps twice. He references two charters of Montiérender, the first discussed above is the charter controversially dated 1114, the second is a charter dated 1131, six years after the death of Erard. Therefore,

honoured and for burial rights, the abbey was given the custom of Droyes.¹⁰³ At the time of Erard's death, therefore, the Brienne dynasty had begun to increase the family's standing through marriage and crusading. An example had been set by the proto - crusader, Rotrou of Perche who may have served as the inspiration for Erard. It is a strong possibility that Erard made at least two, possibly three journeys to Jerusalem – a serious commitment to pilgrimage and to the defence of the Holy Land. The cost of such journeys, the risk to one's physical health and the dangers of leaving one's own lands were all considerable; the numbers of men (and their families) prepared to make such a profound commitment, on a repeated basis, was extremely rare. While it is unknown what Erard did in the Latin East, both Riley - Smith and Phillips have shown that it was common for pilgrims at this time to serve in the defence of the Latin territories during their stay in the Levant. The decision of Erard's Champenois overlord, Hugh I, to join the Templars in 1125 after a similar series of visits to the Levant is an example of the tie between pilgrimage and protection of the kingdom of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴ At the very least, Erard had shown himself a pious and determined man who would certainly stand as a clear exemplar to his son when the next major call to take the cross came in 1145 - 6.

neither of these charters can be used to conclusively confirm that Erard travelled to the Holy Land twice [Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 167 - 8.]

¹⁰³ MI, II, 141: CACB, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 158 - 60.

Chapter Three

The Brienne Between the Second and Third Crusades

In this chapter, as with the second, this thesis will further examine the progress of the Brienne towards the throne of Jerusalem. Familial ties to the Montferrat and the Ibelin will be established. The emergence of the Brienne in the narratives of the crusades, particularly the Third Crusade will be marked. Indeed, these next counts enable the exploration of the nature and character of the sons of Brienne who would further reinforce their family's commitment to crusading. This chapter will also witness the counts becoming more involved than ever before in the politics of the Holy Land.

The New Count of Brienne, Walter II (1125 - 1161) and his Marriage Alliances

When his father died in 1125, Walter became the count of Brienne and within a year, count of Ramerupt, the latter being a title that his father had not held during his lifetime. Walter received this matrilineal inheritance when his uncle, Ebles, the bishop of Châlons and the last male of the line of the counts of Ramerupt, died in 1126 and the two seigneuries of Arcis and Ramerupt were divided between his two sisters. Although both sisters were dead by this time, Ramerupt went to Walter II, the son of the eldest sister.¹

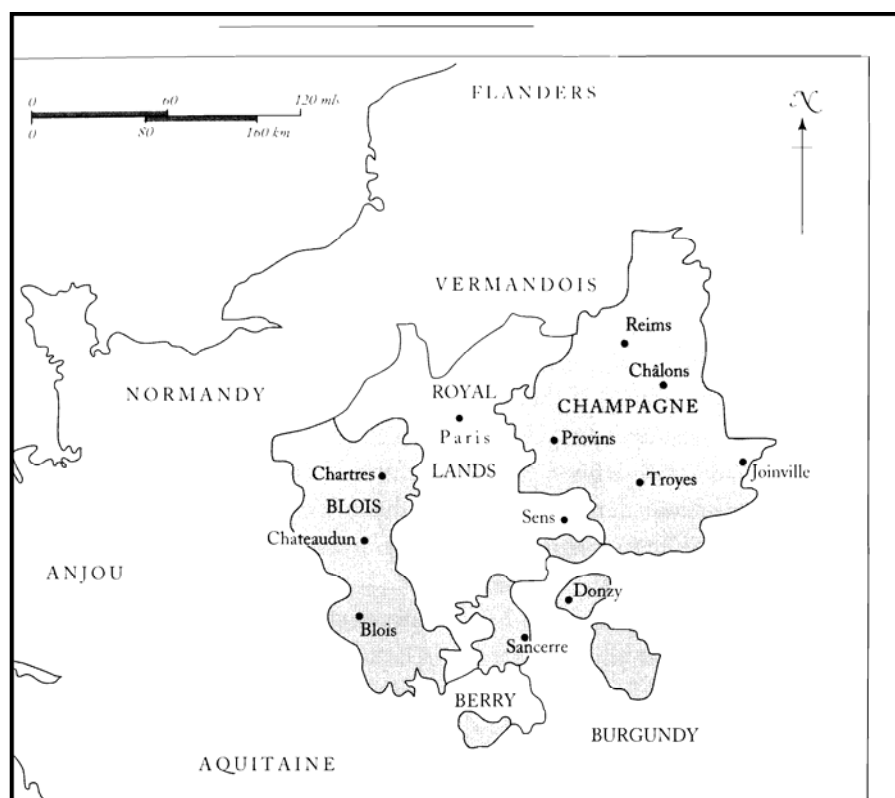
In his work, *The First Crusaders*, Jonathan Riley - Smith suggested that Walter made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, possibly in 1119 when Henry of Brienne was in Jerusalem.² This is unlikely, however, as Walter was still in his minority at the time of his father's death in 1125 and was placed under the tutelage of his uncle, Miles II, count of Bar - sur - Seine.³ Walter's only sibling of note was his sister, Felicity, who took as her second husband in 1141 Geoffrey of Joinville, seneschal of

¹ *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Montieramey*, vol. 7 in *Collection des Principaux Cartulaires du Diocèse du Troyes*, ed. C. Lalore. 7 vols (Paris, 1875), p. 26.

² Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 167 - 168 n.139. Walter's father, Erard, may have been in Jerusalem at this time, he was still alive. Cf. This thesis, p. 72.

³ *Ann Bened.*, V, 564. *Gallia Christ*, IX, 919.

Champagne, which made her the great - grandmother of that renowned chronicler of the Seventh Crusade, John of Joinville and the wife of a man who took part in the Second Crusade.⁴



Map 6: The lands of Blois - Champagne in the later twelfth century (Hallam, *Capetian France*)

The House of Baudement

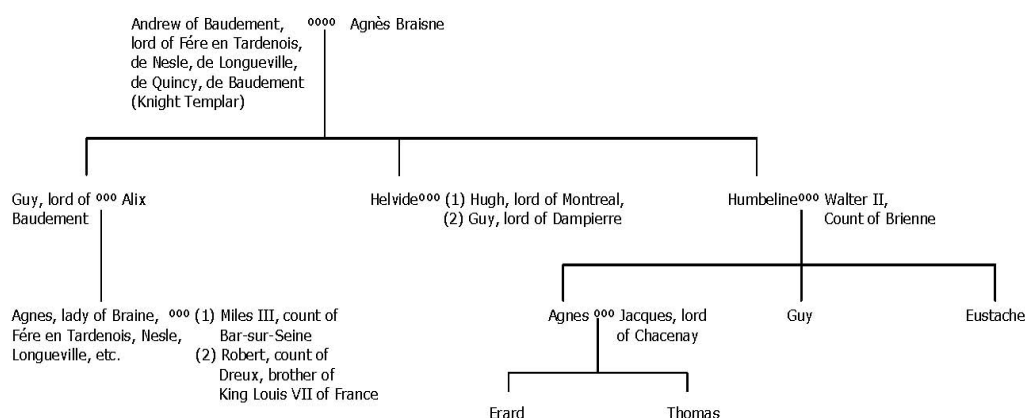
Contrary to the suggestion by the authors of the *Europäische Stammtafeln* (commonly regarded as the authoritative source on the genealogies of the great families of Europe) that Walter married four times, he married only twice. His first wife was Humbeline (sometimes called Adelaide), the daughter of Andrew of Baudement seneschal of Champagne who journeyed to the Holy Land at least on two occasions.⁵ Humbeline's niece, Agnès, lady of Baudement, of Nesle and of Fère - en - Taerdenois, took as her first husband Walter's cousin, Miles III, count of Bar - sur - Seine.⁶

⁴ Joinville, Jean de. *Vie de St Louis*, ed. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1998): translated in: Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. C. Smith (London, 2008) : *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 6B: ES, VII, 6: ES, III. 681.

⁵ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 9. Andrew was given various titles by contemporary sources, however they all connote the position of 'seneschal'. In the cartularies of Saint Père de Chartres, he is referred to as *totius domus sue major* [*Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint - Père de Chartres*, ed. B. E. C. Guérard, 2 vols (Paris, 1840), II,

After Miles' death c.1152, Agnes made an illustrious marriage that would benefit her family when she took as her husband Robert I, count of Dreux, brother of King Louis VII of France, a union which proved a considerable leap up the noble hierarchy of France.⁷ Robert Capet was the third surviving son of King Louis VI of France and Adelaide of Maurienne. He is often referred to as Robert of Dreux 'although he did not acquire Dreux (Eure - et - Loir), where he established his lineage, until 1152'.⁸ Thompson observed that 'little attention has been paid to this early stage of his career in the 1140s when he is more properly described as "the king's brother", the legend inscribed on his seal'.⁹

Houses of Baudement and Brienne Genealogy



447]. In the cartulaires of the Yonne, he is referred to as *major regiae domus* [*Cartulaire Générale de l'Yonne*, ed. M. Quantin, 2 vols (Auxerre, 1854), I, 266].

⁶ Andrew is believed to have died perhaps at Clairvaux on 19 July 1142. His son, Guy, is believed to have died in 1144. Guy's brother was William de Baudement who was a Templar. Therefore, it was in 1144 that her grandfather's and her father's titles passed to Agnès. Agnès married Miles III, count of Bar - sur - Seine in an unknown year. He died on 1 October 1151 [AVD, II, 590, 671]. For more on the family's Templar links, cf. J.G. Schenk, *Templar Families: Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c.1120 - 1307* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 33, 87, 100, 101, 119, 128, 130, 131, 165, 171, 193, 232.

⁷ *Archives de l'Hôtel - Dieu de Paris*, ed. L. Brièle (Paris, 1894), XIII, 6. *Addenda et Corrigenda* in RHGF, XVII, 769E. Evergates noted that Agnes sealed a number of letters with her second husband, Robert I of Dreux, over the course of thirty years (1155 - 86). Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 29.

⁸ Thompson, *Perche*, p. 87.

⁹ *ibid.* To find out more on Robert of Dreux and his marriage to Hawaise of Salisbury, cf. Thompson, *Perche*, pp. 87 - 8.

Agnés's son from this marriage, Robert II, count of Dreux, would participate in the Third Crusade and took part in the siege of Acre.¹⁰ This marriage would not only serve to bring the Brienne into closer contact with the ruling dynasties of the kingdom of Jerusalem, but to also establish family ties that would aid their rise in status. Agnes's husband, Robert of Dreux, was the son of Adélaïde of Maurienne and Louis VI, king of France.¹¹ Robert was the great nephew of Pope Calixtus II (himself a member of the Montlhéry clan), the pope having been the brother of Gisela of Burgundy, Adélaïde's mother.¹² When Adélaïde's father, Humbert II of Savoy died, her mother married Renier III of Montferrat (d. 1135).¹³ Renier and Gisela had one son, William, Adélaïde's half brother, who would become William V of Montferrat, also known as William the Old (d. *circa* 1188) who took part in the Second Crusade and was captured by Saladin during the Third Crusade.¹⁴

William had five sons from his wife, Judith of Babenberg, the daughter of Leopold II of Austria and Agnes of Germany. These illustrious sons would become powerful magnates and/or kings in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Jonathan Phillips remarked that the Montferrat 'brought an impressive combination of prestige, military experience and crusading connections to the Levant and the eastern Mediterranean'.¹⁵ These men were the first cousins of Robert of Dreux who was connected to the future crusaders of Brienne by marriage.¹⁶

The eldest son, William Longsword, would become count of Jaffa and Ascalon through his marriage to Sibylla, the sister of the leper king, Baldwin IV of Jerusalem, in 1176. He would, therefore, have expected to act as regent of the kingdom given his brother-in-law's condition and likely early death. However, shortly after their marriage, he contracted malaria and died, leaving his

¹⁰ AVD, II, 671.

¹¹ WT, II, 1003 - 4.

¹² M. Stroll, *Calixtus II (1119 - 1124): A Pope Born To Rule* (Leiden, 2004), p. 8

¹³ B. Hamilton, *The Leper King and his Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 2000), p. xxi.

¹⁴ P. W. Edbury, 'New Perspectives on the Old French Continuations of William of Tyre' (delivered at Avignon, August 2008), p. 54: cf. *Itinerarium*, p. 23: translated in *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, trans. H. Nicholson (London, 1997), p. 40.

¹⁵ J.P. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (London, 2004), p. 85.

¹⁶ Leopold II's son, Leopold III would go on to marry Agnes, the widow of Frederick I of Swabia and the mother of Frederick Barbarossa and Richalde of Swabia who was the wife of Erard's first cousin, Hugh Cholet. Agnes's son of Leopold III, Leopold IV, would go on to become the duke of Bavaria and Margrave of Austria, which further strengthens the kinship between the Brienne dynasty and the Swabian/Hohenstaufen dynasties.

wife, Sybilla, pregnant with a son who would go on to become King Baldwin V of Jerusalem.¹⁷ The second eldest son, Conrad would go on to be chosen as king of Jerusalem in 1190, but was murdered before his coronation.¹⁸ Boniface, heir to Montferrat, and preferred leader of the Fourth Crusade, would go on to occupy the kingdom of Thessalonica after the sack of Constantinople in 1204.¹⁹ Frederick likely entered the church and Renier married the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos, Maria the Porphyrogenita.²⁰

In a charter dated 1133, Walter stood as witness to a grant gift that his father - in - law, Andrew, made to the Knights Templar.²¹ In this charter, Walter is noted as having been with his wife and this woman, who was not cited by name, was likely Humbeline.²² Walter and Humbeline's daughter Agnès wed James, lord of Chacenay.²³ He took the cross in 1147 along with Walter and embarked upon the ill - fated Second Crusade.²⁴ He died in 1158.²⁵ James and Agnès had two sons, Thomas and Erard, the latter perhaps named after his maternal great - grandfather. According to the *ES*, both sons were born shortly after James's death in 1158, therefore it is probable that they were twins, perhaps with Erard being the eldest as he inherited the title lord of Chacenay whilst his brother appears to have remained without title.²⁶ Perhaps as proof of the circumstances of the brothers' birth, when Erard, the eldest Chacenay son, died at Acre in 1191 without issue, the title passed to the son of his brother, Thomas, who had died in 1179.²⁷

Walter and Humbeline also had two sons, Guy and Eustace.²⁸ Guy, who would have been the heir to the county of Brienne, disappeared from record after 1143 and Eustace, the next in line to inherit, is

¹⁷ C. Du Fresne Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outremer* (New York, 1971), p. 20: WT, II, 977 - 8.

¹⁸ J. B. Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, 1999), pp. 148 - 9, 199 - 201.

¹⁹ Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans and ed. H.J. Magoulias. (Detroit, 1984), pp. 330 - 5.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 97.

²¹ CACB, 37.

²² *ibid.*

²³ Bf, 95. The Chacenay were also supporters of the Templars, joining the ranks of several Champenois families to do so, cf Schenk, *Templar Families*, p. 313.

²⁴ C. Lalore, *Les Sires et les Barons de Chacenay* (Troyes, 1885), pp. 197 - 8.

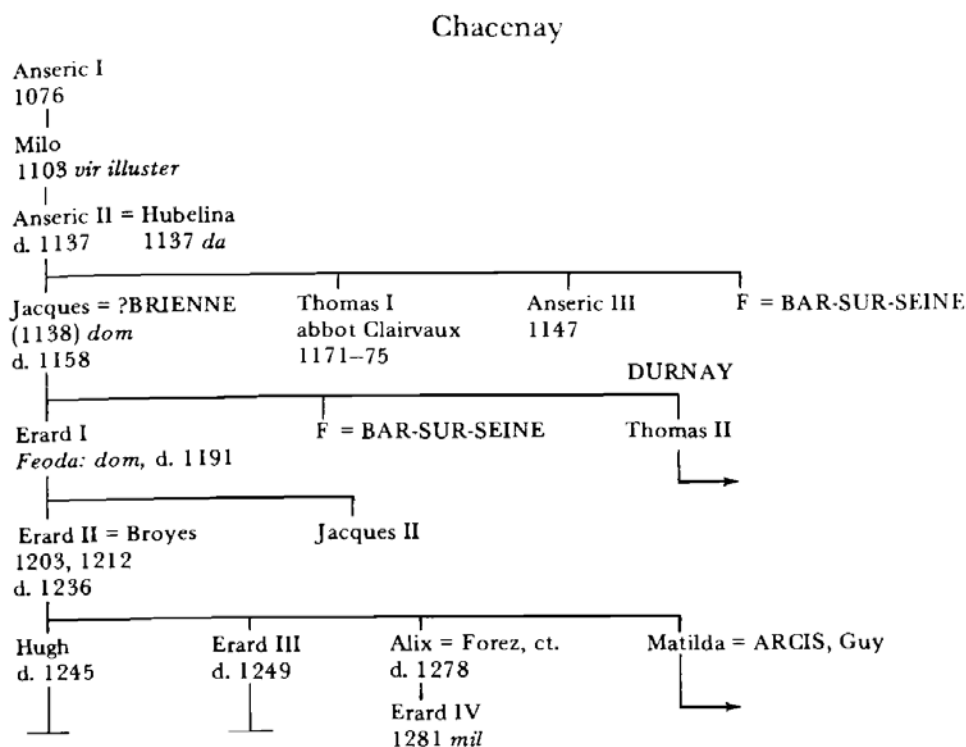
²⁵*Hujus scripti testes sunt: dominus Jacobus de Cacennaco et Agnes uxor sua...*[ML, 266]. *ES*, XII, 63. Lalore, *Chacenay*, p. 201.

²⁶ *ES*, XII, 63.

²⁷ HCC, IV, 53 - 4

²⁸ CACB, 37.

absent from the extant charters for twenty - three years.²⁹ Guy may have died shortly after his last appearance in 1143, or he may have left his patrimony, either willingly or by force, once his father remarried. Eustace's role in the county is also ambiguous as once his father remarried, the titles of Brienne and Ramerupt were granted to the children of his second marriage.



The Chacenay Family Tree (taken from Evergates, p. 167)

It would seem, given his apparent resurrection in 1166 that Eustace stayed within the vicinity of the county and was on civil terms with his half - brother for he is recorded as having stood witness to a charter approved by Erard in 1166.³⁰ Humbeline, countess of Brienne, likely died in 1138 shortly after she stood witness to a gift granted by her husband to the bishop of Châlons.³¹

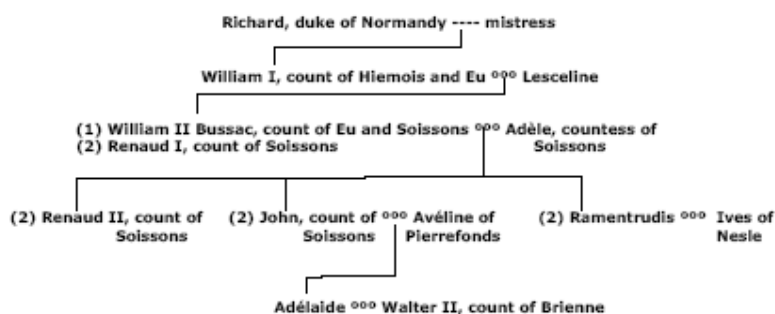
²⁹ CACB, 68.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint - Loup de Troyes*, vol. 2 in *Collection des Principaux Cartulaires du Diocese du Troyes*, ed. C. Lalore. 7 vols (Paris, 1875 - 90), {StL}, 7.

The House of Soissons

Walter's second marriage was to Adélaide of Soissons soon after Humbeline's death.³² Adélaide was the daughter of John, count of Soissons, who was the great - grandson of Richard I, duke of Normandy, John's grandfather having been Richard's bastard son.³³ Unlike the previous marriage, there survives strong charter evidence in support of this union and perhaps more importantly, to confirm the suggestion that this was Walter's second and final marriage.



In 1141, Renaud, the leper count of Soissons, died without issue.³⁴ To prevent discord amongst his relatives, he had charged the bishop of Soissons with overseeing the inevitable crisis of succession after his death.³⁵ The episcopal body of Soissons investigated the suit of four kinsmen who had legitimate claim to the county; Geoffroy of Donzy, Guy of Dampierre, Yves of Nesle and Walter, count of Brienne.³⁶ After much investigation and deliberation, the county of Soissons was granted to Yves.³⁷

³² Although this second wife's name is not mentioned until 1146, her children, Erard, Andrew and Marie are mentioned in a charter dated 22 January 1143. Therefore, Walter likely married her shortly after Humbeline's death in 1138 as within a span of five years, he had three children by Adélaide and they are present as witnesses to this charter [CACB, 40].

³³ Which would have made her distantly related to Walter, likely within the prohibited seven degrees as Walter's mother was a descendant of the duke of Normandy (she was the sister of William the Conqueror), *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis* 11 and 12, MGH, SS, XIII, 254.

³⁴ Nesle 1140 - 1, 6 and Nesle, 1147, 18.

³⁵ Nesle 1147, 18.

³⁶ *Dies posita est: submoniti a nobis et ab ipso parentes venerunt quidem Suessionis, Jofridus de Danziaco, Gualterus comes de Brena, Guido de Damnopetro, Ivo de Nigella...* [Nesle 1140 - 1, 6]. In the later charter of 1147, Yves is explaining how he came about acquiring the county of Soissons, he does not mention his competitors.

³⁷ But not without conditions imposed. Cf. Nesle 1140 - 1, 6 and Nesle 1147, 18.

The authors of the *ES* suggest that Walter was remarried in 1137 and 1146.³⁸ However, they are almost certainly mistaken as Walter's first wife, Humbeline does not disappear from record until 1138 and in this year, she is recognised as his wife, thus eliminating the possibility that he had remarried around 1137.³⁹ Regarding the supposed fourth marriage, Walter's unnamed wife in a charter dating from 1153 had as lord of her goods Joscelin, the former bishop of Soissons, which supports the suggestion that the wife mentioned in this charter was Adélaïde of Soissons whom he likely married in 1139.⁴⁰

Joscelin, the bishop of Soissons mentioned in this charter, was the man charged by the leper count Renaud to serve as intermediary in the succession crisis in Soissons after his death. Indeed, it is likely that Renaud would have appointed Joscelin guardian of his sister's inheritance and interests given the uncertainty of the outcome of the crisis. Moreover, there was a longstanding observed tradition throughout the house of Roucy (a connection that will be fully explored later in this section) to preserve the names of the matriarchs and Adélaïde's name further supports the suggestion that she was of the house of Soissons; her grandmother and her great - grandmother were also named Adélaïde.

A remaining question regarding Walter's marriage alliances centres on his father - in - law, Andrew of Baudement. During his lifetime, he was known by all of the titles that he would eventually pass on to his granddaughter, Agnès through his eldest son, Guy. His full honour was Andrew, lord of Fere - en - Tardenois, lord of Nesle, lord of Longueville, lord of Quincy and lord of Baudement. It has proven impossible to trace the origin of Andrew's title, 'lord of Nesle'.⁴¹

The familial links between these houses were strong. As mentioned previously, Andrew of Baudement's granddaughter, (Walter's niece) Agnès, would marry Robert of Dreux who himself had been married to Hawise de Salisbury, the widow of Alice of Ramerupt's (Walter's mother) first

³⁸ According to the *ES*, Walter married a Humbeline of Troyes in 1137 and Adelais, daughter of the widow of Andrew of Baudement [*ES*, III, 681].

³⁹ *CACB*, 39.*voluntate et petitione uxoris sue Hubeline*....[*StL*,7].

⁴⁰ *Bf*, 104.

⁴¹ *ES*, XIV, 51.

cousin, Rotrou II of Perche.⁴² Agnès was the daughter of Guy of Baudement, son of Andrew of Baudement and brother to the Templar William of Baudement, and his wife Beátrice Monthléry who was the daughter of Guy II Monthléry and Elisabeth of Crécy.⁴³ Walter's marriage to Adélaïde of Soissons did more than any of the previous marriages of the counts of Brienne to bring the family closer to the throne of Jerusalem and the politics of the Holy Land. Walter was acquainted with Yves of Nesle, both men having challenged the other for the right to the county of Soissons. However, it was Yves who successfully brought suit for the lordship of Soissons through his mother, Ramentrude of Soissons.⁴⁴ And it was Yves who in 1147, at the start of the Second Crusade, proved his bravery when, at the request of Conrad, king of Germany, he was dispatched from the body of the crusader army as leader of a French detachment to rescue a small force of intemperate Germans from a contingent of Byzantine knights.⁴⁵ Perhaps even more intriguing is that in 1151 it was Yves who was later put forward as a possible husband for Constance, princess of Antioch who later wed the controversial Reynald of Châtillon.⁴⁶

For the purpose of this study, the possibilities implied by Yves's illustrious career must be considered. Was his nomination as a potential husband for the princess of Antioch due in part to his having been awarded the county of Soissons and the prestige of that position? Had Yves proven himself a brave knight before he had been asked by Conrad of Germany to ride to the rescue of his fellow crusaders? If Walter of Brienne had won the right to his brother-in-law's patrimony of Soissons, could the honour and prestige have been his instead of Yves?

Yves was the eldest son of Raoul I, lord of Nesle and Ramentrude, daughter of the countess of Soissons and the count of Eu, which made him the cousin of the leper count Renaud.⁴⁷ He first appears in a charter dated 1115 whereby he stands witness along with his three brothers and his

⁴² *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche*, ed. P. Barret (Mortagne, 1894), nos. 28,29 : Thompson, *Perche*, pp. 86 - 7; G. Bry, *Histoire des Pays et Comté du Perche et Duché d'Alençon* (Paris, 1620), p. 187. It is likely that there was a common ancestor linking the houses of Baudement and Soissons whose name has not survived.

⁴³ ES, III, 624.

⁴⁴ AVD, II, 729.

⁴⁵ Yves had been to Jerusalem at least once before the Second Crusade. He stood as witness to a charter there on the 5th February 1138 [*Cartulaire de l'Eglise du Saint Sépulcre de Jérusalem*, ed. E. de Rozière, E (Paris, 1849), p. 64]. Cf. Odo of Deuil, abbot of Saint - Denis, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed. and trans. V.G. Berry. (New York, 1948), p. 98.

⁴⁶ WT, II, 785

⁴⁷ *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis*, MGH XIII, p. 254: Nesle, I, 23.

mother as his father forfeits a land - grant.⁴⁸ His father likely died in 1133 as Yves was count of Nesle by 1134.⁴⁹ He journeyed to Jerusalem prior to the Second Crusade and is listed as witness to a charter there on 4 February 1138 in the company of other pilgrims.⁵⁰ He was a pious man and given what is known of Louis VII of France, this would have undoubtedly placed him in good standing with the king. A review of the extant charters from the early years of his tenure as lord of Nesle, before he received the county of Soissons in 1141, suggest that he was a generous lord and a frequent patron of the ecclesiastical seats in and around his lands. He gave freely to the church, even when this put him at odds with his knights.⁵¹

However, the same may be said of Walter of Brienne who could count amongst his associates and kin a Templar family, the Baudement and several other families who made donations to the Templars and married into crusader dynasties.⁵² Walter's gifts to the religious houses in and around his lands seemingly trumped those of Yves of Nesle. Furthermore, Walter would go on to enjoy a favourable relationship with Pope Eugenius III as suggested in a charter dated 1152 in which the pope confirmed the donation from Walter of a mill and a church to Bassefontaine.⁵³ Of all the counts of Brienne hitherto, it may be argued that Walter was the most charitable. His father had been on the First Crusade, one of the many French nobles who had fought to establish the Latin Kingdom of the East, his mother was a descendant of the Capetian kings of France, his wife more than likely the sister of the deceased leper count of Soissons. If anything, these noblemen were equally matched in almost every regard. So, how could it be that Yves was chosen over Walter to rule the county of Soissons?

In his work on the lords of Nesle, Newman admitted to ignorance of Walter's lineage and professed to be confounded as to why Walter was considered a legitimate candidate to inherit the county of Soissons. He cited only Roserot as a source of his knowledge and goes on to affirm that he was also ignorant of the lineage of the parents of Walter's wife, Humbeline (whom he correctly

⁴⁸ Nesle 1115, 1.

⁴⁹ He is noted as lord of Nesle in a charter dated 1133 [Nesle 1133, 3].

⁵⁰ *Cartulaire de l'Église du Saint Sépulchre de Jérusalem*, p. 64.

⁵¹ For an example of the conflict brought about by his piety, *ibid.*

⁵² For an indepth look at the Templar history of these two families, cf. Schenk, *Templar Families*.

⁵³ Bf, 104: CACB, 50.

identifies as Andrew of Baudement and Agnès of Braisne).⁵⁴ However, Newman did draw attention to a mistake made by Roserot who himself had been ignorant of a charter from the tenure of Count Thibaut of Blois, dated 1135, wherein is explicitly named the two daughters of Andrew and Agnès, Humbeline and Helvide.⁵⁵ Helvide became the wife of Guy of Dampierre, who was not only a claimant in this dispute over the county of Soissons, but also the son of Miles of Montlhéry, one of the brothers of the legendary four Montlhéry sisters.⁵⁶ Newman also admits to ignorance regarding Guy's claim to the county as neither he nor Walter appear to have been descendants of the founders of the second house of Soissons, William II Bursac and Adèle, the Soissons heiress.⁵⁷

Perhaps the confusion surrounding the succession may be resolved here. Walter's claim to Soissons may have been equally as strong as that of Yves of Nesle and the other candidates. According to the ancient genealogy written by the anonymous of Foligny, who was a near contemporary (and whose work was later copied into the chronicle of Alberic of Trois - Fontaines who wrote in the early thirteenth century), Walter's matrilineal great - grandfather was Hilduin III, count of Roucy and the brother of William II Bursac, count of Soissons and Demmartin.⁵⁸ If this is true, then Walter of Brienne was the great - nephew of William II Bursac and could therefore lay claim to the county as a descendant of the counts of Soissons through the agnatic line. And yet, this truth flies in the face of the suggestion that Walter was wed to Adélaïde of Soissons, for she would then have been his counterpart on the opposite side of the family tree, with William II Bursac being her patrilineal grandfather, thus making Hilduin III her great uncle. This relationship would place Adélaïde and Walter's union in direct violation of the laws of consanguinity.

The identification of Hilduin III as the brother of William II Bursac is an error on the part of the anonymous of Foligny. Indeed, William of Jumièges does not list Hilduin III amongst the brothers

⁵⁴ *Gautier II, comte de Brienne, 1125 à 1158. On ne connaît pas ses ancêtres. Il épousa Humbeline, fille d'André de Baudement et d'Agnès de Braisne: leurs ancêtres sont inconnus aussi.....* [Nesle, II, 33].

⁵⁵ *.....Helvide et Hubelina et aearum maritis Waltero comite de Brienna et Wido de Dampierre* [Duchesne, 'Broyes et Chateau - Villain', pp. 233 - 4].

⁵⁶ ES, III, 51; Nesle, I, 25. Guy also turned up in Jerusalem in 1118 where he stood as witness to a charter of Barisan the Old, the progenitor of the house of Ibelin [Delaborde, *Chartes de la Terre Sainte Provenant*, pp. 41 - 2].

⁵⁷ Nesle, II, 33.

⁵⁸ Longnon, *Documents*, I, 454 n.1

of William II Bursac (those brothers listed are Hugh, bishop of Lisieux and Robert, who would become heir after William's rebellion against William the Bastard, duke of Normandy).⁵⁹

The relationship becomes even more complicated for, despite the belief that Hilduin was not the brother of William II Bursac that is not to say that Walter was not a blood relative of the house of Soissons. According to William of Jumièges, when William Bursac II revolted against his half brother, William the Bastard, he sought refuge at the court of Henry I, king of France (1031 - 1060).⁶⁰ At Henry's behest, William married Adèla, the daughter of count Renaud of Soissons.⁶¹ Moranvillé, an historian writing in the early twentieth century on the houses of Roucy and Ramerupt, believed that Adèla of Soissons's mother was Adèlaide of the house of Roucy, the sister of Ebles I, count of Roucy.⁶² As previously noted, given the established tradition within the house of Roucy to preserve the female name Adela and its derivative, Adèlaide, it is likely that she was of the house of Roucy and named after both her grandmother and great - grandmother.

It was through Adèlaide of Roucy that the county of Soissons was transferred to William II Bursac and their children began the second house of Soissons. And it is through Adèlaide of the house of Roucy that Walter could place a valid claim through blood to the county of Soissons as his matrilineal great - grandfather was Adèlaide's brother, Ebles I, count of Roucy.

This genealogy is more viable than that of the anonymous of Foligny for not only does it provide Walter with two strong claims to the county of Soissons, but it also places his wife at a greater distance of kinship than that suggested by the anonymous of Foligny. For he and his wife shared a common ancestor in Adèlaide of Roucy, the countess of Brienne's great - grandmother and Walter's great - great aunt.

⁵⁹ GND, pp. 8 - 10. It is interesting to note that William's brother, Robert, then count of Eu, was also involved, along with Stephen of Aumâle, son of the disinherited count of Champagne, Odo III, in the royal intrigues of the time [GND, p. 206]. Robert is named specifically by Orderic Vitalis, cf. OV, IV, 182.

⁶⁰ GND, p. 128.

⁶¹ RAP, 26. William may have been married to Adelaide as early as 1060 for he is listed as count of Soissons in a charter whereby he stood as witness to an act of King Philippe I on the 4th August 1060 at Senlis [RAP, 5]. However, this marriage did not take place until long after William Bursac lost the county of Eu, as Renaud and his son Guy are believed to have lived until 1057. They appear together in a charter of December 1047 at Laon, cf. *Diplomata Henrici I, Francorum Regis* in RHGF, XI, 594.

⁶² Moranville, 'Ramerupt - Roucy', p. 175.

Having established Walter's blood ties to the houses of Roucy and Soissons, his claim to the county is self-evident. Conversely, the legitimacy of Guy's claim remains uncertain as he does not appear to be linked to the family directly. His marriage to the daughter of Andrew of Baudement provides the possibility that his claim was indeed through his wife and stems from the mystery surrounding Andrew's title, 'lord of Nesle'. Is it possible that Andrew was an 'anti-lord', descended from William and Adèle of Soissons through a bastard line? Without extant evidence and the silence of the charters and chronicles of this time concerning this issue, this is simply conjecture. And yet it seems a logical inference given that Guy of Dampierre, who had no discernible right to the county of Soissons, was seriously considered for the inheritance by the bishop of Soissons. This mystery shall have to remain to question.

Presented with the evidence, it is not clear why Yves was chosen over Walter of Brienne. It may have come down to the title being granted to the wealthier lord as Yves was forced to render monetary gifts to the other candidates for the title and the county.⁶³

During eight or nine years of marriage, Adèle gave Walter three sons for certain and possibly two daughters.⁶⁴ The eldest son of this marriage would usurp the patrimony of Walter's eldest sons from his previous marriage and become Erard II, count of Brienne upon his father's death. His brother, Andrew, would become count of Ramerupt. Both whom would be acknowledged by chroniclers of the Third Crusade, one praised and noted for his courage and virtue, the other a blemish upon the honour of the dynasty of Brienne. A future son, John, would go on to become abbot of Beaulieu.⁶⁵ A daughter, Marie, would disappear from record after 1152. And yet another daughter would marry Barthélemy, lord of Vignory, a crusader who died along with his brother Guy of Vignory, at the siege of Acre in 1191.⁶⁶

⁶³ Nesle, II, 6.

⁶⁴ Erard, future count of Brienne, and his brother Andrew, along with their sister, Marie, are first mentioned in a charter whereby they witness their father approve the rights of the abbey of Bassefontaine [CACB, 41]. John, abbot of Beaulieu, does not make an appearance in the charters until his brother's tenure as count [CACB, 60].

⁶⁵ *Gallia Christ*, XII, 615B and CACB, 60.

⁶⁶ *Cartulaire du Prieure de Saint - Étienne de Vignory*, ed. M. d'Arbaumont. (Langres, 1882), {St.Etienne}, pp. 80 - 1: HCC, IV, 53 - 4. His brother, Guy of Vignory, would serve as the inspiration to the chansonnier, Colin Muset [J. Longnon, *Les Compagnons de Villehardouin* (Geneva, 1978), p. 4]. At the moment of his departure for the Second Crusade, Barthélemy made a donation to the abbey of Beaulieu [St. - Etienne, p. 46].

The Second Crusade

In the years that lapsed between the First Crusade and the call for the Second, internecine squabbling in Palestine as well as the growing Muslim counter - crusade contributed to the loss of Edessa in December 1144 when the city fell to Zengi of Mosul. In response to this the settlers of the Levant requested assistance from the papacy. When news reached Eugenius III in mid - 1145 the pope was horrified; he decided to preach the crusade, but he was not in the position to direct the movement as Pope Urban had attempted to do. Since his election to the papacy in February 1145, Eugenius had been unable to secure his position in Rome and therefore he delegated the preaching of the crusade to Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux.⁶⁷

The preaching of this Second Crusade would require a different methodology from that employed by Pope Urban II. Self - evidently those who had gone on the First Crusade were either dead or too old to undertake such a strenuous journey a second time. This crusade would have to appeal to the sons of those men who had taken the cross in 1095 - 96. The First Crusade had prompted an unprecedented burst of historical writing with numerous writers across the Latin West deciding to create accounts of this miraculous (as they saw it) event. In subsequent decades further histories of the crusade were produced and the reputation of Christendom's heroes grew and grew.⁶⁸ Oral histories and songs did even more to embed the achievement of the First Crusade into the consciousness of Europe's knightly classes.

Thus the generations after the capture of Jerusalem were reared on glorious tales of the Holy Land and impossible feats of valour, It is clear that Eugenius could not hope to approach these people in the same manner as Urban had approached their fathers, and a line of argument similar to Urban's would have been an utter failure.

On 1 December 1145, Pope Eugenius III issued *Quantum praedecessores*, a papal bull that was heralded throughout the West four months later. In order to understand the nature of this second formal call for crusade, an examination must take place of the carefully crafted message of Pope

⁶⁷ Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, pp. 37 - 9.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 25 - 9.

Eugenius III, who transferred his vehemence and passion into words that carried throughout Western Europe.⁶⁹

With the first lines of his speech – ‘How greatly our predecessors’ - it is clear that Eugenius’s method is well - rehearsed and that he is equipped with the knowledge and training of a skilled rhetorician. The content of the bull demonstrated the pope’s knowledge of his audience and his attention to their needs. Therefore, he would need to launch an argument whereby even the simplest of men would understand the ethics, the emotion, and the logic of the crusade and to accentuate these three key components of the art of rhetoric or persuasion, he exploited their fierce pride and glory, which stemmed from a noble lineage. He evoked the ancestors.

How much our predecessors the Roman pontiffs did labour for the deliverance of the oriental church, we have learned from the accounts of the ancients and have found it written in their acts. For our predecessor of blessed memory, pope Urban, did sound, as it were, a celestial trump and did take care to arouse for its deliverance the sons of the holy Roman church from the different parts of the earth⁷⁰

He then moved on to the logic of the crusade in noting that Urban II had earlier induced men from various regions of the world to free Jerusalem from the yoke of the Saracens:

At his voice, indeed, those beyond the mountain and especially the bravest and strongest warriors of the French kingdom, and also those of Italy, inflamed by the ardour of love did come together, and, congregating a very great army, not without much shedding of their own blood, the divine aid being with them, did free from the filth of the pagans that city where our Saviour willed to suffer for us, and where He left His glorious sepulchre to us as a memorial of His passion, - and many others which, avoiding prolixity, we refrain from mentioning.

Notice how he accentuated the involvement of the nobles of France to further involve them in the just cause, flattering ‘the bravest and strongest warriors of the French kingdom’.

⁶⁹ Eugenius III, *Quantum Praedecessores*, in R. Grosse, ‘Überlegungen zum Kreuzzugsaufruf Eugens III. von 1145/46. Mit einer neuedition von JL 8876’, *Francia* 18 (1991), pp. 85 – 92) translation taken from J.P. Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, pp. 280 - 82.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

What follows in the remainder of the bull is an appeal to the pathos or sympathetic nature of his audience. The pope adapts language which would evoke feelings of reminiscence of those days when their fathers rode off to the East in pursuit of salvation. Would they not want their sons to have the same opportunity? To become knights and soldiers of God? To obtain the ultimate salvation by offering their blood in the struggle against the infidel? These are notions which may well have registered with Walter as he heard these words, perhaps in his family's abbey of Beaulieu, perhaps in one of the local abbeys of Radonvilliers, Bassefontaine, Blaincourt, Epagne, Crespy, or Morvilliers. Indeed, he may have been present at Vezélay, eighty - five miles to the south of Brienne, on 31 March 1146 when Bernard of Clairvaux read aloud the papal bull. Given the family history of crusading, Walter was a highly suitable target for Eugenius's appeal. As previously noted, Erard I was likely a pilgrim to the Holy Land, as the dynasty had by this point established a commitment to preserve the advances the crusaders had made into the Levant, it can also be assumed that tales of the destruction of holy places and attacks on pilgrims resonated with Walter. Moreover, there were many instances where, as in Walter's case, men who took the cross for the Second Crusade were the descendants of First Crusaders. Indeed, instances where father and son took the cross together; for example, Peter and Fulcher of Bré,⁷¹ Guy II of Ponthieu and his son, John;⁷² Bernard and Hugh of Brancion⁷³ and others. Thus crusading enthusiasm swept across Western Europe and, inspired by the papal bull and Bernard's powerful preaching, many thousands of knights headed towards the Levant in the summer of 1147.

Walter's Religiosity

In 1133, Walter approved a donation made to the Templars by Andrew of Baudement, seneschal of Champagne.⁷⁴ He disappears from the record for three years shortly after approving the donation and in the absence of any record of his whereabouts, it is left to speculation. He may have been involved

⁷¹ *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Vigeois en Limousin* (954 - 1167), ed. M. de Montégut (Limoges, 1907), no. 316, pp. 213 - 4; Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 102; Riley - Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 93 - 7.

⁷² H.J. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c.879 - 1160* (Leiden, 2004), p. 224; Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 102.

⁷³ *Recueil des Chartres de l'Abbaye de Cluny*, ed. A. Bernard and A. Bruel, 6 vols (Paris, 1876 - 1903), V, no. 4131, pp. 473 - 4; Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 102.

⁷⁴ CACB, 37.

in the conflict between his overlord, Thibaud of Champagne and King Louis VI of France who were fighting in the Brie region from 1128 to 1135.⁷⁵

Conversely, had Walter embarked on pilgrimage during those three obscure years, it would have been in keeping with his character. Evidence suggests that whilst not as generous from the start of his tenure as count, Walter was likely more pious than his predecessor. There remains no record of him violating the rights of any religious house. Throughout his rule as count of Brienne, he regularly made donations to the church, his most notable grant being the foundation charter of the Praemonstratensian abbey of Bassefontaine.⁷⁶ In 1131, he was inclined to ratify donations made to the bishop of Troyes for the abbey of Montiérender, which his father had agreed before departing for Jerusalem in the company of his liege lord in 1097.⁷⁷ Also, once again favouring the abbey he founded, he confirmed donations made to the abbey of Bassefontaine in 1145.⁷⁸

Preparations for Departure

The opportunity for Walter to journey to the Holy Land as a crusader presented itself in 1147.⁷⁹ As mentioned, his first wife, Humbeline, the daughter of Andrew of Baudement, had given him a daughter Agnès whose husband, James, lord of Chacenay would also leave in 1147 for the crusade and his example would be followed by his sons James, lord of Chacenay and James' brother, Anséric III, lord of Feins.⁸⁰ Walter's wife, Adélaide of Soissons had provided him with two heirs, Erard and Andrew. His niece, Agnès of Baudement's husband, Robert I of Dreux and Perche, brother of King

⁷⁵ Dunbabin noted 'For it was Thibaud IV (1102 - 1152) who, when he inherited Troyes and Meaux in 1125, made the crucial decision to take up residence there rather than in Chartres, his own and his family's traditional home, and on his death, to leave Champagne to his eldest son. Thibaud's choice was perhaps inspired by fear: Louis VI favoured the succession of his uncle's illegitimate son Odo of Champlitte, so Thibaud had to fight for Champagne' [Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, p. 314].

⁷⁶ Bf, 1. The Praemonstratensians were a branch of canons that had taken their name from the mother - house of Prémontré. According to Lawrence, 'Their founder, St Norbert, the son of a baron in the duchy of Cleves, had been a canon of the cathedral of Xanten in Lorraine since his teens. In 1115 he resigned all his benefices and adopted the life of an eremitical preacher like Robert of Abrisel. The canons of Xanten, whom he attempted to evangelise, gave him a rough time, but he attracted the sympathy of Bishop Bartholomew of Laon, a man of the reform party, who was prepared to support his experiment and acquired for him the chapel of Prémontré in the forest of Coucy' [C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*. 2nd edn (London, 1984), p. 142].

⁷⁷ *Gallia Christ*, XII, 554D: CACB, 38.

⁷⁸ Bf, 2.

⁷⁹ CACB, 45.

⁸⁰ Lalore, *Les Sires et les Barons de Chacenay*, pp. 197 - 8 : cf. CACB, 42.

Louis VII of France, had also taken the cross, as had his cousin, William 'the Old'. Both of these men were blood kinsmen of the Hohenstaufen.

With his county in order and the continuation of his line secure, the time was right for Walter to follow in his father's footsteps, perhaps with the compelling words of Eugenius in his heart; *Maximum namque nobilitatis et probitatis indicium fore cognoscitur, si ea quae patrum strenuitas acquisivit, a vobis filiis strenue defendantur!*⁸¹

Unwilling to exclude his heir from the experience of crusade, Walter took Erard with him to the East.⁸² There were other identifiable family members in Walter's entourage, his son-in-law, James, lord of Chacenay and James' brother, Anséric III, lord of Feins.⁸³ Walter's retinue likely joined the ranks of Henry of Champagne, the son of their liege lord, Thibaut, count of Champagne.

Shortly before or perhaps upon the day of departure, in a further act of piety and a common devotional act amongst crusaders, Walter visited the abbey of Beaulieu where he again confirmed and added to gifts made by his father and obtained final blessings for his journey.⁸⁴

Unfortunately, Walter is absent from the annals and chronicles of the Second Crusade.⁸⁵ He may have participated in one of the few victories of the Second Crusade alongside his lord, Count Henry of Champagne who along with Thierry of Flanders and William of Mâcon led a spirited charge across the Maeander River, breaking through a line of Turkish archers who hoped to destroy the French as they emerged.⁸⁶ It is also likely that Walter was one of the many lords present at the meeting held near Acre on 24 June 1148 in the company again of Henry, Yves of Nesle and others. This, however, is conjecture as Walter is not listed as an attendee at this meeting, which may confirm his lack of stature in consequence of his failure to secure the county of Soissons.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Eugenius III, *Quantum Praedecessores*, p. 85: translation Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, p. 280.

⁸² CACB, 46.

⁸³ CACB, 42.

⁸⁴ *Gallia Christ*, XII, 614C, 615A: CACB, 47: Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, pp. 110 - 1.

⁸⁵ It is possible that Walter had role in a battle of importance or held a position of merit as it appears in a charter date on the 1st March 1153 that he was acquainted with Pope Eugenius III. Indeed, the count of Brienne sent his wife, Adélaide, to confirm for both himself and their son, Erard, a charter in the pope's presence at Segni.

⁸⁶ OV, pp. 110 - 11: WT, II, 749 - 50: Niketas, *Byzantium*, pp. 39 - 42.

⁸⁷ WT, II, 760 - 1

The exact date of Walter's death or his return to his county from the Levant remains unknown.⁸⁸ Towards the end of his life, Walter made several gifts and donations to religious houses. Given the contemporary emphasis on family traditions of crusading, it is little wonder that his eldest son would take up the cross and join the Third Crusade and that the younger son would follow in the footsteps of his father and brother. The next generation of Brienne will sustain the crusading impulse. Walter seems to have been a man of courage and piety. Were these traits passed on to his eldest son? Two chroniclers note the tragic death of Andrew, the younger son, in battle and it is with this story of his fall that is questioned the character of Erard II who holds the distinction of having been the first count of Brienne to die on crusade.

Erard II, Count of Brienne 1152 – 1189

The Early Years - Marriage into the House of Montbéliard

At the time of his father's death in 1152, Erard had already been on crusade once in 1147 - 48. Around the year 1166, if not before, he wed Agnès of Montfaucon, daughter of Amadeus of Montfaucon, count of Montbéliard.⁸⁹ This union, in concordance with previous unions and familial ties, would serve to cement the Brienne dynasty's familial associations in the East. Agnès's niece, Alice, would marry into the Ibelin family, which would establish a blood kinship between Erard's sons and the house of Ibelin, the most powerful nobles in Jerusalem. Indeed, it was the Brienne dynasty that would serve as the linchpin by which the houses of Ibelin, Montbéliard and Le Puiset were related.

Agnès of Montfaucon's great - grandfather was Amadeus I, lord of Montfaucon, the brother of Welf 'the Burgundian' who may have died whilst on the crusade of 1101.⁹⁰ Her grandfather, Richard

⁸⁸ In his work, *Le Premiers Seigneurs de Ramerupt*, published in 1860, Jubainville suggests that Walter died in 1152. In the footnote of this article, he states that Walter witnessed a charter of the abbey of Larivour in 1152 and his son, Erard II, took the title count of Brienne in 1153 [Jubainville, 'Ramerupt', p. 446]. However, in the CACB, published by the same author in 1872, there are several charters listed whereby Walter stood as witness after the supposed date of his death [CACB, 51 - 9]. Therefore, it is probable that his death occurred shortly after the date of the last extant charter, which would be 1161. Indeed, his son and successor, Erard II, appears in the extant charters as count of Brienne in the year 1161 [CACB, 58]. His wife apparently survived him by at least six years as she is present as witness to a charter issued by her son, Erard, in 1166 [CACB, 65].

⁸⁹ *Eracles*, 234; DHC, I, 244.

⁹⁰ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 224; WT, I, 224; ES, XI, 134.

II, married Sophia, the heiress of Montbéliard, daughter of Count Dietrich II of Montbéliard.⁹¹ Her father, Amadeus, held both Montfaucon and Montbéliard and her mother, Beatrice of Joinville, was the daughter of the founder of the house of Joigny, Roger of Joigny and his wife, Adèle of Vignory.⁹² Adèle of Vignory was the aunt of the Third Crusader, Barthélemy of Vignory (d. 1190 Acre), who was wed to Erard's sister, Agnès providing the second instance whereby a member of the house of Vignory was married into the house of Brienne.⁹³

In his work on the Le Puiset dynasty, of the many branches of this family and their common progenitor, John La Monte noted that according to Bishop William Stubbs who wrote at the beginning of the twentieth century;

The Lords of Ibelin and Mirabel, sprung from the house of Puiset, viscounts of Chartres, and closely connected with the counts of Champagne and Blois' were descended from Balian le Francois...described as brother of Count Guillin of Chartres, by which we are to understand that he was a relation of Hugh de Puiset count of Joppa, son of Everard and grandson of Geldewin viscount of Chartres. His name Balian is likely a softened form of Waleran.⁹⁴

La Monte further observed that although Stubbs cited DuCange as an authoritative reference, DuCange had taken liberties to advance the suggestion as indisputable fact. The one apparently conclusive statement concerning the origins of the house of Ibelin comes from the *Lignages of Outremer* which noted '*Balian le Fransois fu frere au conte Guillaumin [Guillin] de Chartres, et vint desa mer soi disenne de chevaliers...Ledit Balian espousa Helvis, la seur Phelipe de Naples..*'⁹⁵

⁹¹ ES, XI, 134.

⁹² The editor of the cartulaires of St. Etienne noted: '*D'après les Acta Sanctorum, sept, V. VIII, p. 720, Roger de Vignory (de Wangionis ripa) aurait eu une autre femme du nom d'Adèle, laquelle, mariée avec lui en troisièmes noces, et en quatrièmes avec le comte Rodulphe de Crespy, serait la mère de saint Simon de Bar - sur - Aube*' [St. Etienne, 71]. *Adèle's father was Guy III, lord of Vignory and her mother was Beatrice, the sister of Robert of Burgundy, bishop of Langres* [St. Etienne, 9, 11] *and of duke Odo 'Borel' I of Burgundy who died in the Holy Land in 1102, she was the granddaughter by consequence of Robert the Old, first hereditary duke of Burgundy of the first royal branch* [St. Etienne, 75 - 6].

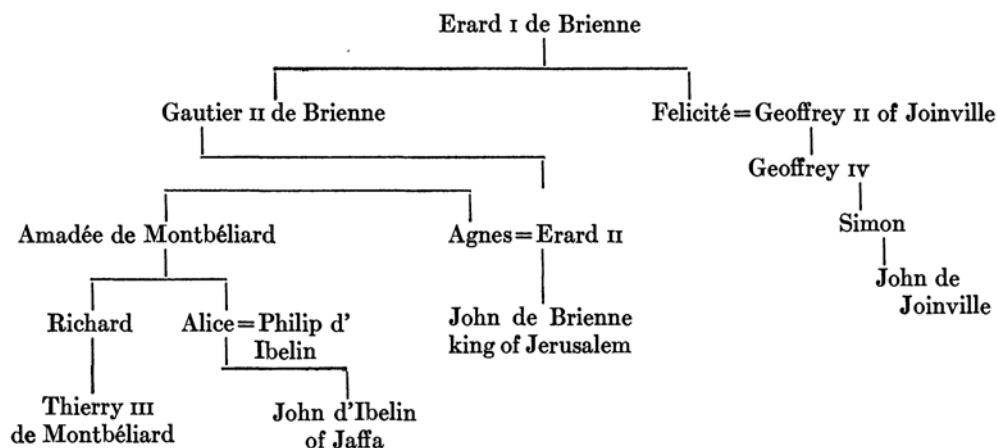
⁹³ *Cartulaire du Prieuré du Jully - les - Nonains*, ed. E. Petit (Auxerre, 1881), p. 16.

⁹⁴ La Monte, 'Le Puiset', p. 113; W. Stubbs, *Seventeen Lectures on Mediaeval and Modern History*. 3rd edn (Oxford, 1900), p. 190 and note.

⁹⁵ *Lignages d'Outremer*, ed. M - A. Nielen (Paris, 2003), p. 97: RHC, II, 435 - 74.

DuCange was of the opinion that Guillin could not possibly have been the count of Chartres because the county of Chartres was held by the counts of Blois. He argued that Guillin was in all likelihood Guilduin, viscount of Chartres in 1028 and founder of the house of Le Puiset.⁹⁶ In support of this theory, DuCange turned to Joinville's description of the *cross patée* of the Ibelin that was, with slight exception to the colour pattern, the same *cross patée* as that of the Le Puisets of England.⁹⁷ To counter this suggestion, La Monte claimed that difference in the colours of the two *cross patées* is significant for this leaves only the cross as the common feature of the *patées*. Indeed, Joinville noted that John of Ibelin was 'cousin germane of the count of Montbéliard and of the lineage of Joinville'.⁹⁸

LaMonte went on to remark that Joinville's ambiguous statement, which indicated kinship between the house of Montbéliard and the house of Joinville, did nothing to aid in determining the link with the Le Puisets as posited by Stubbs. Conversely, the relationship between the houses of Joinville and Montbéliard, he argued, may be traced through Alice of Montbéliard, the mother of John of Jaffa, and did not involve the paternal relatives at all. He then constructed the following chart to delineate this relationship between the Montbéliards and the Joinvilles.



There is however an error on this genealogical chart. Agnès of Montbéliard was not the sister of Amadeus of Montbéliard as implied by the genealogy, but rather she was his daughter and it was her brother, Eudes de Montfaucon, who served as constable of Jerusalem (1223 - 27) and later Lord of

⁹⁶ C. Du Fresne Du Cange, *Les Familles*, p. 361.

⁹⁷ Joinville noted, *D'or a une croiz de gueules patee*. Joinville, *Vie*, p. 256.

⁹⁸ Joinville, *Vie*, p. 77.

Tiberias (1218 - 47).⁹⁹ It was, in fact, Simone de Montfaucon, the daughter of Agnès' nephew, who wed Philip of Ibelin on 13 August 1253 by papal dispensation.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, John of Ibelin, lord of Jaffa was the cousin of the future Walter III, count of Brienne and his brother, John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem.

La Monte stated, 'I have not been able to trace any connection between the Le Puisets and either of these houses [Montbéliard and Joinville]'.¹⁰¹ He further suggested that because this connection was through the matrilineal line, it was of little consequence. However, it is important to elucidate the kinship between the houses of Joinville, Montbéliard and Le Puiset for their shared common ancestor is of the house of Brienne.

As previously discussed, Erard's mother, Alice, was the first cousin of Mabile of Roucy who wed Hugh I Le Puiset and was the mother of Hugh II Le Puiset who would go on to become lord of Jaffa. Erard II count of Brienne was married into the house of Montbéliard, which would serve to connect distantly the house of Le Puiset to the house of Montbéliard through the matrilineal line. The connection with the house of Joinville was established by Erard's aunt, Felicity, who took as her second husband in 1141 Geoffrey of Joinville, seneschal of Champagne.¹⁰²

In an article published in 1867, entitled, 'Notice sur un Famille Chartraine', A. de Saint Laumer questioned why William of Tyre had refrained from remarking upon the relationship between Hugh of Jaffa and Balian.¹⁰³ The answer to this question undoubtedly lies in the complexity of relationship between these families and is likely the reason why William of Tyre refrained from delving into the particulars of the dynastic connections.

Erard's brother - in - law, Walter of Montbéliard, would act as constable of Jerusalem sometime between 1201 and 1205 this same brother - in - law married Burgundia of Lusignan, daughter of King

⁹⁹ ES, XI, 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Lignages*, pp. 99, 102; Rüd - Collenberg, W. H. 'Les dispenses matrimoniales accordées à l'Orient Latin selon les Registres du Vatican 1283 - 1385', *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome. Moyen - Age, Temps Modernes*, Tome 89, no. 1 (1977), Tableau A, 6, p. 58.

¹⁰¹ La Monte, 'Le Puiset', p. 114.

¹⁰² *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 6B.

¹⁰³ A. de Saint Laumer, 'Notice sur une Famille Chartraine', in *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique d'Eure et Loir*, 4 (1867), p. 112.

Aimery of Jerusalem and Eschiva of Ibelin.¹⁰⁴ This very same Walter of Montbéliard would accompany Erard's son, Walter III, count of Brienne, as he campaigned in Sicily.¹⁰⁵ Walter's nephew, Odo of Montbéliard would act as constable to the Emperor Frederick II.¹⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that the relationship between Odo of Montbéliard and Frederick II may have experienced periods of contention given that Odo was the cousin of the sons of Erard's union with Agnès of Montbéliard, namely Walter of Brienne, count of Lecce and Taranto and his brother, John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople. Both Walter and John were in direct conflict with the interests of Frederick II at some point in their lives.

Turning back now to the marriage between Erard of Brienne and Agnès of Montbéliard. There were five children born of their union. The eldest, Walter, would go on to become Walter III, count of Brienne, of Lecce and Taranto. The second eldest, William, was without title, his grandfather's lesser title having gone to his uncle, Andrew, whose death and the circumstances surrounding it will be discussed shortly. William was wed to Eustachie of Courtenay, lady of Pacy - sur - Armançon, and when he died in 1200, she wed William of Champlitte who departed Pacy - sur - Armançon for the Fourth Crusade in the company of William's brother, Walter of Brienne, and would go on to have a distinguished career.¹⁰⁷ The third son, Andrew, disappears from record after 1181. The fourth son, John, would go on to become king of Jerusalem, emperor of Constantinople, and leader of the Fifth Crusade. John, as the youngest son, was intended for the church from birth, as had been his uncle, his grandfather's youngest child and his namesake, John, abbot of Beaulieu. The last child, Ida, would go on to marry Arnoul of Reynel, lord of Pierrefitte and of Cirey.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ DuCange, *Les Familles*, p. 621; *Opera Omnia*, I. XIV, 104. Longnon also cites Walter of Montbéliard as a source of inspiration for the art of the chansonnier in Champagne, particularly for the chansonnier Robert of Boron [Longnon, *Villehardouin*, p. 4].

¹⁰⁵ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, p. 2; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ HCC, IV, 302; Huillard - Bréholles, *Historia Diplomatica Friderici Secundi* (Paris, 1859), introduction, pp. 345 - 8; IV, 297; V, 360; S. Paoli, *Codice Diplomatico del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano oggi di Malta*. 2 vols (Lucca, 1733 - 7), I, 126.

¹⁰⁷ ES, III, 681; Longnon, *Villehardouin*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁸ ES, III, 681

The Deeds of Erard of Brienne

From the time of his succession in 1152 until 1179, there does not survive any record of Erard making new donations to religious houses. Indeed, extant charters suggest that he only approved donations which had already been made by his father and likely at the instigation of those houses concerned, behaviour that perhaps suggests that there were limited resources with which to make donations. His wife and his sons do not appear on record until 1181, the count having preferred to have his charters witnessed in the presence of his brothers, John, the abbot of Beaulieu and Andrew, lord of Ramerupt.¹⁰⁹

Although the Brienne had acknowledged the suzerainty of the count of Champagne since the time of Erard I, subsequent counts had thus succeeded in holding themselves aloof from their powerful neighbour.¹¹⁰ However, the county of Brienne was not to escape the notice of the count of Champagne as evidenced by Brienne's listing as the first fief of the Troyes and Isle region compiled for the count of Champagne in 1178.¹¹¹ In 1184, Erard was apparently involved in a war, possibly the contemporary Franco - Flemish struggle between the king of France, Philip Augustus and the count of Flanders, and increased taxes on his land to provision his castle.¹¹² There were several inquiries and disputes recorded during this count's tenure as well, for instance in 1185, an inquiry was opened into the rights of Erard II on the usage of the land held by the Cistercian abbey of Larivour in which the pope appointed a delegate to resolve the issue.¹¹³ It was only after the dispute between Erard and Larivour was resolved that Erard began to make donations to religious houses.

Erard and Frederick Barbarossa

In 1147, whilst Erard journeyed from France to the East with his father to take part in the Second Crusade, the future Holy Roman Emperor travelled with his uncle's army of German crusaders. Conrad, king of Germany, would go on to designate his nephew, Frederick Barbarossa, duke of

¹⁰⁹ See charters located in CACB dating from Erard's reign. CACB, 60 - 102.

¹¹⁰ For Erard I's attendance at the court of Champagne, cf. CACB, 23, 26 - 7, 30 - 2.

¹¹¹ 'Feoda Campanie i', no. 1884, in Longnon, *Documents*.

¹¹² HCC, IV, 5: CACB, 85: StL, 73.

¹¹³ CACB, 86 - 8.

Swabia, as his heir.¹¹⁴ Erard's grandmother, Alice, lady of Ramerupt had been the first cousin of Hugh Cholet who had wed Frederick's aunt, Richilde of Swabia in 1147.¹¹⁵ Frederick may have known of his aunt's relationship with Erard as the Hohenstaufen family would have needed to be aware of the lineage and kinsmen of Hugh Cholet to ensure that they were not within the prohibited degrees of marriage. Furthermore, with the marriage having taken place in the same year as the start of the Second Crusade, these relationships would have been fresh in the minds of those involved.

It is possible that Frederick became acquainted with his young Brienne cousin whilst on the Second Crusade. Indeed, a relationship beyond mere acquaintance is suggested by a charter in the CACB dated 1166 wherein Erard pays homage to Frederick, who was then Holy Roman Emperor, and his wife, Beatrice, countess of Burgundy...*praesenti scripto testor & notum facio omnibus Imperi Romani fidelibus, quod dominus Imperator Fridericus, & consors sua Beatrix, domina mea Imperatrix.*¹¹⁶ It is also of interest to note that Erard's displaced half - brother, Eustace was listed in this charter as a witness to the proceedings, his first reappearance in thirty - three years.

Erard's son, Walter, would go on to protect the interests of Frederick's grandson in Sicily. This grandson of Barbarossa, Frederick II, would later usurp the throne of the kingdom of Jerusalem from Erard's youngest son, John. The relationship between these two houses is of the utmost importance when this thesis later examines the problematic issues that stem from these familial connections. Indeed, it was whilst in service to Frederick II that Erard's heir, Walter III, was killed in southern Italy in June 1205. This thesis has attempted to establish that the kinship and familiarity between the two houses existed perhaps as early as the Second Crusade and certainly by the year 1166. Therefore, it is possible, if not probable, that the association of these two houses was outlined to the pope in order to court his favour and influence him in agreeing to the choice of Walter as champion of the papacy in Sicily. This is not an implausible suggestion given that Walter was distantly related to the young emperor Frederick II.

¹¹⁴ OF, pp. 284 - 7.

¹¹⁵ WT, II, 651 and *Genealogia Regum Francorum Tertiae Stockis* in RHGF, XIV, 6.

¹¹⁶ CACB, 68 and E. Perard, *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces Curieuses Servant à l'Histoire de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1664), pp. 253 - 4.

The Holy Land after 1148

After the failure to secure Damascus, the leaders of the Second Crusade could find no reason to linger in the Holy Land, with the exception of King Louis of France who remained in Palestine to visit pilgrimage sites.

The fall of Edessa in 1144 was a watershed in the history of the crusades, representing the most important setback yet suffered in the Latin East. Over the next fifty years, the Muslims were to have a sequence of successful leaders, the greatest of them being Saladin. Due in no small part to the internecine squabbles of the leaders of the Frankish kingdom, Jerusalem would fall to Saladin in 1187 and this disaster provoked the appeal for the Third Crusade (1187). Whilst the newly elected pope, Clement III, attempted to contact Frederick Barbarossa, the archbishop of Tyre journeyed west to meet with the kings of France and England. After a delayed start the first wave of crusaders finally reached the East.¹¹⁷

The Plancy Controversy: Lineage and Corruption

In chapter two of this work was mentioned the Brienne's marriage into the house of Plancy, a family that was of some standing in the Levant. In his work, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Jean Richard noted 'A newcomer to the East, who did not leave Champagne until after 1160, Miles of Plancy no doubt owed his rapid rise to his being related to King Amalric. The link was through the Montlhéry family'.¹¹⁸ Indeed, this is further supported by Bernard Hamilton who noted 'Miles of Plancy was a member of the royal family, being a third cousin of King Amalric'.¹¹⁹ Miles may have owed his rise in the Holy Land to this distant kinship, but his relationship to King Amalric may not have been through the maternal line as historians have posited. These scholars did not adduce primary sources to support this argument; rather they cited Roserot's work on the region of Plancy as an authority. Bernard

¹¹⁷ Niketas, *Byzantium*, p. 228. *Itinerarium*, pp. 54 - 5: Ibn al - Athir, *The Annals of the Saljuq Turks*, trans. D.S. Richards. 3 vols (Brookfield, 2002), II, 5: Baha' al - Din Ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. by D.S. Richards (Brookfield, 2001), pp. 113 - 4: *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*, trans. G.A. Loud (Farnham, 2010), pp. 115 - 6. Whilst others suggest that Barbarossa drowned whilst taking a bath in shallow water, Phillips posits that Barbarossa suffered a heart attack [Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, p. 2].

¹¹⁸ J. Richard, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1979), A, 152, n° 28

¹¹⁹ B. Hamilton, 'Miles of Plancy and the Fief of Beirut', in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. B.Z. Kedar (Jerusalem, 1992), 136 - 46, p. 136.

Hamilton directly cites Roserot's *Dictionnaire Historique*; whilst in his work, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, Jonathan Phillips cited Hamilton's work.¹²⁰ Reliance upon the *Dictionnaire Historique* is misplaced as Roserot himself obtained his information from a secondary source, namely André Duchesne's *Histoire Maison de Broyes*.¹²¹

Roserot stated '[Hugh of Plancy, Miles's father] était marié déjà 1085, à Emeline dont le nom de famille est inconnu. Duchesne dit simplement qu'un fille de Milon I de Montlhéry espousa le sire de Plancy et il ne le nomme pas'.¹²² Notwithstanding the absence of the name of this supposed daughter of the house of Montlhéry, Duchesne went further to note that a daughter named Emeline of the house of Montlhéry wed Hugh II Bardolf of Broyes.¹²³ This Emeline that is mentioned in Duchesne's work cannot be the daughter of the house of Montlhéry who was supposedly wed to Hugh of Plancy for Duchesne specifically noted that Ermeline was married to Hugh II Bardolf of Broyes. It goes without saying that Roserot and Duchesne were uncertain of the lineage of the wife of Hugh of Plancy. And although it would seem that historians of the crusades have not been judicious in relying upon an uncertain source, Miles was indeed related to Amalric through the marriage of his cousin, Clarembaud III, to Emerjert of Montlhéry.

One may question if these distant degrees of kinship were of merit, and if these distant kinships were acknowledged at the time. Indeed, they were and perhaps more importantly, the descendants of Roucy were recognised as being of Capetian stock by their contemporaries. Alberic of Trois Fontaines, although writing in the thirteenth century and undoubtedly benefiting from hindsight and knowledge of the success of the descendants of the house of Roucy, noted in his chronicle; *Anno 1070. Manasses ordinatur Remensium archiepiscopus per annos XVI. De matre hujus dictum est superius in anno 1031, quod ipsa fuit Beatrix de Roceo, neptis regis Roberti; pater vero eiusdem archiepiscopi dictus est Manasses Calva Asina, et fuit frater comitis Hilduini de Rameruit sive de Roceo*.¹²⁴ Hamilton also recognised the importance of kinship during this period, regardless of the

¹²⁰ J. P. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119 - 1187* (Oxford, 1996), p. 225.

¹²¹ To redress any further confusion, cf. A. Duchesne, 'Broyes et de Chateau - villain', p. 10 : DHC, II, 1131.

¹²² DHC, II, 1131.

¹²³ Duchesne, 'Broyes et de Chateau - Villaine', p. 10.

¹²⁴ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 796: Longnon, *Documents*, I, 453.

great degrees which separated them; ‘This was the kind of relationship of which the twelfth - century nobility needed to be aware, because of canon law rulings about the prohibited degrees of marriage’.¹²⁵

Miles of Plancy served as seneschal of Jerusalem during the reign of King Amalric and when the king died on 11 July 1174, it is generally believed that Miles was appointed as regent.¹²⁶ It was considered an honour to be appointed to such an august position as seneschal, the king’s right hand whose duties would have included administering legal courts and dispensing with justice as well as overseeing the administration of the king’s household and perhaps on a broader scale, the kingdom. However, Miles’s career subsequent to the death of the king was a disastrous affair which came to a violent end when he was cut down in the streets of Acre with no recorded attempt having been made to capture his killers.¹²⁷ His legacy appears to have ended with his demise; had he any sons or heirs, they did not achieve prestige as crusaders or hold positions of consequence in the Levant.

Miles was one of the first crusaders related to the Brienne to have achieved status in the Holy Land and his example, coupled with that of his Spanish kinsmen, undoubtedly served to further perpetuate the espousal of the crusade *ethos* within the Brienne dynasty. In fact, for generations of Brienne counts after the First Crusade, as with several other families, such as the Lusignan and others, crusading appeared a hereditary act, with Erard’s son taking to crusade like his father before him and his son doing the same. Although the exact nature of the relationship between Miles and his Brienne cousins remains imprecise, there was an existing kinship.

The two marriages of Erard I’s sister, Gildie of Brienne, succeeded in connecting two separate crusader dynasties to the crusaders of Brienne. With Plancy, Montlhéry and Le Puiset cousins, in addition to a strong tradition of crusading and the acknowledged importance of family connections in Outremer, it seems that the Brienne were taking the first steps towards becoming important figures in the kingdom of Jerusalem.

¹²⁵ Hamilton, ‘Miles of Plancy and the Fief of Beirut’, p. 137.

¹²⁶ *Regni Iherosolymitani Brevis Historia*, in *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de Suaoi Continuatori*, ed. L.V. Belgrano (Genoa, 1890), I, 135. For a full discussion on the career of Miles of Plancy, see Bernard Hamilton’s ‘Miles of Plancy and the Fief of Beirut’.

¹²⁷ WT, II, 965.

Erard and Andrew's Arrival in the Holy Land on the Third Crusade

In the summer of 1189, Erard arrived in the East. Before he departed on crusade, the charter evidence suggests that he was busy in his county, but there is only one surviving charter that clearly indicates fund raising. In early 1189, he reclaimed a quarter of his rights over the land of Sacey that he had given to the Abbey of Saint Loup for 20 sous of rent and assured this abbey the rents on his revenues of Piney, Sacey and Rouilly.¹²⁸ Perhaps amongst the many knights and men - at - arms in Erard's retinue was his sister Agnès's son, Erard, lord of Chacenay who would die in battle at Acre in 1191.¹²⁹ Indeed, amongst the ranks of those who travelled with Erard was also the husband of his youngest sister, Barthélemy, lord of Vignory, as he too would die at Acre.¹³⁰

In a charter dated 1188 that has survived in its original form and is now kept at the Department d'Archives de l'Aube, Erard confirmed a gift made by his vassal, Simon, in the presence of his sons Walter and William and two additional men, Gobertus and Peter. In another charter dated 1183, Erard's well - preserved equestrian seal is accompanied by that of his brother John, abbot of Beaulieu's seal. Erard made numerous gifts of lands and rents to the abbey of Bassefontaine, which his mother founded. In return for his gifts, the canons of Bassefontaine were to supply the hosts for the mass held by all the churches on Brienne lands.¹³¹

In his *Gesta*, Roger of Howden noted that Erard arrived in the Holy Land in the company of James of Avesnes.¹³² Erard and James of Avesnes were kinsmen. Erard's matrilineal great - grandfather, Andrew of Ramerupt had a sister, Ade, who took as her third husband Thierry of Avesnes with whom she established the abbey of Liessies in the diocese of Cambrai around 1095.¹³³ Ade and Thierry of

¹²⁸ CACB, 100 and StL, 103.

¹²⁹ HCC, IV, 30.

¹³⁰ CACB, 100 and StL, 103.

¹³¹ Slack, *Crusade Charters*, p. 113.

¹³² Roger of Howden, *The Annals of Roger Howden*. 4 vols (London, 1853), II, 126. Also repeated in Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*. 4 vols. (London, 1868 - 1871), III, 20.

¹³³ The dedication of Liessies was celebrated by Barthélemy, bishop of Laon, the nephew of Ade. Cf. *Gallia Christ*, III, 124: Alberic of Trois - Fontaines also noted this event, *Abbatia de Letiis restitute est per Theodericum de Avesnis et Aldam uxorem ejus anno 1030* [Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 783, 1.42]. A. Duchesne, *Historiae Francorum Scriptores*, IX, 2nd part, p. 578. *Gallia Christ*, III, col. 123. On his death, cf. P. Hossart, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Profane du Hainaut* (Mons, 1792), I, 216. On her marriages, cf. *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusciniacensis* 17, in MGH XXIII, 255 and *Chronicon Loetiense* 3, MGH XIV, 493 - 4.

Avesnes were the great - grandparents of James of Avesnes, which made him a distant relative of Erard of Brienne, both men being descendants of the house of Roucy.

James of Avesnes became the leader of the crusader army shortly after his arrival in the Holy Land in the early stages of the siege of Acre in September 1189.¹³⁴ He was made famous by his deeds during the Third Crusade as expressed in the *Ordinacio de predicatione S. Crucis, in Anglia* which has been attributed to Philip of Oxford.¹³⁵ Of the *Ordinacio*, Powell noted that it is 'not a sermon but a guide for the development of a sermon on the preaching of the cross to the laity....Two concepts emerge from this treatise. First, the crusade is an imitation of Christ...Second, the crusade is a *vocatio*, a vocation'.¹³⁶

In a section of the *Ordinacio* devoted to the importance of taking the cross, the author described James of Avesnes as an exemplary knight by attributing a speech to him in which James attempts to deter his friends from giving up the fight in the midst of a massacre. In the *Ordinacio*, James says, 'I will go forth more willingly and let no man hold me back'.¹³⁷

James of Avesnes' son would participate in the Fourth Crusade and his son would participate in the Fifth Crusade and as Powell noted, 'At least part of this crusade tradition of the Avesnes family could have been known to the audience, reinforcing the image of the selfless generosity illustrated in the *exemplum*'.¹³⁸ James of Avesnes was killed on 7 September 1191 when the army of crusaders was set upon by the Muslims at Arsuf. In further testament to his popularity and the high regard in which he was held, his death provoked widespread mourning.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ He had previously gained notoriety in consequence of his rebellion against the authority of his lord, the count of Flanders [AVD, III, 11]. *Il prit part à la troisième croisade, où il se distingua par sa vaillance. Il mourut en combatant* (sept. 1191) [*L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. P. Meyer (Paris, 1891 - 1901), III, 40]. *Eracles*, 127.

¹³⁵ Philip of Oxford, "Ordinacio de predicatione S. Crucis in Anglia," in *Quinti Belli Sacri Scriptores*, ed. R. Röhrich (Geneva, 1879), II, 2 - 26.

¹³⁶ Powell, *Anatomy*, p. 52.

¹³⁷ Philip of Oxford, "Ordinacio", p. 20: cf. Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, ed. M. Ailes and M. Barber, trans. M. Ailes. 2 vols (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 108 - 9: cf. Powell, *Anatomy*, p. 54.

¹³⁸ Powell, *Anatomy*, p. 60.

¹³⁹ Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, ed. W. Stubbs. 2 vols (London, 1847), II, 141.

Erard's brother, Andrew, lord of Ramerupt, arrived in the Holy Land at a later date and in the company of Geoffrey of Lusignan.¹⁴⁰ In 1189, when news reached Geoffrey that his brother, King Guy, had been captured, he was not content to wait for the kings of England and France to depart for crusade. He gathered his men to him and hurried to the Holy Land. In his retinue was Andrew of Brienne.¹⁴¹

Andrew of Brienne, Lord of Ramerupt

Of Andrew, Alberic of Trois - Fontaines noted *Pater regis Iohannis Ierosolimitani, comes Erardus, fratrem habuit Andream de Venesio, titulis militie famosissimum*.¹⁴² Andrew was the second son of Walter II and Adélaide of Soissons. Before 1167, he married Adelaide de Vénisy, daughter of Anseau de Vénisy and with her he had at least six children, including Erard of Brienne, who would later go on to claim the county of Champagne by right of his wife.¹⁴³

There are indications in the extant sources that Andrew's relationship with his brother was unstable, if not explicitly hostile; their father made several donations to ensure a substantial inheritance for Andrew, often at the expense of Erard's patrimony. In 1147, whilst reaffirming the donations given by his father, Walter II gave to the Priory of Notre Dame of Ramerupt the right to use his forest.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, on the day he departed for the crusade with his heir, Erard, Walter ensured the future security of the priory of Ramerupt and approved the donations made by his vassals to the priory.¹⁴⁵ This priory of Ramerupt became one of only a few beneficiaries of donations given by Walter and his numerous vassals. This benevolence continued once Walter returned from the Holy Land, indeed, in what was perhaps his most lucrative gift; he gave the monks of the priory the right to set up a market in Ramerupt.¹⁴⁶ Whilst these gifts do not appear to have been out of the ordinary in content or number, and are in fact indicators of piety and charity, Walter was conscious of ensuring

¹⁴⁰ *Eracles*, 124. The author of the *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte* suggests that Erard and Andrew arrived in each other's company, but this was likely a literary ploy to maintain the rhyming scheme of the poem. Cf. Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ *Eracles*, 124.

¹⁴² Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', p. 903.

¹⁴³ ES, III, 686.

¹⁴⁴ CACB, 45.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 54.

that Andrew's inheritance was prosperous, perhaps overly so and given the later nature of the relationship between the two brothers, these donations likely bred sibling conflict.

As previously discussed, the title Ramerupt came into the family when the eldest brother of Alice of Ramerupt, wife of Erard I, count of Brienne, died without issue c.1108. Alice and Erard's son, Walter II, took the title *lord of Ramerupt* as was intended for him to do so by his deceased uncle. He then passed this title on to his son, Andrew. It is likely that the Ramerupt lands and title were, by right of custom, the inheritance of the eldest son, Erard, and were bestowed upon Andrew, the second son, at the behest of his father. Although it was Walter's intent for his youngest son to take the title lordship of Ramerupt, it was a full thirteen years after his death that Andrew eventually came to possess the territory.

This prolonged period of time between his father's death and the claiming of his patrimony was not due to Andrew's minority as at the time of his father's death, Andrew was of an age to witness his father's charters with both himself and his brother, Erard, appearing on record in the same charter dated 1145.¹⁴⁷ Had Andrew been born in 1145, he would have been at least sixteen years old at the time of his father's death c.1161. Presumably, the length of time that it took for him to come into his inheritance was not due to Andrew's age, rather it was in consequence of Erard's attempts to purposefully keep his brother from his patrimony. For thirteen years, the brothers were locked in bitter dispute over the land.

Roserot noted that Erard did not release to Andrew the territory of Ramerupt until his brother swore to hold it in fief to the county of Brienne, which effectively rendered Andrew his brother's vassal and not his equal.¹⁴⁸ It was not until 1176 that Andrew appears on record as Andrew *of Ramerupt*. This may explain why Andrew and his brother journeyed to the Holy Land in separate retinues. It is not clear how Andrew came to befriend Geoffrey, lord of Lusignan.¹⁴⁹ Andrew may

¹⁴⁷ CACB, 41.

¹⁴⁸ DHC, II, 1227.

¹⁴⁹ In his monograph on the lords of Lusignan, Painter noted Geoffrey of Lusignan made an indelible impression on his contemporaries. In an age of war and warriors he was frequently mentioned as a particularly effective soldier. In a charter of his son, Geoffrey II, he was referred to as 'lo Prodome' [*Addenda Chronico Richardi Pictaviensis* in RHGF, XII, 419: *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. F. Michel, in *Société de l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1840), p. 94 : *Cartulaires du Bas - Poitou*, ed. P. Marchegay (Les Roches - Baritaud, 1872), pp.

have become involved in the politics of 1177 when the last count of La Marche sold his county to Henry of England and Geoffrey of Lusignan came forward to claim it for his family by hereditary right.¹⁵⁰

This thesis has examined the dynamics behind Andrew's troubled relationship with his brother in order to set the stage for events that unfolded on 4 October 1189 when Andrew was killed. Evidently, there was no rapprochement between the two. Indeed, to his contemporaries, Andrew's death was extremely problematic. As discussed in greater detail shortly, he had been a man of importance, having been leader of the rearguard of the crusader army. In testament of the repercussions of his death, these events were recounted in no fewer than four surviving chronicles. The allegations levelled against Erard for his part in his brother's death were substantial and did much to impugn his honour. In the next section, this matter, and the consequences that resulted, shall be further explored.

The Controversial Death of Andrew of Brienne

*La fud ocis Andreu de Braine -
Qui ja s'alme ne seit en paine,
Car tells chevaliers ne murut
Ne tantes genz ne socurut.*

Ambroise, *Estoire de la guerre sainte*¹⁵¹

There are four sources that recount the death of Andrew of Brienne. The first source is the *Histoire de la guerre sainte* of Ambroise. It is a lengthy poem likely composed by an eyewitness (or by someone who closely followed an eyewitness account).¹⁵² He wrote in Old French verse and it is believed, given that he writes in verse, the traditional way of recounting a story meant to be read aloud, that he was a jongleur. The *Histoire* was rediscovered in 1897 when Gaston Paris published his edition of the text and whilst it lay undiscovered in the Vatican Library, historians accepted the second source, the

304 - 05]. Apparently his ability in war was matched only by his love for it and he was completely unhampered by any delicate feeling about feudal propriety [Painter, 'Lords of Lusignan', pp. 27 - 47].

¹⁵⁰ Painter, 'Lords of Lusignan', p. 41.

¹⁵¹ Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, p. 48. Translation - There was Andrew of Brienne slain: May his soul suffer not in pain! Never died knight so unafraid, Or so quick to lend others aid.

¹⁵² Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, i & ii

Itinerarium regis Ricardi which was believed to have been ‘composed’ by Richard, a canon of the Holy Trinity, London, as the authoritative account of the Third Crusade.¹⁵³ Indeed, when juxtaposed, the most notable distinction between the two texts is the recounting of the siege of Acre before the arrival of the kings of England and France that is found in the *Itinerarium* and lacking in the *Histoire*. It is now generally held that for most of his narrative, the author of the *Itinerarium* borrowed heavily from the *Histoire*.¹⁵⁴

The third source, as discussed in the Introduction, is known as the *L’Estoire de Eracles empereur et la conqueste de la terre d’Outremer*, or for brevity’s sake, the *Eracles*. It is, in fact, one of the many continuations that were composed after the death of that renowned chronicler, William of Tyre. In her work on the continuations of William of Tyre, Janet Shirley remarked little on the accuracy or authority of the *Eracles* text; she noted only that there are occasions when the *Eracles* text conflicts with the contemporary continuation of William of Tyre known as the *Rothelin* text. However, perhaps of greater importance to this section of this study than the question of unfailing accuracy is Shirley’s observation that the *Eracles* text offers an unquestionable character analysis of the men and women of that time and how they preferred to interpret the age in which they lived.¹⁵⁵ Edbury is more thorough in his assessment of the reliability of these texts ‘In all probability, the sections describing the events of the years 1186 and 1187 incorporate much that was written by Ernoul and so can be accepted as a reworking of his eye - witness account’, the remainder, however, cannot and that includes the years relevant to this section of the thesis.¹⁵⁶

In an unpublished paper on the continuations of William of Tyre and the Ernoul - Bernard text, Edbury noted that the latter text was put together ‘in the late 1220s and early 1230s by someone associated with John of Brienne, whose immediate purpose was to explain John’s by - then troubled relationship with Frederick II, and how it was that he came to be governing Constantinople’.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, ii, xii.

¹⁵⁵ *Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century: The Rothelin Continuation of the History of William of Tyre with part of the Eracles or the Acre Text*, ed. and trans. J. Shirley (Brookfield, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ P. W. Edbury, ‘New Perspectives’, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*: G. Perry, ‘John of Brienne’, p. 27.

And the last source of importance to this section, Roger of Howden's *Gesta*, compiled c. 1191, offers information on the arrival of the main players in the Holy Land as well as an indispensable list of those who died at Acre.¹⁵⁸

The story of Andrew's death begins with his arrival alongside his companion, Geoffrey of Lusignan, at Tyre in 1189. Once there, they received news that Geoffrey's brother, Guy, king of Jerusalem, had been released from captivity by Saladin. Once liberated, Guy went immediately to Tripoli where he revoked his oath to Saladin to retreat to the West and never again raise arms against the Muslims. He gathered his forces and marched for Tyre with the intent of taking over leadership of the city. The doors were closed to him by Conrad of Montferrat who proclaimed that he held the city for the crusader kings who were coming to rescue them. Embittered, Guy retreated to Tripoli.¹⁵⁹

Frustrated that he found himself a king with no kingdom, Guy decided that he would take his followers south to lay siege to Acre. He arrived outside the city walls on 28 August and established his camp on the neighbouring hill of Toron by a river that supplied the army with water.¹⁶⁰ His brother, Geoffrey of Lusignan and Andrew of Brienne were likely with him by this time. When Guy attempted, three days later, to take the city by force and failed, he was compelled to await reinforcements. Ships from Italy brought a contingent of men from Flanders and France. It was with these men, led by his cousin James of Avenses, that Erard travelled from France, along with his kinsman, Robert, count of Dreux, the count of Bar and Philip, bishop of Beauvais.¹⁶¹

With Guy, Sybilla and Geoffrey encamped on the hill of Toron, it is likely that Andrew camped here as well. On the other side of the hill were James of Avenses, along with the Germans and Genoese who had travelled with Guy from Tripoli. Conrad of Montferrat had encamped below the hill towards the sea. In his camp was Erard, count of Brienne, along with the count of Dreux, and the French.¹⁶² Saladin and his forces had encamped on the opposite side of Toron and they had the

¹⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion on the author, accuracy and dating of the *Gesta*, cf. J. Gillingham, *Richard Coeur de Lion* (London, 1994), pp. 141 - 53; Roger of Howden, *Gesta Henrici II et Ricardi I*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1867).

¹⁵⁹ *Itinerarium*, pp. 27 - 8; *Eracles*, 114: 119 - 20.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Howden, *Gesta*, I, 95 - 6.

¹⁶² *Radulfi De Diceto Decani Londoniensis Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1876), p. 79. Here is also listed others who traveled with the army.

crusaders so tightly confined that no food could break through the lines. On 4 October, after they had fortified the camp, leaving the safety of the women and children to Guy's brother, Geoffrey of Lusignan, the crusaders launched an attack against Saladin's army.

As the companion of the king of Jerusalem's brother, Andrew's nomination to the important position of defender of the rearguard of the crusader army is thus qualified.¹⁶³ The *Eracles* stated 'the master of the Temple, brother Gerard of Ridefort, made up the front guard and Andrew of Brienne the rearguard. The king, Guy and Geoffrey of Lusignan, his brother, guarded the pilgrims from the Muslims in the city'.¹⁶⁴ The army broke through the Saracen defences and whilst Runciman remarked that 'the Count of Brienne even penetrated to the Sultan's own camp,' he does not adduce a primary source and this feat of valour remains unsubstantiated.¹⁶⁵ When some pilgrims left the safety of the army to chase after an errant horse, the army lines broke. The Muslims slaughtered many Christians whilst the king, the master of the Temple, and Andrew of Brienne continued to fight to protect them 'A ce que li Sarrasin les tormentoient ensi, li Crestien et li roi Gui et le maistre dou Temple et André de Briene, o grant plenté de gent, alerent rescorre cele gent'.¹⁶⁶

There are three different versions of what happened next in the main sources. They are all in agreement that when the Muslims realised the crusader army had broken rank, they sallied forth with great strength. The *Histoire* stated simply, 'La fud occis Andreu de Braine: Que je s'alme ne seit en paine'.¹⁶⁷ The *Eracles* claimed that had it not been for Geoffrey of Lusignan, the camp would have been lost.¹⁶⁸ It went on to say that whilst defending and attempting to rescue the people who were left vulnerable by the breaking of the ranks, Andrew, along with the Templars, fought valiantly in the rearguard to protect them and bring them to safety. The *Eracles* continued by noting that it was in the

¹⁶³ For a discussion on the importance of defending the rearguard, cf. R.C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097 - 1193* 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 75 - 80.

¹⁶⁴ *Eracles*, 129.

¹⁶⁵ J.C.S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*. 3 vols (Cambridge, 1951 - 4), III, p. 25.

¹⁶⁶ *Eracles*, 129.

¹⁶⁷ Ambroise, *Histoire de la Guerre Sainte*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁸ *Eracles*, 130: *se Deu par sa grace ne les eust secorus par Jofrei de Lisignan, qui la deffendi au jor avec cele petite gent que li rois avoit laissé en sa compaignie por la garde de la herberge.*

midst of battle when the knights were rushing down the hill that Andrew was killed, it says no more about his death.¹⁶⁹

The *Itinerarum* suggested that Andrew was attempting to prevent the others knights from fleeing in the face of the Saracen onslaught when he was killed. Although not clearly stated, the author does hint at an incident recorded by the author of the *Eracles* whereby Andrew fought at the rearguard with the Templars to protect the pilgrims.¹⁷⁰ *In hoc tam flebili et infelici tumultu Andreas de Breno, dum aliis, ne terga prebeant, animosus inclamat, ab irruentibus Turcis perimitur, quem adeo supra omnes Francos virtus extuerat, ut ei militia primate concessa ceteri de laude secunda certarent.*¹⁷¹ After this passage, the events that are recounted do more than a little to support the belief that Andrew and his brother were at odds. Indeed, if the author of the *Itinerarum* is to be believed, Erard witnessed his brother fall on the battlefield and although Andrew called out to him, Erard left his brother to die at the hands of the Muslims in what was, to this chronicler, a flagrant display of apathy and cowardice.¹⁷² *Frater eius comes Brenensis non inscius preterivit collapsum, vocatus quidem subsistere timuit et gloriam, quam casus obtulerat, ignavia declinavi.*¹⁷³ The author did not cease his condemnation for several lines, he proceeded to place emphasis on the depravity of Erard's actions by juxtaposing him to a knight of honour who came to the aid of James of Avesnes.¹⁷⁴ *Ceterum miles quidam, cum Iacobum de Auennis equo perturbatum conspiceret, mox equum, cui fugiens insidebat, ei contradidit et mortem domini sui morte sua laudandu redemit.*¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹ *Eracles*, 130: *Li rois et li miastres dou Temple et André, o cele conpaignie que il avoient, deffendirent et rescostrent icele menue gent, qui estoient en la herberge de Salahadin alé, au meauz que il postrent: si que en la descendue dou Toron de Salahadin, li Sarrasin chargerent si durement le roi et sa compaignie, que a bien po que il eussent esté tuit perdu. Li miastres dou Temple et André et Briene faisoient l'ariere garde, il se tindrent tant que les gens furent mises a suaveté. A la descendue dou Toron, il furent tant chargé, que li miastres dou Temple et André furent ilec morz.*

¹⁷⁰ *Itinerarium*, pp. 314 - 5.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* 'In this sad and unfortunate confusion, Andrew of Brienne was killed by the Turkish onrush while he was courageously calling out to the others not to run away [Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 80]'.¹⁷²

¹⁷² *ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 'His brother, the count of Brienne, knew that he had fallen and passed by him, but although his brother called to him for help he was afraid to stop. So cowardice declined the glory which chance had offered' [Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 80].

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* 'In contrast, when another knight who was fleeing saw that James of Avesnes had been thrown off his horse, he immediately gave him the horse on which he as sitting. So by his own death that laudable man ransomed his lord from death [Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 80]'.

One must wonder if the author of the *Itinerarium* was alone in his opinion. It is clear from other examples how cowardice was rewarded, as in the case of Stephen of Blois, who was never able to shake off the blemish to his reputation when he left the crusaders besieged.¹⁷⁶ If the events surrounding Andrew's death filtered throughout the crusader army, then death may have been a welcome blessing for Erard. Indeed, it is possible that were he not ill shortly after his brother's death and forced to remain in the Holy Land, Erard made the choice to remain in order to repent for his perceived sins against his brother.

The count of Brienne likely lived for at least six months after the loss of his brother. In the summer of 1190, death was rampant throughout the crusader camp. Roger of Howden's *Gesta* lists Erard's name amongst the many that died at Acre of disease.¹⁷⁷ Andrew was survived by his wife, Aalide, lady of Venisy and his two sons, Walter and Erard. Walter died young without heirs and Erard inherited Ramerupt.¹⁷⁸ In yet another step forward for the dynasty, Erard would take as his wife Philippa, the daughter of Henry the Liberal and through her, he would lay claim to the rights of the county of Champagne in a bid that would embroil the region of Champagne in a civil war.

Erard's participation in two crusades, his marriage into a well - connected house and his brother's heroic death on the battlefield served to bring the family out of crusade obscurity and into the pages of the chronicles of the crusades. Although, Erard's name may have been damaged by his actions, the Brienne had finally captured the notice of those in the Levant and perhaps beyond. To borrow from Kathleen Thompson when she spoke of Rotrou of Perche, the same can also be said of the Brienne, 'The family's participation in every crusading initiative of the twelfth century therefore suggests as much a renewal of commitment in each generation as an emulation of family achievement'.¹⁷⁹ This achievement would no doubt serve to bolster the prestige bestowed upon Erard's son, Walter, as examined in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁶ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 310 - 1, 592 - 5.

¹⁷⁷ Howden, *Gesta*, I, 148.

¹⁷⁸ Jubainville, 'Ramerupt', p. 447.

¹⁷⁹ Thompson, 'Family Tradition', p. 33.

Chapter Four

Walter III, Count of Brienne, Lecce and Taranto

Walter III was the first of the crusader counts of Brienne to become involved in a political movement that would serve to shape and secure his place and that of his family in the Levant. He is also the first Brienne whose history has been preserved in the contemporary chronicles of his time and has been subjected to the interest of modern historians such as David Abulafia and James Powell whose research interests include, but are not limited to; the kingdom of Sicily, Papal Reform under Innocent III, and the Fourth Crusade. This chapter is important to this study of the Brienne on crusade not least because Walter III did much to pave the way for the nomination of his young brother, John of Brienne, to the throne of Jerusalem, but also because scholars have suggested that the campaign in Sicily was a crusade in which Pope Innocent III bestowed crusader privileges, a suggestion that shall be fully addressed in this chapter.

Walter as Count of Brienne (1190 – 1205)

Upon his father's death at Acre in 1190, Walter became count of Brienne. As with all of the counts of Brienne, it is difficult to identify the exact date of his birth; however, he and his brothers, William and Andrew, are first mentioned in an extant charter dated 1177. His mother, Agnès of Montbéliard, is first mentioned in 1166.¹ Given the volume of surviving charters that date from 1161, the first year of Erard II's reign, and considering that Agnès was not mentioned at all in the extant charters from the first five years of his tenure, there is no cause to believe that Erard married Agnès earlier than 1166. It is therefore feasible that Walter's birth took place shortly after the marriage in 1166.

Walter was an educated man. He was the first of the counts of Brienne whom the charters note had a tutor.² As a teenager he was likely under the tutelage of Master Gilo in 1184, *Gilon pédagogue de Gautier*, and a mature young man at the time of his succession in 1190.³ Although Walter is described in the chronicle of Burchard von Ursberg as a *nobiles quidem, sed pauperes*, the extant charters do not

¹StL, 56: CACB, 67.

²Ibid.: CACB, 85.

³CACB, 85.

explicitly support this suggestion.⁴ For the first seven years of Walter's reign there is only one transaction of sale that survives and even in this instance, Walter was asked only to approve the selling of land by the abbey of Beaulieu to the abbey of Boulancourt.⁵ It is not until some time later, during the years 1199 – 1201, that the evidence suggests that the county was under financial strain because during those years unprecedented fundraising took place within Brienne. Indeed, it was at this time that Walter mortgaged a great deal of Brienne lands for at least 700 *l*.⁶ Several circumstances may have necessitated Walter's need to sell off such a large portion of the county's landed wealth. A leading cause may have been because of the financial strain exerted by the Brienne who participated in the Third Crusade. There are several examples of crusaders being in financial difficulties in the aftermath of their campaigns, for example, the Genoese in the early 1150s.⁷ Other causes may include poor administration or a spell of particularly bad harvests. Whatever the case may be, none of his predecessors sold or exchanged land, goods and woods to the same degree as Walter III.

The county was seemingly prosperous in 1161 as the counts oversaw the creation and management of markets within Brienne.⁸ As previously mentioned, since the First Crusade, Brienne had been funding the taking of the cross, and pilgrimages to the Holy Land by the counts and an indeterminate number of their household knights and men - at - arms, for 'there is little doubt that if a noble decided to take the cross, then barring old age or physical impediment, his household knights were duty bound to share their master's enthusiasm'.⁹

Funding for such an undertaking by hearth knights or vassals dependent upon the munificence of the counts would have to come from the Brienne coffers. The substantial financial risk posed by the crusade, however, was strategically minimised by the counts themselves who on the First, Second and Third Crusades had taken the cross and departed for the Holy Land as part of the contingent of their liege lord, the count of Champagne. Phillips noted, 'it has been estimated that a knight needed to

⁴ *Burchardi Praepositi Urspergensis Chronicon*, p. 86.

⁵ CACB, 104

⁶ CACB, 124: cf. *Littere Baronum: the Earliest Cartulary of the Counts of Champagne*, ed. T. Evergates (Toronto, 2003), no. 29. To get an idea of the value of the livres in the trade ports of Italy and other parts of France, cf. P. Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* (London, 1986), pp. 164 - 7.

⁷ H.C. Krueger 'Post - War collapse and rehabilitation in Genoa, 1149 - 1162, in *Studio in onore di Gino Luzzatto*. 2 vols (Milan, 1949), I, 117 - 28.

⁸ CACB, 54.

⁹ Phillips, *Fourth Crusade*, p. 14.

spend four times his annual income to pay for a crusade—yet his family still needed to survive at home and there had to be provisions for them in case he did not return'.¹⁰ Undoubtedly, the counts of Brienne, who in each instance left behind a wife and at least three children, were fully aware of the substantial burden this undertaking would place upon their finances. Phillips went further to note that 'many crusaders seem to have run out of money in the course of their journey to the East, which meant that they relied on the patronage of the most senior nobles, or on securing booty from the campaign'.¹¹

The years 1199 - 1201 were not the first years on record that reflect financial difficulty for the Brienne. Lack of money first became a cause for concern prior to the call for the Third Crusade. Indeed, in 1185, the family vineyard, Bertrimonte, was sold.¹² And whilst reasonable to assume that a year before departure on crusade the charters would reflect the selling of land in preparation for the event, it was a full four years prior to Erard's departure for Outremer that the charters confirm a considerable exchange of goods for money. It is possible that the family's finances improved slightly whilst Erard was away on crusade as the first seven years of Walter's tenure do not reflect sufficient activity to support the suggestion that he was having financial issues.

The first charter attributed to Walter dated 1192 noted one of the few gifts that he made during his tenure as count, a gift to his sergeant, Raoul de l'Etape, of the land and rents that he held over Radonvilliers (seven years later, Walter would entrust this land, and others held by Raoul, to the abbey of Molesme for safeguarding).¹³ From 1192 until his departure for Italy in 1200, Walter serves only to witness gifts made by others. However, by 1201 he was again experiencing difficulties for he borrowed monies against lands held by the heirs of his deceased brother, William.¹⁴ These monetary troubles would follow Walter from his county to the papal court in Italy, indeed it was a matter of such note that Walter would pass into perpetuity identified not by the courage, military prowess and stalwart supporter of papal reform that he displayed during his career, but rather by his financial difficulties - *nobiles quidem, sed pauperes*.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ CACB, 103.

¹⁴ CACB, 119.

Trouble in Champagne

In the year 1198, Walter became embroiled in the conflict between King Richard I of England and King Philip Augustus of France. This war, whilst serving to place more strain on the family's finances, also served as invaluable instruction on diplomacy, royal politics and affairs of state, all of which would be of considerable value to Walter in the future.

On 28 December 1192, Emperor Henry VI of Germany wrote a letter to Philip Augustus informing him that he had captured their common enemy, Richard I, who had been returning West from the Holy Land. Gillingham suggested that the animus against Richard in that region was due not only to the perceived slight and humiliation he had inflicted upon various kings and princes who had been on the Third Crusade, but also because he was thought to have been directly involved in the murder of Conrad of Montferrat ruler - elect of Jerusalem.¹⁵ Whatever the reason for his captivity, whilst Richard was being held, Philip Augustus followed his father's example and worked to undermine his rival's authority by conspiring with the youngest Plantagenet brother, John. In mid - January 1193, John did homage to Philip Augustus in Paris for Normandy and all of Richard's other lands, including England, although this proved a short - lived alliance.¹⁶

Shortly after his release on 4 February 1194, Richard turned his attention to France and the reclaiming of his lands there. Indeed, by 1198, Philip's vassals were deserting him to take up an alliance with Richard. Walter, as count of Brienne, is listed by Roger of Howden, a contemporary source, as one of the many French nobles who switched allegiance.¹⁷ Indeed, as early as September 1197, a prominent Brienne kinsman, Baldwin IX, count of Flanders, had also gone over to Richard's side.¹⁸

Only two charters from the CACB are attributed to Walter during this time of political unrest. The first dates from April of 1198 whereby William of Brienne, Walter's brother, is listed amongst the

¹⁵ Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 222: *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*, ed. and trans. J.T. Appleby (London, 1963), p. 80.

¹⁶ *Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs. 2 vols (RS, 1879 - 80), I, 514 - 5; Howden, *Chron.*, III, 196 - 7, 204 - 5.

¹⁷ Howden, *Chron.* IV, 54.

¹⁸ D. Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (London, 1992), p. 75.

securities at the ceremony in which Thibaut of Champagne did homage to Philip Augustus.¹⁹ And another, without month but during the year 1198, has Walter witnessing one of Thibaut's charters.²⁰ It is logical to suggest that the first charter from April occurred before Walter switched allegiance from Philip Augustus to Richard.

Landon noted that as late as 1 September 1198, Thibaut was still publicly avowing that he had not joined the ranks of Philip Augustus's enemies. Landon observed that when Thibaut went to such great lengths to proclaim his allegiance, a deep suspicion was cast over his true intent and that it is likely that the count had in fact gone over to Richard's side earlier in the year.²¹

In truth, Thibaut was a young and relatively unseasoned count for he was only nineteen, having just been dubbed knight by his uncle and king, Philip Augustus. He may have been cautiously playing both sides of the fence, as suggested by Roger Howden who noted that the men of Champagne, which would have included Walter of Brienne and presumably his kinsmen, had joined with Richard as early as 1197.²² If indeed such a large number of Thibaut's subjects had joined with the king of England, it is difficult to argue that they did so without his knowledge or consent.

At some point between 1 September 1198 and 1 July 1199, Thibaut publicly joined forces with Richard against the king of France. Shortly thereafter, perhaps as conclusive proof of an alliance between the two, Thibaut married Blanche, the sister of King Sancho VIII 'the strong' of Navarre and Berengaria, Richard's wife of eight years.²³ This match was quite obviously secured for the purposes of political alliance and in fact, succeeded in strengthening Champagne against Philip Augustus.

The longterm implications of this alliance must be left to conjecture, for the war between the kings of England and France was cut short by the death of Richard on 6 April 1199. Consequently and shortly thereafter, the count of Champagne and Philip Augustus were reconciled. It is unlikely that Philip Augustus harboured long - lasting feelings of ill - will towards the count of Brienne for his duplicity. Indeed, within a few years Philip would become the Brienne's most fervent supporter.

¹⁹ CACB, 108.

²⁰ CACB, 109.

²¹ L. Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I* (London, 1935), p. 133: William the Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* in *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde. 2 vols (Paris, 1882 - 85), I, 202 - 3.

²² Howden, *Chron*, IV, 19 - 20.

²³ *ibid.*

Preparations for the Fourth Crusade

On 22 November 1199, Thibaut III, count of Champagne (1197 - 1201) held the last great tournament of the century at Ècry in northern Champagne. It was whilst here, as recounted by Villehardouin, that Walter of Brienne took the cross.²⁴

The next month, Walter took steps to prepare for his journey to the Holy Land by selling 300 – 400 *arpents* of wood from his lands at Doches, which were held in fief by Clarembaud of Chappes, to the abbey of Larivour or to whomsoever wanted the wood.²⁵ In February 1200, Walter continued to muster funds, this time with the assistance of his liege lord, Thibaut, who authorised the sale of the village of Villeloup and offered Walter the funds from this transaction in exchange for the subinfeudation of the lands of Trannes, Jessaines, Onjon and Pel in Der.²⁶

Evidence suggests that it was between February and April 1200 that Walter married the woman whose history and landed interests would take the Brienne into Italy. In his chronicle, Villehardouin stated that Walter ‘was on his way to Apulia to recover some lands belonging to his wife, King Tancred’s daughter, whom he had married since taking the cross’.²⁷ And it is to the history of Italy that this thesis will now examine in order to have an understanding of the complex and dangerous situation in which Walter found himself inextricably and fatefully involved.

Southern Italy and Sicily under the Normans, ‘The Other Conquest’

This section is crucial in setting the stage for Walter’s campaign in Italy because upon his marriage, he became involved in a conflict that was already centuries old when he reached the *Regno*. Upon Walter’s arrival, there were more than three separate factions attempting to establish autonomy over this strategically important territory. Indeed, one cannot grasp the intricacies of Walter’s relationship with the Hohenstaufen or the papacy without understanding the history of the interests of those directly involved.

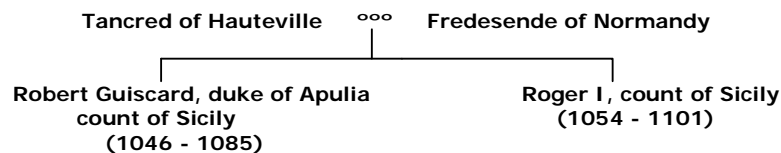
²⁴ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, p. 2: Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 6.

²⁵ CACB, 110.

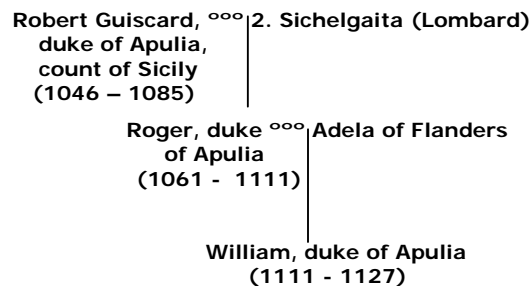
²⁶ CACB, 111.

²⁷ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, p. 10 : Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 11.

By 1085, the Normans had gained control of southern Italy and Sicily. Following Robert Guiscard's death in July 1085 at Corfu, his duchy was divided. His brother, Roger I, count of Sicily, whom he had left in charge there, apparently held little interest in taking his brother's place on the mainland and the way to succession was made clear for Guiscard's son, Duke Roger of Apulia (1085 – 1111) who was more submissive to the papacy than his father had been. Both Roger II, first to take the title 'king of Sicily' (1130 – 54), and his son, King William I of Sicily (1154 - 66), were determined to hold both Sicily and southern Italy together in what was called the *Regno*, it was also their intent to maintain their dominance over the papal see through conquest.²⁸



In Roger II's lifetime, his sons inherited the titles of territories on the mainland and undertook whatever responsibilities were required. The eldest son, Roger, was granted the duchy of Apulia; and when he died prior to his father in 1148, he left a bastard son, Tancred, who would not become duke of Apulia (that honour going to his father's brother, William I), but who would later take that title and then become king of Sicily in 1190.²⁹



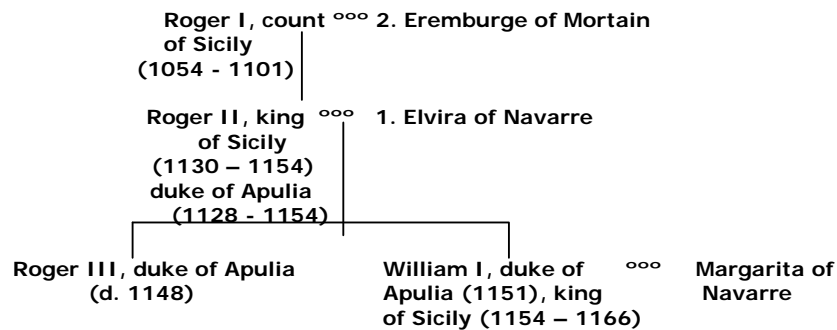
At the time of William I's succession in 1154, the relationship between Sicily and the papacy was poor.³⁰ In 1153, in the treaty of Constance, Frederick Barbarossa of Germany vowed to defend the

²⁸ J.H. Drell, *Kingship and Conquest: Family Strategies in the Principality of Salerno during the Norman Period, 1077 - 1194* (New York, 2002), p. 4.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Hugo of Falcando noted that William was captured by Tancred, his uncle, the bastard son of King Roger II. Hugh Falcandus, *La Historia o Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum Panormitane Ecclesie Thesaurarium* (Rome, 1897 - 1904), p. 51.

possessions and rights of the Latin Church unequivocally and to lend military support to the pope when these lands and possessions were threatened.³¹ In return, the pope promised Barbarossa the imperial crown and spiritual help against the enemies of the Empire, as well as support in protecting his rights.³² In retrospect, later in the history of this region, one would be pressed to recall this particular moment when the Hohenstaufen and the papacy were aligned for a common purpose, so rare was the occasion.



When William died in 1166, his son and namesake succeeded him as William II, king of Sicily.

Crisis of succession in Sicily invites the Hohenstaufen to move against Norman hegemony

William II's twenty-three year reign as king of Sicily remains shrouded in mystery. Ostensibly, he left no reputation as a diplomat or a warrior king.³³ What is most remarkable about him is that when he died on 17 November 1189, his death created the second instance whereby the kingdom of Sicily and the duchy of Apulia were left without an heir apparent to the descendants of Tancred of Hauteville. And it was his death that reopened the door to the imperial ambitions regarding the incorporation of Sicily and the southern territories into his lands.

Hampe suggests that Frederick Barbarossa had already contemplated a treaty and a marriage alliance with the kings of Sicily in 1173, twenty years after he had made a failed alliance with the papacy against King William I of Sicily. In the event, Barbarossa was prevented from doing so whilst

³¹ K. Hampe, *Germany Under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors* (Oxford, 1973), p. 162.

³² Hampe further explains, 'He [Frederick] had no mind to receive the crown at the hands of the Roman revolutionaries, who offered it to him in proud and haughty terms: now as always he held fast to established law, and he could after all expect coronation from the pope only in return for services rendered'. *ibid.*

³³ D. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 167-8.

engaged in hostilities with the papacy.³⁴ After he had been taken ill in 1167, Barbarossa had not returned to the south again until 1174 where he found William's successor, William II (1166-89) in power. There were skirmishes between the emperor's army and southern Italian forces led by Tancred of Lecce, bastard son of King Roger II born of his mistress, Bianca of Lecce and the first cousin of the king of Sicily. Tancred defeated Barbarossa on 26 May 1176 and a peace accord was reached between the two parties.

Earlier in his reign, William II had been keen to secure a wife who would provide a marriage alliance with a powerful leader from the north after his plans for a Byzantine marriage fell through. Understandably, Pope Alexander III was alarmed that the king would chose a wife who would bring yet another claimant to the region, thus he arranged a marriage between William and Joanna, the daughter of King Henry II of England.³⁵

When Barbarossa returned to Italy in 1184, he was determined to circumvent the efforts of the papacy to keep the Hohenstaufen from marrying into the Norman ruling dynasty. Indeed, the emperor established a blood claim to the kingdom of Sicily by securing what, at the time, must have seemed to William II as an innocuous betrothal between Barbarossa's son and heir, Henry VI and the king of Sicily's aunt, Constance. William was greatly mistaken, however, for it was this marriage that would prove to be the undoing of the Norman dynasty of Sicily.

Hohenstaufen claims to throne are thwarted, Tancred becomes king

It is difficult to understand why, after having successfully countered every measure of the emperor's efforts to establish imperial hegemony over the south, William II would have taken such a risk as to align himself with Barbarossa. And without doubt, we believe the answer to lie behind the dynamics of the Norman kings' relationship with the papacy. There was, quite simply, no trust or mutual respect for alliances between the two factions.

Morris observes that up until William's death, the prospect of a Hohenstaufen succession in Sicily was fairly remote, for William was only in early middle-age, newly married to a woman who came

³⁴ Hampe, *Germany Under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors*, p. 210.

³⁵ Robert of Torigni, *Chronicon*, MGH VI, 531-2.

from a large family and was thus expected to provide the king with many heirs.³⁶ In William's defence, the possibility that the succession would fall to the husband of Constance was unlikely because according to Robert of Torigny, who became prior of Mont-Saint-Michel on 27 May 1154, Joanna, queen of Sicily, had given birth to a son in Normandy in 1181, but we have found no further source material to support this.³⁷ William's decision to allow the marriage of his aunt, who was at least thirty, to the young Henry VI, seems in hindsight, to have been a very foolish act.³⁸ It is unclear how Pope Lucius III (1181-85) regarded this alliance. Munz suggests that it was at Lucius's instigation that Constance and Henry were married to cement a political alliance, whilst Matthew indicates that the pope may have had reservations but was unable to protest due to his precarious position in exile in northern Italy.³⁹ Sources writing after the death of William II hypothesise that on his deathbed, he forced his subjects to swear fealty to Constance as his heir, which suggests that his young son, born in Normandy in 1181, had either not survived or had never been born at all.⁴⁰

Hampe postulates: 'What the treasure of the Nibelungs was to the heroes of legend, the wealth of Sicily was to the Hohenstaufen: it cast its spell over their imaginations, until in the end it lured them to destruction, and Germany with them.'⁴¹ And whilst this is somewhat hyperbolic, there is some truth to this suggestion. When William II died in 1189, Henry VI was as eager as any of his predecessors to claim Sicily for himself and he was equally incapable of fully pursuing his interests there because of the unstable state of his government in Germany. Instead of taking to the battlefield, Henry opted to secure peace with his enemies, leaving the way clear for an invasion of Sicily at a later date, when he hoped to compel the pope to crown him emperor.

Armed with the knowledge of how difficult it had been for his father as the emperor, Henry must have known that he represented 'the long-resisted pretensions of the western empire to the southern kingdom.'⁴² In the end, it was Constance's nephew, Tancred, the chief official of southern Italy, a noted administrator, soldier, the illegitimate eldest son of Roger II and, perhaps most importantly, a

³⁶ C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), p. 201.

³⁷ Robert de Torigni, *Chronicon*, MGH VI, 532.

³⁸ Matthew, *Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, p. 275.

³⁹ Ibid.; F. Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa: A Study in Medieval Politics* (London, 1969), p. 367.

⁴⁰ *Annales Casinenses*, MGH XIX, 314.

⁴¹ Hampe, *Germany Under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors*, p. 220.

⁴² Matthew, *Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, p. 286.

Norman, who claimed the throne. Hampe suggests that Tancred's election was executed by 'a nationalist party in Sicily', but it is unlikely that the populace would have been receptive to a German king at any rate.

The only serious rival to Tancred's candidacy was Roger, count of Andria who was also a *magister justiciarius* and vehemently opposed to Tancred's election.⁴³ It was Roger who was able to call on the Germans in northern Italy for assistance. Whatever threat Roger posed; however, was short-lived as he was captured by Tancred's ally, the count of Acerra and murdered.⁴⁴

It was with Pope Clement III (1187-91)'s consent that Tancred claimed the throne of Sicily. The new king soon quashed most of the rebellions against his authority so that when the crusaders passed through the region on their way to the Holy Land in 1190, his kingdom was at relative peace. Hampe insists that Tancred was a 'physical weakling of no particular significance'; however, he managed to repress internecine fighting and maintain stability within his kingdom.⁴⁵

Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor, attempts conquest of Sicily

Before embarking for the Holy Land from Sicily in what would become the Third Crusade, King Richard I of England and Philip Augustus of France were expected to meet with Henry VI on the island before proceeding as one large crusader army. However, Richard departed months before Henry arrived, leaving the new emperor free to pursue his true aim of invading Tancred's kingdoms. Despite the harsh disapproval of Pope Celestine III (1191-8), Henry crossed the border in April 1191, intent upon conquest.⁴⁶

In May, the emperor besieged Naples with his forces lead by the count of Acerra. After a series of uneventful skirmishes, Henry retreated to Germany where Pope Celestine III sent proposals for a truce between the Hohenstaufen and the Norman-Papal alliance of Sicily. Whilst the pope sought to treat with the Holy Roman Emperor, Tancred had his son, Roger, crowned king and he arranged an advantageous match between his heir and the Byzantine heiress, the daughter of Isaac Angelos in

⁴³ *Ryccardus de Sancti Germano Annales*, MGH XIX, 325.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Hampe, *Germany Under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors*, p. 221.

⁴⁶ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 499.

1192.⁴⁷ He also began to campaign in the northern territories, lands historically allied with the emperor, but it is uncertain if he gained any leverage.

Whether or not he would have been a strong enough king to prevent the emperor from conquest shall remain to question for Tancred died on 20 February 1194 before Henry VI and his army could return to Sicily.⁴⁸ His surviving son, William III, was a child at the time of his father's death, but he was recognised as king of Sicily and his mother, Sibylla of Acerra, served as his regent.⁴⁹

The Hohenstaufen usurp the throne of Sicily, Norman royal family exiled

Despite the recognition of his right to rule as the son of the previous king, the leading nobles throughout the Regno were making overtures of support to Henry VI who had been planning yet another coup before Tancred's death. This time, he made certain that his alliances were firmly established before he made his move, while most of the funds that supported this conquest were generated from the ransom paid by England to secure the release of King Richard the Lionheart.⁵⁰ Henry VI rode ahead of his army to reach Sicily quickly, leaving behind his pregnant wife. When he crossed the Straits of Messina, Queen Sybilla, Tancred's widow and the future mother-in-law of Walter of Brienne, could do little to secure the crown for her young son, William II. Henry was crowned king of Sicily on 25 December 1194.⁵¹

Shortly after his coronation, under the guise of quashing a suspected plot against his authority, Henry arrested several of the leading nobles of the kingdom including Tancred's family and sent them off to imprisonment in Germany.⁵² A few days later, his heir, Frederick II, was born, his birth heralding a new era of Hohenstaufen hegemony in Italy.

Henry had never intended to be a resident ruler, his interest in his patrimony of Germany was more substantial and of greater importance, thus he returned to the empire and left his wife, Constance, in Sicily to represent the Hohenstaufen interests. Abulafia notes, 'it is hard to show that Henry saw the

⁴⁷ *Innocentii III, Romani pontificis, Opera Omnia*, ed. by J.P. Migne. 4 vols. (Paris, 1855), 214, xviii; J.M.Powell (tr.), *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III* (Washington, 2004), p. 18.

⁴⁸ *Annales Casenses*, MGH XIX, 317.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 312.

⁵⁰ *Innocent III, Opera Omnia*, 214, xviii; Powell, *Deeds*, p. 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

Regno as a limb of the western Roman empire; everything suggests that he wanted to keep it as a private domain, a source of wealth which he could then use for more grandiose schemes.’⁵³ Unable to secure a formal law of hereditary succession, Henry had his son elected king of the Romans in December 1196.⁵⁴

The relationship between the Hohenstaufen and the papacy was strained. Constance accused the pope of infringing on her ancestral rights to rule. The particulars of the disagreement are not known. Whatever his grievance, Pope Celestine was not in any position to legally and publicly remonstrate against Constance and Henry. But, his problems were at least half solved when Henry took ill whilst hunting in Sicily in August and died of dysentery on 28 September 1197.⁵⁵

Henry VI dies leaving an infant Frederick II and internecine strife within the empire

At the time of the emperor’s death, the kingdom was in a dire state. Shortly before, his wife Constance was widely believed to have been involved in an uprising against his authority. Despite the apparent evidence against her, the German nobles were loathed to rebel for she was queen and had ruled the kingdom on her husband’s behalf for years before his death. Shortly after Henry’s demise, Constance oversaw the coronation of her two year old son, Frederick, as king of Sicily.⁵⁶ In Germany, Frederick’s uncle, Philip, was elected king on 8 March 1198.⁵⁷

Whilst Constance may not have gained the trust of her husband’s subjects, she was the daughter of Roger II, the Norman king of Sicily and this fact was not forgotten. She earned their respect when she dispelled Markward of Anweiler, her deceased husband’s champion, from the kingdom; although other Germans who had prospered during the reign of Henry VI, such as William Capparone and Diepold, remained.⁵⁸ And whilst she could not count on the support of the Germans, the Norman nobility of the kingdom of Sicily and Apulia were more than willing to support her not only as the daughter of Roger II but as the mother of their future king, Frederick II. It is possible that if Constance

⁵³ D. Abulafia, ‘The Kingdom of Sicily under the Hohenstaufen and Angevins’ in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume V, c.1198-1300*, ed. D. Abulafia. (Cambridge, 1999), p. 500.

⁵⁴ Matthew, *Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, p. 292.

⁵⁵ *Continuatio Admuntensis*, MGH IX, 587.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Innocent III, *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxi; Powell, *Deeds*, p. 19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

had lived a bit longer, she would have reared her son as the natural successor of his father, which may have served to sever Frederick's German ties, or at the very least weaken the claims of the Empire on him.

Innocent III becomes Pope and Protector of Frederick II

Celestine III died in January 1198 and was replaced on the same day by Lothar de Segni, who was fifty years his junior and consecrated as Pope Innocent III.⁵⁹ The threat to Frederick's safety was imminent; his uncle fully expected to pursue the incorporation of the kingdom of Sicily into the Empire. The Germans who had been left to their own devices in Sicily and Apulia naturally looked to the emperor for guidance. Philip of Swabia, now king of Germany, was no friend of the papacy for whilst duke of Tuscany he had been excommunicated on the grounds that he had invaded and laid waste to the Apostolic Patrimony.⁶⁰ The anonymous author of the *Gesta Innocentii* further noted that the pope was reluctant to lift this ban of excommunication and that Philip himself was expected to approach the papacy for absolution.⁶¹

The *Gesta Innocentii i III* (the *Deeds of Innocent III*), was composed during the years 1204 – 09.⁶² In his recent translation, Powell observed that the work is not a biography of the pope, that it was written by an anonymous author and that it is limited to the first eleven years of the pope's reign. He went further to note that the author, who Powell suggested may have been Peter of Benevento, the papal legate, was quite obviously a personal acquaintance of Pope Innocent III's and very knowledgeable of the events taking place in the *Regno*. Of the *Gesta*, Peters commented 'this strong narrative line omits most of the other details of the early pontificate, those reflected abundantly in the first few volumes of the Register, but it reveals a decisive, firm pope in action, and it noted that the working of the pontificate began on the day after the election'.⁶³ In this source, as well as the Register of Innocent's letters, Walter's career is covered in some detail and these sources are therefore significant to this study.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Powell, *Deeds*, p. xi.

⁶³ *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. J. C. Moore (Vermont, 1999), p. 22.

In defiance of the Empire after a rebellion against her by Tancred supporters, Constance turned to the papacy for help, remembering that it had been the papacy that had pressured Tancred to release her from imprisonment in 1192.⁶⁴ Days after Constance appealed to Innocent for protection, the pope wrote to Germany and demanded the release of Queen Sibylla, her son and daughter and others of the kingdom who were yet imprisoned there.⁶⁵ At the time, this action must have seemed to Constance to be a sign that the papacy would align with the exiled family of the deceased king, Tancred. Indeed, it had been to Constance that Innocent had addressed his appeal, specifically requesting that she restore them to favour.⁶⁶

Innocent's pontificate was off to an energised and stern start. Shortly after becoming pope, he absolved all of the Christians in Le Marche of the oaths they swore to Markward. Although royal deference to the papacy had been insisted on since the time of William I in 1156, this was perhaps the first time in the history of the Norman kingdom of Sicily that the monarchy looked to the papacy for protection. Constance considered Innocent to be an ally against the Germans. The moment she stopped looking to the Empire, essentially severing ties in that direction, it was inevitable that the papacy would take on a new importance to the empress and her child. Indeed, shortly after Innocent's election, she sent messengers to him with gifts and devoutly requested that he formally invest her with the kingdom of Sicily, the duchy of Apulia, the principate of Capua and other territories that were part of her son's patrimony.⁶⁷ However, whilst the pope was amenable to this request, he was unwilling to grant her the ecclesiastical liberties of council, appeal, elections and legations.⁶⁸

The queen would not be deterred and she sent him more gifts and ambassadors all to no avail. The final agreement was settled when the ambassadors agreed to drop the four liberties of contention and Innocent renewed the monarchy's privileges with the usual payment of fidelity and homage required. There would, however, be no celebrating of the small victory for when the ambassadors returned to their mistress in November 1198, she had died.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ H. Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages c. 1050 - 1200* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 181.

⁶⁵ Powell, *Deeds*, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Powell, *Deeds*, p. 21.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxi; Powell, *Deeds*, p. 20.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

The imminent threat to Frederick and the kingdom was from Markward of Anweiler, the former champion of the young king's father who threatened to invade Sicily on the grounds that the last will and testament of Henry VI awarded him custody of the kingdom. When Constance died she entrusted the regency of the kingdom to Innocent III, a move that would cast the kingdom into years of political strife and war.

Early into his pontificate, Innocent's actions confirmed that he was a stalwart champion of the interest of the papacy in the kingdom of Sicily. Constance was dead, Frederick was a small child and Queen Sibylla had just fled from German imprisonment to France with her children, the heirs presumptive to the throne. Once in France, she married her daughter to a count about who, up until this present work, very little was known. Having rallied against the power of the Empire, with her children's patrimony now entrusted to a powerful pope and with Philip of Swabia's henchman, Markward of Anweiler, threatening to invade Sicily from the North, Sybilla certainly knew that if she wished to launch a successful campaign to reclaim her children's birthright, she would need to align herself with an able warrior figure. A figure with clout, prestige and a reputation for success in battle. She would, ideally, need someone with strong ties to the king and great lords of France, a man with knowledge of the Empire, perhaps a man whose family was related to or closely associated with the Hohenstaufen, a man with means and men to wage war against the might of Germany. In the end, it was Walter of Brienne who was chosen. The onus is upon this thesis to establish why.

Sybilla di Medania, Widow of Tancred di Lecce, Escapes from Prison in Germany

Three primary sources record the imprisonment of Sybilla and her children in Germany. The first is the *Annales breves Argentinense*, the earliest Strasbourg chronicle. It is, according to Professor Bloch, a concise yet scanty record of the years 673 - 1207 and it is believed to have been compiled and/or composed at the cloister in which Sybilla was alleged to have been imprisoned, namely Hohenburg.⁷⁰

The *Annales breves Argentinenses* recorded: '*Anno Domini 1195. Heinricus imperator Sibillam, reginam Sicilie, uxorem Tancredi, filiasque eius in monasterio Hohneburgh custodie mancipavit.*

⁷⁰ *Annales Argentinenses*, MGH XVII, 89. For a discussion on the author and the authority of the *Annales Argentinenses*, cf. H. Bloch, *Regesten Der Bischöfe Von Strassburg*. 2 vols (Innsbruck, 1908), I, 67 - 79.

Eodem anno facta est maxima fames in terra'.⁷¹ The second source is the *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, which was written by Thomas Tusci (Pavia), a monk who studied at Padua in 1229 and travelled to the East in 1253.⁷² The *Gesta Imperatorum* noted, *Tancredum captum in Alamaniam misit et cum filio suo Tancredo, iam in regem in Sicilia coronato, uxore ac filibus exilio relegavit*.⁷³ And the third source, and perhaps the most authoritative, is the *Gesta Innocentii*, likely written between 1204 and 1205, much earlier than the previously named sources were written which may well lend more credibility to the latter text. In the *Gesta*, although the author does little to note the passage of time, he observed;

*Idem vero piissimus pontifex, ad liberationem captivorum clementer intendens, praesertim cum per detentionem Salernitanensis archiepiscopi nimis detraheretur apostolicae dignitati, statim, circa suae promotionis primordium, misit Sutrinum episcopum, natione Theutonicum, et abbatem Sancti Anastasii, ordinis Cisterciensis, in Theeutoniam, scribens episcopis, quatenus detentores eorum monerent, et, I fiecesse foret, compellerent per excommunicationem in personas, et interdicunt in terras, ut illos dimitterent absolutos;.....Pro raedictis vero captives, licet jam liberates, adhuc tamen exulibus, rogavit imperatricem per nuntium ad hoc specialiter destinatum, eisue restitutionis gratiam impetravit. Sed et Sibiliam, relicta Regis Tancredi, cum filiabus suis, ergastulum captivitatis evasit, et, in regnum Francorum confugens, primogenitam suam Gualtero, Brenensi comiti, tradidit in uxorem.*⁷⁴

As previously mentioned, shortly after he was elected pope in 1198, Innocent appealed directly to the Empress Constance for the freedom of the captives. At this point, the *Gesta* suggested that before Constance could rule either way, Sybilla escaped the place of her imprisonment and subsequently fled to France, where she married her daughter to Walter, count of Brienne, an event which took place

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² P. Péano, 'Thoms de Pavie', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité XV* (Paris, 1991), pp. 867 - 8.

⁷³ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 508.

⁷⁴ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxii-iii, xxxvi-ii; Powell, *Deeds*, pp. 20 - 1.

early 1200.⁷⁵ These sources are, seemingly, in direct contradiction to the accounts in the *Eracles* and the chronicle attributed to Ernoul, a matter discussed in greater depth later in this section.

When Sibylla fled from the cloister of Hohenburg in Germany to France in late 1199/early 1200, having been imprisoned with her children for five years, as suggested by the *Annales Argentinenses*, she was in desperate need of an ally.⁷⁶ Sibylla was the daughter of Roger of Medinina, count of Acerra and the sister of Count Richard of Acerra, who had shared command of the Sicilian army with Count Alduin, the royal seneschal, when William II was king of Sicily (1166 - 1189).⁷⁷ Whilst Tancred had led the royal fleet, it had been Richard of Accerra who had directed William's army against Thessalonica in 1184.⁷⁸ Indeed, it was Richard who had captured and murdered the only true rival to Tancred's throne, Roger of Andria, at Ascoli.⁷⁹ Throughout Tancred's reign, it was Richard who was his strongest, ablest champion and he was so until his execution in December 1196.⁸⁰ In May 1191, when Henry IV crossed the border into Sicily, it had been Richard of Acerra who marched against him in Naples.⁸¹

Evidently, Sibylla was of strong stock. She had given Tancred two sons and at least three daughters. The eldest son, Roger, had only begun the start of what likely would have been a brilliant career, having been crowned king in his father's lifetime and married to Eirene Angelina, the daughter of Issac II, emperor of Constantinople, when he predeceased his father in 1193.⁸² The second son, William, was crowned by his father as William II king of Sicily shortly after the heir's death and he succeeded Tancred in 1194 as king.⁸³ Although acknowledged by Henry at his coronation on 25 December 1194 as count of Taranto and count of Lecce, Henry arrested him the next day on what were likely trumped - up charges of conspiracy against his rule. William was thus blinded and

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 499: *Annales Argentinenses*, MGH XVII, 89.

⁷⁷ *Annales Ceccanenses*, MGH XIV, 287.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Benedict of Peterborough*, II, 141.

⁸⁰ *Annales Ceccanenses*, MGH XIX, 294

⁸¹ *Annales Casenses*, MGH XIX, 314 - 5.

⁸² *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XII, 498: *Ryccardus de Sancti Germano Annales*, MGH XIX, 325: *Annales Casenses*, MGH XIX, 317.

⁸³ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 498: *Annales Casenses*, MGH XIX, 317.

castrated and sent into exile to Germany with his mother and sisters where he died likely from his injuries.⁸⁴

When Sybilla arrived in France years later, she had just escaped imprisonment from a foreign country where her life and the lives of her children had hung perpetually in the balance. Her very existence and that of her children endangered the interests of the Empire in the *Regno* and arguably the interests of Innocent as well, for given his move to secure their freedom, he evidently did not consider her a threat at the time, but there can be little doubt that he was suspicious of her intentions. She may very well have spent the remainder of her life, and her children their lives, in a German monastery had it not been for the intervention of the pope. The circumstances of her liberation are uncertain.⁸⁵ With her were her only surviving children, Sibilla Medania, Elvira Albinia and Constance. She may have arrived at the court of the count of Champagne or, perhaps with her plight undoubtedly known to Philip Augustus, she may have journeyed to the court of the king himself, the likely chronology of events will be explored later in this chapter.

Walter of Brienne, Champion of Sicily and Papal Reform

Within a hundred years, the counts of Brienne had established themselves as a family of some note. At the time of Walter III's succession to the county, the Brienne had enjoyed prominent moments, having produced several crusading counts although they were not exactly of the highest rank. Perry argued: 'By that stage [1180s], however, it was possible for Briennois lords to bypass the count of Brienne in various ways, giving service more directly to the suzerain count of Champagne. The most celebrated family to follow this course was undoubtedly, the Villehardouin'.⁸⁶ Perry went on to note that 'during the later twelfth century, members of other, admittedly rather lesser but still prestigious Champenois families, expressed their own relationship with the count of Champagne by serving him as aristocratic office - holders....the Briennes, however did none of these things'.⁸⁷ And although they had made several advantageous marriages that enabled them to expand their lordship and domain within the Champagne region, these strategic marriages perhaps reaching their peak when Erard II

⁸⁴ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 498.

⁸⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 29.

⁸⁶ Perry, 'John of Brienne', p. 30.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 32.

married into the cadet branch of the house of Montbéliard in the 1160s, they had not yet achieved the notice of chroniclers outside of their immediate locale. It was not until Erard II, count of Brienne and his brother, Andrew of Ramerupt went on the Third Crusade that the Brienne became renowned on a more 'international' scale and then only to pit one brother against the other, the villain being none other than the count of Brienne himself. The Brienne family treasury had been placed under considerable strain, perhaps by several generations of crusaders. However, a setback in fortune was not enough to preclude an advantageous marriage. An example would be the Ibelins, who was one of the most powerful families of the Levant, 'For the Ibelin to intermarry with the Montforts and Montbéliards in the opening years of the thirteenth century shows that, despite the territorial losses of 1187 and the uncertain future of the kingdom, they could be seen as the equals of well - placed aristocratic families in the West'.⁸⁸ And whilst the same can be said of the Brienne and their marriages into more august dynasties, what did Walter of Brienne, a man pledged to take part in the Fourth Crusade, offer the exiled queen of Sicily?

Walter Marries Elvira Albinia of Sicily

Walter III of Brienne married Elvira Albinia of Sicily in early April 1200.⁸⁹ Besides the merits of marrying into an established crusader dynasty, the practical reasons for this marriage must also be examined.

The county of Lecce and the principality of Taranto had been legally granted to Tancred's heir by Henry VI. The emperor confirmed this grant by his own oath and that of his men and thus there existed substantial cause to believe that the oath would be acknowledged by his descendants.⁹⁰ William III, count of Lecce had died in captivity in Germany and the county was in need of a successor. The matter was undoubtedly pressing, the exiled queen would have been quite anxious to find someone willing to leave France for a likely hostile reception in the south of Italy in order to reclaim territory on behalf of an heir who had not only been absent for nearly four years, but was now dead.

⁸⁸ Edbury, *John of Ibelin*, p. 28.

⁸⁹ CACB, 113.

⁹⁰ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 29.

That Sibylla considered Walter a suitable candidate for her daughter suggested that the dynasty's prominence was recognised at this time. Although he fulfilled the other obvious requirements of being a single, adult male of some standing, for his part, Walter could offer them little more than his loyalty and support. As established, he had very little wealth. The marriage was likely conducted by his chaplain, William and his mother's chaplain, Nicholas, with his brothers and his mother in attendance.⁹¹ The question remains, at whose instigation?

It may have been Philip Augustus. When recounting the events surrounding the marriage, the author of the *Eracles* remarked *Li rois Felipes li dona en aide a son fait .xx.mile livres de Paris*.⁹² Moreover, there was history between Philip Augustus and Tancred of Sicily. Indeed, whilst en route to the Holy Land in 1190, Philip had come 'quietly into Sicily in a single ship, prepared to accept the status quo, not keen to antagonize either Tancred or Henry VI the German emperor seeking control of Sicily'.⁹³ Philip Augustus had suffered a setback at sea when he weathered a particularly harsh storm and he was received warmly by Tancred and housed in the palace.⁹⁴ Richard, on the other hand, arrived in the country to great pomp, angry that his sister, Joanna, had not been returned her dowry after the death of her husband, William II, after Tancred became king. Philip Augustus attempted to mediate between Richard and Tancred only to further infuriate the English king whilst conversely receiving the gratitude of Tancred who offered him a marriage arrangement between their offspring, which Philip Augustus declined.⁹⁵

Unquestionably, it is of interest to this study that Tancred sought an alliance with Philip Augustus by offering one of his daughters in marriage and although it remains unclear which daughter Tancred selected for the king of France, Philip Augustus would not have forgotten this proposal. It is also quite likely that Philip Augustus had not forgotten the Brienne as well. When he arrived in the Holy Land, he had established a relationship with Conrad of Montferrat to whom, as discussed in chapter three, the Brienne were distantly related by marriage.⁹⁶ Perhaps more substantially, although Walter of

⁹¹ CACB, 113, 116.

⁹² *Eracles*, 235.

⁹³ Bradbury, *Philip Augustus*, p. 82.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ See Genealogy in this work entitled 'The Brienne, Le Puiset and the House of Jerusalem'.

Brienne had sided with Richard against the king of France only the year before, he had since been reconciled with the Capetian upon the death of King Richard.

When Sybilla fled to France with the knowledge of the king's stalwart support of her husband, Philip Augustus was busy intriguing to topple the Angevin Empire by aligning himself with the now deceased Richard Lionheart's heir, Arthur of Brittany. Incidentally, Arthur of Brittany had also been sought after by Tancred of Lecce as a potential suitor for one of his daughters.⁹⁷ The king may very well have wanted the counsel of his advisors and Arthur of Brittany (a conciliatory and strategic diplomatic tactic) on the most expedient manner in which to deal with Sybilla. He may have also been seeking to secure the loyalty of Walter of Brienne. This discussion may have taken place, as alleged by the author of the *Eracles*, at an assembly.⁹⁸

Whilst it is likely that Walter's exploits later enhanced his brother John's subsequent nomination to the throne of Jerusalem, it is also of merit to note that at the time of his own nomination as a suitor, Walter was the heir of a family of increasing prominence. His uncle's death on the Third Crusade had been widely recorded although this was counterbalanced by allegations of his father's cowardice on the battlefield. For better or worse, the Brienne name had achieved recognition as evidenced in the passage below from the *Eracles*, whereby the author remarked on the lineage of Walter, noting not only his parentage, his mother's descent from the house of Montbeliard, but also his mother's brothers and his uncle 'le bon chevalier' Andrew of Brienne who had died at the siege of Acre. Indeed, the *Eracles* account of the events leading up to the marriage of Walter and Elvira cast the events in a positive light:

Or vos dirons des filles don roi Tancre. Quant li roi Tancre fu mors, si demora a sa feme de lui trois filles. La dame se trova soule et sanz amis, et vit que chascunz des barons dou regne n'entendoient que a eaulz acroistre, ne ne connoisoient seignor ne dame. Ele prist ses filles, si s'en ala a l'Apostaoille, et li cria merci, que il meist conseil en ses filles ; car il savoit bien que eles estoient drois heirs don regne de Cesile come celes qui estoient filles do rei Tancre. Li Apostoiles li respondi que il ne n'avoit poeir de lui aider par force, car ele avoit a

⁹⁷ *Benedict of Peterborough*, II, 133.

⁹⁸ *Eracles*, 234.

faire a male gent ; mais se ele trovoit un prodome, qui esposast sa ainz née fille, il li aidereit volentiers ; et que il li loeit que ele alast au roi de France et li preast que il la conseillast d'un prodome. La dame passa les mons et s'en ala en France, et mostra son affaire au roi de France Felipe. Li rois assembla une grant assemblée a Meleun sur Sene, et fist assaver as baronz le fait de la dame, et offri s'aide a celui qui le vodroit enprendre. Il ot en la cort un baron de Chanpaigne, vaillant chevalier et prou et de grant cuer et bien enparenté. Ice fu le conte Gautier de Briene, qui fu fiz dou conte Erart de Briene et de la fille dou conte Ami de Monbliart. André de Briene le bon chevalier, qui fu ocis au siege d'Acre, estoit son oncle; et Rechart le conte de Monbliart et Gautier son frere furent ses oncles de par sa mere.⁹⁹

After the presentation of a short history of the Brienne taken from this thesis by the author at the Institute of Historical Research, attending scholars suggested that the account contained within the *Eracles* is an accurate depiction of the events which led to the nomination of Walter of Brienne for this important role. In the 'Sources' section of the Introduction of this thesis, the relevant chronicles for events involving the Brienne in the Latin East and Italy were discussed and from those sources for the purpose of this section on Walter's marriage, the version of the 'Colbert - Fontainbleu *Eracles*' from the *Recueil des historiens des croisades* was used. Whilst the narrative contained within this source is contentious because the author was in fact reflecting upon events well after they occurred, there is a strong likelihood that on some points, the *Eracles* is a reliable source. The author of the *Eracles* telescopes events, giving a broad overview reflected upon in hindsight, which may be both a blessing and a curse.

A clear indication of this can be found in the following text: *Johan de Briene, qui fu de Jerusalem rois et puis fu empereor de Constantinople, si come vos orrez ce avant, furent ses freres.*¹⁰⁰ John did not become king of Jerusalem until thirteen years after his brother's marriage to the Sicilian princess and the emperor of Constantinople much later. Another possible point of contention is in the following detail from the *Eracles*, the author posited *La dame passa les mons et s'en ala en France, et*

⁹⁹ *ibid*, II, 234 - 5.

¹⁰⁰ *Eracles*, 235.

*mostra son affaire au roi de France Felipe. Li rois assembla une grant assemblée a Meleun sur Sene, et fist assaver as baronz le fait de la dame, et offri s'aide a celui qui le vodroit enprendre.*¹⁰¹ The catalogue of the extant acts of Philip Augustus does not mention an assembly at Melun during the years 1199 - 1200 and whilst this may be an oversight, assemblies were held there because Bradbury noted at least one having taken place in 1216, this is yet another instance where information was selectively included.¹⁰² The author of the *Eracles* failed to mention Sybilla's captivity in Germany, indeed the narrative implied no lapse of time between Tancred's death and the dowager queen's escape to Rome where she fell on the mercy of the papacy. Conversely, the author of the *Annales Argentinenses* dated her imprisonment to have taken place in 1195.¹⁰³ The narrative of the *Eracles* suggested that once the pope instructed her to journey to France to implore Philip Augustus for assistance, Sybilla went there where all was neatly decided before the assembly at Melun, an assembly that remains without date.

Despite the problems with the text, the *Eracles* does much to lend credence to Walter's nomination. The author noted that Walter was a '*vaillant chevalier et prou et de grant cuer, et bien enparenté*'.¹⁰⁴ Walter's previous transgression against the French crown aside, his family had a long-standing relationship with the Hohenstaufen and the extant evidence suggests they had a similar relationship with the papacy. Indeed, Walter seems, if not an obvious candidate for the hand of the princess of Sicily, then at the very least no less worthy than his peers.

There is also the account of the *Gesta Innocentii i* to consider, an eyewitness version that was written much closer to the time by someone who may have been a direct participant. The *Gesta Innocentii* observed that Innocent sent a message to Empress Constance in Germany requesting that she free Sybilla and her children. *Pro praedictis vero captivis, licet jam liberates, adhuc tamen exulibus, rogavit imperatricem per nuntium ad hoc specialiter destinatum, eisque restitutionis gratiam impetravit.*¹⁰⁵ Not only does this source confirm the imprisonment of Sybilla and her children in Germany, it also inadvertently bolsters the evidence in the *Eracles* for whilst the imprisonment is not

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 234.

¹⁰² Bradbury, *Philip Augustus*, p. 270.

¹⁰³ *Annales Argentinenses*, MGH XVII, 89.

¹⁰⁴ *Eracles*, 234.

¹⁰⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxvi - ii: Powell, *Deeds*, pp. 20 - 1, text at p. 21.

remarked upon in that source, it does cite that Sybilla sought the pope's counsel on how best to reclaim her rights. The *Gesta Innocentii i* account suggests that there was some communication between the pope and Sybilla's captors, if not Sybilla herself, during her imprisonment.

Unfortunately, the *Gesta Innocentii* is silent on the events surrounding the marriage. The author remarked *Sed Sibilia, relicta regis Tancredi, cum filiabus suis, ergastulum captivitatis evasit, et, in regnum Francorum confugiens, primogenitam suam Gaultero, Brenensi comiti, tradidit in uxorem.*¹⁰⁶

Yet another practical explanation for the union hinges on the proximity of the county of Brienne to Germany. Heading westwards, Sybilla may have reached Brienne and halted there for assistance, negotiating a marriage alliance directly with Walter whilst there. Ancillary to the account found in the *Eracles* and the *Gesta Innocentii i* is one found in the *Chronicle of Ernoul*. As with the *Eracles*, there is a clear lapse of time between the events and the recording of these events. The authorship of the second half of *La Chronique d'Ernoul* is generally attributed to Bernard the Treasurer, possibly a monk of the abbey of Corbie located 12 miles from Amiens or a layman who originated from that area, who wrote a continuation of William of Tyre's work during the mid - 1220s until 1230 - 1.¹⁰⁷ Possibly writing at least twenty years after the fact, the chronicle succinctly described the career of Walter of Brienne in the *Regno* and the circumstances of his marriage to Elvira as such; '*Elle, par le conseil l'apostoile et le conseil d'aucun preudome, ala en Campaigne, al conte Gautier de Braine et fist tant qu'il l'espousa. Et quant il l'ot espouse, elle l'enmena en Puille et alerent par Rome*'.¹⁰⁸ Again it is noted that Sybilla sought the counsel of the pope on how best to reclaim her rights. It also observed that Sybilla's eldest daughter wed Walter, taking him first to Apulia and then to Rome, whilst the charter evidence does not support the first suggestion, Walter visited with the pope in Rome shortly after his marriage. Another instance of a source telescoping the events.

It is also entirely possible that the alliance was secured by the count of Champagne. At the time that Elvira, her sister and her mother fled to France, Thibaut III, the twenty - two year old count of Champagne, was preparing to take the cross. Thibaut's aunt, Elisabeth of Blois, his father's third eldest sister, had married Roger II, duke of Apulia, the son of Roger I, king of Sicily, who had died in

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul*, pp. 46 - 58.

¹⁰⁸ *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. by M.L.Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), p. 329.

1154.¹⁰⁹ In a letter, Saint Bernard spoke of the vassals of the king of Sicily who met Elisabeth of Blois at Montpellier on the octave of the Assumption.¹¹⁰ To honour this occasion, King Roger II had given Thibaut of Champagne a beautiful vase, which Thibaut then gave to Suger, abbot of Saint Denis.¹¹¹

In 1138, two years prior to his marriage to Elisabeth of Blois, Roger II fathered the bastard born Tancred, the count of Lecce and the grandfather of Walter's wife, Elvira of Sicily. Whilst Thibaut was too young to remember his aunt and her husband, he was presumably aware of the family connections to the exiled queen and her daughters. Busy with planning the crusade or not, he may have acted on Elvira's behalf and secured the alliance with the house of Brienne. Walter was intending to take part in the crusade and it is possible that during preparations, the exiled queen and her daughters arrived at Thibaut's court, evoked a past family association and requested his aid. Thibaut may have then gone to Walter of Brienne on behalf of the queen and Walter may have then sought the council of his uncle, Walter, count of Montbéliard, who agreed to postpone taking the cross in order to assist his nephew in Sicily.¹¹²

In summary, taking from the three sources cited above, the evidence suggests that Sybilla sought the counsel of the pope whilst she was imprisoned in Germany. She escaped imprisonment with her children and travelled to France on the counsel of the pope. It is possible, given the geography, that she reached Brienne first, that Walter was moved by her cause, took her to his liege lord, Thibaut of Champagne, who agreed to the match and who in turn sought to confirm it by seeking the endorsement of Philip Augustus perhaps as an effort to solidify their favourable alliance, a courtesy to the Capetian with whom he had difficulties in the past. The king then called a council to uphold the union at Melun and subsequently gave Walter a gift of money to aid his cause. This seems the most plausible explanation.

¹⁰⁹ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 841.

¹¹⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Saint. S. Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq, et al. 8 vols (Hannover and Leipzig, 1916), VIII, 447: *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. and trans. B.S. James (Santa Rosa, 1998), I. 279.

¹¹¹ *Ex Chronico Mauriniacensis Auctoribus Teulfoet Aliis Ejusdem Loci Manachis* in RHGF XII, 102A.

¹¹² He is named as Walter's maternal uncle in the *Eracles*. *Eracles*, 235.

Preparations for Conquest and John of Brienne's Early Role in the Administration of the County

Once married, Walter postponed his plans to take part in the Fourth Crusade and with the assistance of his sergeant, Raoul of Étape, immediately began raising enormous sums of money in provision for his journey to Rome. These preparations included taking the necessary precautions to ensure the well-being of his county. His brother, John of Brienne, who would one day become king of Jerusalem was now the sole approver of his charters. It is evident that John's role had now taken on a more weighty importance. This young man was at his brother's side overseeing a substantial sale of the Brienne legacy for the purposes of a war in a distant land. Thirteen years later, chroniclers would wonder at the choice of this youngest son of Brienne as king of Jerusalem; however, John likely began his full instruction in the administration of a prominent and important territory during this time of preparation for war in Italy. If ever there truly had been any intention of John taking the cloth, it is safe to say that once his brother had pledged himself to his wife's cause in Sicily, all such plans were abandoned. Whilst one cannot begin to suggest that John was fully prepared to take on the responsibility of the administration of a kingdom as august as that of Jerusalem, it is clear that at a fairly early age, Walter of Brienne had full confidence in his brother's ability to administer a holding of some importance (as Perry noted, John had once held Brienne fiefs of Trannes, Jessains, Onjon, Pel and Der directly from the count of Champagne, thus providing him with the groundwork for his regency of Brienne) and John did this successfully for many years prior to his brother's death and his own nomination to the throne of Jerusalem.¹¹³

Walter was without children at this time, having just married Elvira. His brother, William had likely died in January 1199/1200,¹¹⁴ his brother Andrew had disappeared from the record years before, leaving a younger sister and John as the only remaining siblings and heirs apparent. The Brienne had never been in a situation whereby the issue of a female heir would have to be addressed, having produced at least two sons since the dynasty's inception in the tenth century. John of Brienne, as the youngest son and elder of the two remaining children, was the likely successor were his brother to die

¹¹³ Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 50.

¹¹⁴ William last appears in the extant charters of Brienne in 1198 by April of 1199 to April of 1200, John had become the sole witness of Walter's charters [CACB, 109 - 15].

childless. This too is perhaps the reason why he is to be found in almost every extant charter that dates from this period as witness or executor and when his brother departed for Italy in 1200, John was left as regent for the county and issued charters in his name sole.¹¹⁵ Although already married to Elvira, Walter must have known that he could not hope to carry a small army into Sicily without the support of the papacy and without explaining his intentions. Therefore, high and perhaps first on his agenda was to obtain the recognition and the approval of his campaign from the highest authority in Christendom, were it not the pope who had approved Walter's selection earlier.

Walter wasted little time in journeying south with his wife in what was most likely a fact - finding mission. Powell and Matthew suggest that Walter arrived in Rome in 1201, but the activity in the charters of the county of Brienne support a first visit to Rome in 1200 as will be explored below. Indeed, he was certainly married to Elvira before 8 April 1200 for she is named as his wife in a charter which has been approximately dated from 18 April 1199 to 8 April 1200.¹¹⁶ Shortly after their union, in what was perhaps an embarrassing confirmation of a lack of Brienne funds for all involved, in the presence of his wife, Walter sold to the abbey of Clairvaux the meadow and pasture of Trémilly and Nogent and the wood and meadow of Thil, Beurville and Saulcy.¹¹⁷ These transactions were clearly for the sale of large tracts of valuable commodity – small fiefs or villages within the county of Brienne. The county had only just weathered a period of financial instability, it is therefore likely that this land was sold for the purpose of funding the trip south to Rome to meet the pope. Indeed, the exiled dowager queen of Sicily and her daughters were likely destitute and Walter would have had to provide a trousseau for all three women, with gowns and accessories worthy of the grandeur of the court of the successor to Saint Peter and his wife's station as the rightful countess of Lecce. Notwithstanding the money that Philip Augustus provided, Walter would have had to provide transport and pack horses for the ladies, himself and his men - at - arms.¹¹⁸ Needless to say, this was a very expensive trip launched for a very important audience.

¹¹⁵ CACB, 103 - 35.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, 113.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 113.

¹¹⁸ *Eracles*, 235.

The second charter witnessed Walter securing the rights and financial stability of the abbey of Molesme that had been a beneficiary of the family's munificence for several generations.¹¹⁹ He entrusted this house with the territory of Radonvilliers for the safeguarding of his interests there; he also charged the abbey with the protection of the property of his sergeant *et autorise cette abbaye à acquérir les propriétés que Raoul de l'Etape, son sergent (famulus), possède au même lieu.*¹²⁰

As previously mentioned, during a paper given on this topic, various scholars who were in attendance questioned whether Walter's crusader privileges had been transferred to his campaign in Sicily and although this suggestion will be fully explored later in this chapter, it is important to note that it is from transactions such as this, which feature regularly in the charters at this time, that a series of logical deductions can be made. If Walter had been selected to serve as Elvira's husband by the pope, one would assume that his lands would have fallen under the protection of the church, particularly so if his crusader privileges had undergone transference from one pledged crusade to the Levant, to another 'pseudo - crusade' in the *Regno*. Perhaps in a desire to ensure the security of his lands, Walter pledged some of his territory to one of Champagne's most important (and regionally powerful) monasteries, thus entrusting his lands to the Church and by extension, to papal authority.¹²¹

Walter's uncertainty in his role in the *Regno* and the fact that he did entrust his lands to powerful surrounding monasteries possibly stemmed from the capriciousness of papal protection of one's lands whilst away on crusade and an even greater need to raise funds. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that mortgaging one's lands to the Church was anything more than an attempt to secure money. Whilst papal protection of lands was enacted by Pope Urban II as far back as the First Crusade, it remains to question whether or not the papacy was ever able to provide sufficient protection of crusader lands, and there exists even more ambiguity around what exactly the protection of lands under papal authority entailed.¹²² In his study on the First Crusaders, Riley - Smith noted a

¹¹⁹ CACB, 114.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ For a more detailed discussion of papal protection, cf. D. Park. 'Under Our Protection, That of the Church and Their Own' – Papal and Secular Protection of the Families and Properties the Crusaders Left Behind, c. 1095 – 1225'. Unpublished Thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012), pp. 48 - 80, 110 - 12, 113 - 6.

¹²² R. Somerville, *The Councils of Urban II, Vol. I Decreta Claromontensia* (Amsterdam, 1972), pp. 73 - 4:108: 124.

situation whereby Hugh II of Le Puiset was away on crusade when Rotrou of Perche erected a castle on lands Hugh believed to fall under his aegis.¹²³ Ivo of Chartres, appointed by the pope to handle the situation, was clearly uncertain about what could be done and thus moved the case to a secular court 'stating that this law of the Church protecting the goods of knights going to Jerusalem was new; and that they did not know whether the protection applied only to their properties or also applied to their fortifications'.¹²⁴ These uncertainties were directly addressed by the First Lateran Council in 1123 when it was decided that 'houses, families, and all their goods into the protection of St Peter and the Roman church, as was established by our lord Pope Urban' with the threat of excommunication cast upon anyone who violated this decree.¹²⁵ Riley - Smith concluded by stating that 'Crusaders anyway felt safer taking their own measures' and given Walter's preparations, and the later evidence suggested that he intended to continue on and take part in the Fourth Crusade, he clearly chose to secure his lands independent of any promises by the pope that his lands would fall under papal protection.¹²⁶ Perhaps the most famous case of the ineffectualness of papal protection is the example of Richard I's French lands during the Third Crusade.¹²⁷

In securing his interests, it is reasonable to assume that Walter would not have wanted to overburden his young brother, John, with the running of the whole of Brienne. In this same charter, he authorised Molesme to acquire, in addition, the properties that belonged to Raoul de l'Etape, his sergeant.¹²⁸ This was undoubtedly in consequence of Raoul's intent to depart with the count of Brienne thus rendering him incapable of protecting his lord's interests in the region.

Turning back now to the events that took place shortly after Walter's marriage, there is evidence in support of the argument that he journeyed to Rome shortly after his marriage and sometime during 1199 - 1200 for the charters from this period suggests that the count of Brienne was not expecting to return to his county for quite some time. He went on to secure the well - being of his subjects; he gave to the house of the poor near the village of Chêne the right to use the wood of Batei for the suffrage of

¹²³ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 136.

¹²⁴ Ivo of Chartres, 'Epistolae', cols 170 - 4, 176 - 7: Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 136: I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073 - 1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 305: 337 - 8.

¹²⁵ *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. G. Alberigo (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 167 - 8

¹²⁶ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 137.

¹²⁷ Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp. 311 - 20.

¹²⁸ CACB, 114.

those in need, a charter which he signed in the presence of his chaplain, William and that of his mother's chaplain, Nicolas.¹²⁹ Walter went on to entrust the chapel founded by his father to Brévonne.¹³⁰ This is the last extant charter that can be dated to the years 1199 - 1200. Perhaps the most conclusive piece of evidence in support of the suggestion that Walter journeyed to Rome shortly after his marriage is a letter (incontrovertibly dated 1200) from Innocent III recommending Walter of Brienne to Walter of Palear, the chancellor of the kingdom of Sicily.¹³¹

Walter of Brienne Journeys to Rome to Seek Audience with the Pope

Conventional sentiment notwithstanding, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Innocentii* provided a narrative of the visit beginning with a characterisation of Walter as 'a brave, noble, strong, and generous man'.¹³² Walter approached the pope and requested the right to the 'things that belonged to his wife in Sicily'.¹³³ Apparently, he said nothing more in support of his cause aside from acknowledging that his rights stemmed from the fact that his wife's father, King Tancred, had obtained the throne of Sicily and the circumstances under which the throne had been lost to William III.

The *Gesta Innocentii* noted that the pope was wary and weary of this new claimant to hereditary rights in Sicily and seemed to distrust Walter on sight and believed that the count was perhaps a bit too eager to avenge the injuries done to his wife's family. Nevertheless, neither Innocent nor Frederick were in a position to reject Walter's petition for they could not afford to make yet another enemy in a kingdom where they were constantly beset by old foes. And although neither option was ideal, Innocent deliberated diligently with the advisors of his court. Finally, it was concluded that the king would recognise the rights that Elvira held by grant of Henry VI to the county of Lecce and the principality of Taranto. However, Walter was to receive his rights only after he took an oath in the

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, 116.

¹³⁰ CACB, 117.

¹³¹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xlvii - xlix: Powell, *Deeds*, pp. 28 - 31: CACB, 118.

¹³² *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 28.

¹³³ *ibid.*

presence of a large crowd to ensure that the nobles of the kingdom were aware of the events which had taken place during the meeting.¹³⁴

In a further effort to maintain stability, Innocent dispatched letters to the nobles outlining the events of the meeting and Walter's claim to the county of Lecce and the principality of Taranto. It was in this letter that Innocent made evident his hope that Walter's presence would further encourage his kinsmen to assist the king of Sicily in his fight against the Empire *qui jam crucis signaculum assumpserunt, in terrae sanctae succursum et ipsius comitis subsidiium profecturi*.¹³⁵ Innocent also noted in this letter that the decision to grant Walter the territories was also to stop him from taking 'a position hostile to the kingdom'. This letter will be discussed in more detail later in the section that deals with the suggestion that Walter was on crusade in Italy.

It is possible that Walter had threatened to take up the cause of Markward in his negotiations with the pope. Indeed, many years later, Frederick's expressed mistrust of the then long - dead count and Innocent's attempts to keep the count of Brienne in line when he first sought the pope's support suggests that Walter may have posited that he would join the ranks of the kingdom's enemies.¹³⁶ This claim cannot be substantiated as it is unlikely that the *Gesta Innocentii* would have described Walter in such pleasing terms had the count used blackmail to obtain the support of the papacy.

In exchange for this grant, Innocent stated the following terms:

We have therefore arranged, after we had with diligent zeal deliberated many plans with him, for him to undertake a security sworn on the cross and relics that, neither by himself nor through another would he enter into any scheme against the person of the king, his honor, and the Kingdom of Sicily. Rather, when he obtains the aforementioned principate and county, or a just substitute, he will keep faith with the king at our command and will pay homage to us and will, on the proper oath, obtain the guardianship of the king and the regency of the kingdom, and he will work in good faith to the

¹³⁴ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 29.

¹³⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30.

¹³⁶ As late as 1246, Frederick II considered Walter to have been the protector of the interest of Tancred's heirs and not that of Frederick himself. *Historia Diplomatica*, VI, 389.

degree possible against the king's enemies, namely Markward, Diepold, Otto of Laviano, and their followers.¹³⁷

And so it was that before Walter had even journeyed to his newly obtained territory, his enemies were named and the course of his life in the south of Italy was set. If he wanted the territory then he would have to serve as the champion of the young king and the papacy against their enemies. It begs to question, had Walter had been completely forthcoming with Innocent? Later events would suggest that he had not been honest with the pope. Walter was in a financial quagmire, he was in no position to launch either a campaign or a counterattack against the enemies of the kingdom who had the full support of the Empire behind them. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that at this time, in consequence of the Fourth Crusade, Walter was confident that he could call upon the assistance of the men of France whom the pope suggested he attempt to recruit for assistance although as noted, some knights and nobles did accompany him. The count of Champagne and the count of Montbéliard had both taken the cross at the Tournament of Écry and were intent upon fulfilling their vow. Baldwin IX, count of Flanders, had also taken the cross.¹³⁸ Although they may have desired to assist Walter, their pledge to crusade would have compromised such a wish.

Perhaps overwhelmed by what was transpiring, Walter was powerless to halt the juggernaut of papal initiative once Innocent had resolved himself. It was further decided that if Walter refused to uphold the conditions or betrayed the king, he and his family would be excommunicated, their lands placed under interdict and his rights to those lands summarily revoked. Innocent ended his letter with an invitation to all of his nobles to inform him of any objections.¹³⁹

The *Gesta Innocentii* noted only one noble as being opposed to Walter's petition, the bishop of Troia (another Walter), who also served as the chancellor of the kingdom of Sicily. Without question, the bishop's mistrust of this new claimant to rights within the territory was well - founded because his family had actively opposed Tancred. Should Walter of Brienne begin to seek justice for the wrongs committed against his wife's family, the bishop of Troia would undoubtedly find himself at the top of Walter's list of enemies.

¹³⁷ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30.

¹³⁸ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, pp. 3 - 4: Villhardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 6.

¹³⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30

Whilst the bishop of Troia was specifically mentioned, there was in fact yet another noble who stood to lose a great deal if Walter became involved in the politics of the *Regno*. Lecce already had a count, Robert, who had been invested in 1195 by Henry VI and to add further complications, he had been approved by the curia because of his munificence in giving to the church.¹⁴⁰

That Innocent was able to disengage himself from this potentially explosive situation attests to his great skill as a diplomat and politician of the first order. He was faced with a seemingly insurmountable challenge for he could not afford to alienate Robert, count of Lecce, nor disregard the disgruntled mumblings of the bishop of Troia.¹⁴¹ Yet his need for the military support offered by Walter was greatly pressing, moreover, he could ill - afford to make Walter of Brienne an enemy. Therefore, it was decided that the count of Brienne would be welcomed with stringent stipulations in place to limit his power and his ambition. How Robert of Lecce received the news and his fate subsequent to these events remains unknown.

Although there survives no account of Walter having been criticised by the pope for seemingly postponing his commitment to the Fourth Crusade, this cannot be considered an indication that vows were transferred or that the pope had actively sought Walter as his champion. Indeed, it is likely that the absence of papal criticism is because Walter was acting in the *Regno* to protect the interests of both the pope and the young Frederick II.

The *Eracles*, though it stipulated that the pope urged Sybilla to seek the counsel of the king of France for a champion, did not suggest that the pope himself nominated Walter for the position. Instead, it noted that Walter was one of the men at the assembly at Melun and the language suggested that it was simply coincidence that he was there and perhaps little more than luck that he was chosen, although he was clearly considered to be suited for the role. '*Li rois assembla une grant assemblée a Meleun sur Sene, et fist assaver as baronz le fait de la dame, et offri s'aide a celui qui le vodroit enprendre. Il ot en la cort un baron de Champagne*'.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *Die Register Innocenz III*, p. 337; *Opera Omnia*, 214, cccxli: II, clxxxii. As noted by Van Cleve, for confirmation of his name as Robert, cf. E. Winkelmann, *Philipp von Schwaben und Otto IV. Von Braunschweig* (Leipzig, 1873– 8), 30, n. 1.

¹⁴¹ Innocent had only recently written to Robert of Lecce assuring him of papal support, cited in cf. op cit.

¹⁴² *Eracles*, 234.

In late spring, Walter of Brienne, leaving his wife and mother - in - law in Rome, returned to his county to raise funds for his campaign.¹⁴³ Indeed, fundraising began in earnest in the year 1201, with systematic selling of lands and goods in what was an attempt by Walter to raise enough funds to recruit and sustain a large army to march with him to the *Regno* and then to participate in the Fourth Crusade.

Walter's intentions when he married Elvira are unknown. In his important work on Markward of Anweiler, Van Cleve suggested that Walter could look upon his marriage as a means of restoring the family fortune, basing his knowledge of the family's finances on the account found in the *Chronicon von Ursberg*, which commented that Walter was a *nobiles quidem, sed pauperes*.¹⁴⁴ However, it seems that the suggestion that Walter looked upon this marriage as a means of bolstering the family finances could only be true if Walter had been a gambling man prepared to wager his county on the success of a poorly - funded campaign in a distant land rife with conflict stemming from the existence of three possible pretenders to the throne, each with valid claims. Van Cleve further suggested that Walter was keen to open for himself 'a new world of knightly adventure'.¹⁴⁵ If it was adventure that the count of Brienne sought, he could have departed France in the retinue of either one of his liege lords, the count of Champagne or the king of France, intent upon taking part in the crusade. Indeed, not only would the crusade have provided 'adventure' but also remission of sins. That said, Walter was almost certainly aware that his status would be greatly elevated and as the Brienne were a dynasty consistently moving upwards in status via marriages, this would have been an ideal union for Walter. Indeed, his motives for undertaking this campaign in the *Regno* remain ambiguous. But, the pope's motives in throwing his support behind Walter are clear.

Walter's mother was Agn  s of Montb  liard, her eldest brother, Richard of Montfaucon, count of Montb  liard, was one of the leading nobles of Burgundy. Innocent was well aware of Walter's relationship with some of the leading lords of their time when he received the count of Brienne, Sybilla and Elvira in Rome at the end of April 1200. Indeed, the pope commented on the possibility of securing the assistance of the nobles of Champagne and Flanders on the basis that they were the

¹⁴³ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ T.C. Van Cleve, *Markward von Anweiler* (Oxford, 1937), p. 142.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

kinsmen of Walter of Brienne.¹⁴⁶ In a few months time, the pope was sure to be disappointed by the turnout of Walter's kinsmen, but not to digress. The mere possibility of such an alliance was enough to secure the support of the pope within a very limited scope.

Innocent's specific reference to Champagne was likely in consequence of the recent clash of regalian rights within the county and the Brienne's role in the events. And whilst the pope's desire to secure the assistance of the count of Champagne is understandable, it remains a mystery why the pope would make specific reference to Walter's relationship with the nobles of Flanders. The pope may have had Baldwin IX, count of Flanders in mind, having perhaps recalled his role in the conflict between Richard of England and Philip Augustus.

As delineated in the genealogy provided in this chapter, Walter was related to the house of Flanders, but distantly so. The house of Flanders had been instrumental in the promulgation of papal reform throughout their territory and was an enthusiastic and consistent crusading dynasty.¹⁴⁷ The pope would have perhaps been better served had he noted Walter's kinship with the Montbéliard, who had become the powerful house of Burgundy, thus both the Brienne and the counts of Burgundy were descendants of that most prolific family, the Roucy. Innocent's interest in the house of Flanders may also be attributed to the Alsatian dynasty, which began with Thierry of Alsace, the nephew of Robert of Jerusalem. Nicholas noted 'crusading enhanced the prestige of the Flemish counts...[their] involvement with the East becomes more serious with Thierry of Alsace'.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Thierry of Alsace married into the ruling house of Jerusalem when he wed Sybilla, the daughter of King Fulk V of Jerusalem.¹⁴⁹ Without a doubt, the pope would have been loath to alienate a man with such connections as Walter had to Flanders and Champagne.

¹⁴⁶ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv. Concerning the dating of the visit, Van Cleve noted: '*Gesta XXV* contains the letter of the Pope acquainting the Familiares with the agreement with Walter of Brienne. For the fixing of the date of Innocent's communication in May, cf. F.J. Baethgen., 'Die Regentschaft Papst Innozenz III', in *Königreich Sizilien*. Heidelberg, 1914. p. 32, n.I. It has been pointed out above that in the ecclesiae minister etc. and that his later dropping of that title is likely to be attributed to his anger at hearing from the Pope of the latter's agreement with Brienne. Accordingly it is improbable that the Chancellor received the letter before May or later. Assuming that the Pope informed the Familiares immediately after the agreement, Walter of Brienne must have arrived in Rome likely in April'.

¹⁴⁷ Phillips, *Second Crusade*, p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ Nicholas, *Flanders*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁹ OV, VI, 165; VI, 333, 379. *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint - Bertin, Collection des cartulaires de France*, ed M. Guérard, in *Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'histoire de France, 1ère série, histoire politique*. 3 vols (Paris, 1840), II, 300.

Walter was likely briefed of the situation in Sicily and southern Italy before he married his wife and knew that if he desired the slightest chance of obtaining papal support on behalf of Elvira, he would have to confine his request for aid to the purposes of securing the county of Lecce and the principality of Taranto. To broach the subject of his wife's rights to the kingdom of Sicily only just as the papacy had, after centuries, secured its pontifical rights over the Empire would have meant an immediate halt to any and all of his wife's pretensions. By the time Walter arrived in the presence of the pope, it is possible that it had been firmly decided that Lecce and Taranto were the only issues to be discussed. Indeed, despite the misgivings of the papacy and Frederick II, and Walter's obvious claim to the throne, it is highly unlikely that the count of Brienne ever harboured hopes or even desired to become the king of Sicily.

Fundraising and Regency in the County of Brienne

When Walter returned to France there was a general move by the nobles of Champagne towards preparation for what would be known to posterity as the Fourth Crusade. In his chronicle, Villehardouin listed some of these nobles as being; Geoffrey of Joinville, seneschal of Champagne, Robert of Joinville, Walter of Vignory, Walter of Montbéliard, Guy and Clarembaud of Chappes; the latter two would later seek an exit from the Fourth Crusade to fight with Walter in Italy.¹⁵⁰ All of the nobles listed here were either the kin or the vassals of the Brienne, thus exemplifying both the opportunity and the difficulty facing Walter.

Based on the charter evidence, it seems that Walter spent the remainder of 1200 ensuring the security of the religious houses dependent upon his charity and perhaps attempting to convince his kinsmen and vassals to postpone participating in the crusade in favour of campaigning in Sicily. It is likely that Walter's kinsmen planned to assist him in acquiring his wife's lands before continuing on to the Holy Land and it is also possible that Walter's intentions were the same as Villehardouin observed when he met Walter in 1201, 'When Geoffrey told them [Walter of Brienne and his party]

¹⁵⁰ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, 36 - 7: Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 31.

the news of their achievements in Venice, they were overjoyed....They said to him, "We are already on our way, and when you return to Venice you will find all of us ready there."¹⁵¹

Walter successfully recruited his mother's brother, Walter of Montbéliard, (who would go on to act as the constable of Jerusalem in 1206 and did, therefore, reach the Latin East as promised), Eustace of Conflans (another descendant of the house of Roucy through his mother, Hildegard of Reynel, who herself was the daughter of Thibaut I of Reynel and his wife, Ermentrude of Roucy) and Robert of Joinville.¹⁵² These associations delineate the importance of family, at least to the descendants to the house of Roucy, who remained closely aligned for generations.

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing the number of men Walter was able to raise, Villehardouin noted that amongst those previously mentioned were other nobles of Champagne, but it is unlikely that Walter was able to convince more than a few nobles and their knights and men - at - arms to accompany him to Italy because many had already prioritised the crusade. By April 1201, Walter was ready to leave for Italy and in that month alone, he raised what was likely the bulk of his funds for the campaign. He gave to the abbey of Saint - Loup of Troyes the rights of security, shelter and justice that he held over the village of Molin in exchange for 100 livres of Provins.¹⁵³ He then committed his lands to Thibaut II, count of Champagne, for the amount of 700 livres.¹⁵⁴ Having evidently run out of lands and goods to sell, he turned to his young brother's inheritance, for John possessed a holding that was independent of his brother's patrimony. The future king of Jerusalem sold this holding, Herbissee, to Thibaut of Champagne for 780 livres, which he then gave to Walter.¹⁵⁵

Entrusting his county to John, Walter departed with his small army for Italy, meeting Villehardouin who was returning from Venice as they passed over Mont Cenis.¹⁵⁶ Van Cleve suggested that the sight of his compatriots en route to Italy under the papal banner likely amused Villehardouin. Philip Augustus had some years before sought an alliance with the Hohenstaufen to

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵³ CACB, 122.

¹⁵⁴ CACB, 124.

¹⁵⁵ CACB, 119.

¹⁵⁶ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, p. 10; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 6.

whom he may have been indebted for bringing an end to his war with Richard I.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the evidence suggests that Markward himself may have been the mediator between the feuding monarchs for when the war was over, Philip invested Markward with the village of Leberau in upper Alsace.¹⁵⁸

The apparent autonomy of the count of Brienne does much to distinguish the separation between ‘feudal France’ filled with lords and nobles who practiced a degree of sovereignty over their holdings and ‘national France’ which fell under the aegis of the king. Walter’s alliance with the young Hohenstaufen king, particularly at this point in the Brienne history, is not out of place.¹⁵⁹ It is likely that Walter’s father, Erard, had contact with Barbarossa when he was a teenager on crusade as will be fully discussed in chapter three of this work. Moreover, the Brienne dynasty had a history of supporting the papacy, and neither could there be a presupposition of loyalty to the monarchy for Walter himself had sided with the king of England against Philip Augustus. There is no evidence to suggest that Philip Augustus attempted to stop Walter from embarking on this campaign. And whilst Villehardouin may have been amused at the sight of Walter and his army, he was perhaps hardly surprised to find that Walter was once again aligning himself with the king’s adversaries.

A Kingdom in Need

Since the death of Tancred and the exile of his family, the kingdom of Sicily had elected and buried a ruling king, Henry VI (d. 1197), whose wife was now regent on behalf of their infant son, Frederick, who had been born into the purple. This infant was, by right of blood, king of Sicily and Germany. And although his mother had been unable to hold on to his interest in Germany, where his uncle Philip of Swabia had usurped the throne, she secured an admirable protector in Pope Innocent III. To be sure, a distant thought at best was the exiled dowager queen who, as far as most of the players were undoubtedly concerned, had rights only to those territories sworn by oath to her keeping by Henry VI.

The most pressing threat to the young Frederick was Markward of Anweiler who had previously been exiled from the kingdom by Constance when he championed Henry VI and who was now preparing for a mighty invasion of southern Italy and Sicily with the full weight of imperial support.

¹⁵⁷ Van Cleve, *Markward*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁸ Van Cleve, *Markward*, pp. 52 - 3: *Catalogue des Actes de Philippe - Auguste*, ed. L.V. Delisle (Paris, 1856), 503.

¹⁵⁹ Van Cleve, *Markward*, p. 53.

When Walter wed Elvira of Sicily, it is highly unlikely that either Constance or Markward regarded this modest noble of Champagne and his wife to be a viable threat. Indeed, in the *Gesta Innocentii*, Elvira and Walter's marriage duly and briefly mentioned in *regnum Francorum confugiens, primogentiam suam Gualtero, Brenensi comiti, tradidit in uxorem*, before the author launched into several paragraphs of the threat posed by the Holy Roman Emperor, Philip, and his champion, Markward, and the alliance between Innocent and Constance.¹⁶⁰

It was perhaps because of the schism that had recently taken place within Germany that Innocent and Constance were spared the full brunt of the Empire's military strength. Philip's election was a polarising issue in the Empire. A faction of nobles and clergy, led by the archbishop of Cologne, inclined to believe that they had been excluded from the process of electing Philip as king, summoned Otto, count of Poitou, son of the late duke of Saxony and elected him as king of Cologne.¹⁶¹ He was subsequently crowned at Aachen and set up as the anti - king. Philip was thus in no position to press forward with his interests in Italy.

Markward of Anweiler, Champion of Philip I, Holy Roman Emperor

In order to understand the importance of Walter's career in Italy as a member of a crusader dynasty, husband to an heiress with claim to the throne of Sicily, his role as papal champion and perhaps most importantly, why he never fulfilled his intention to participate in the Fourth Crusade, this thesis will first examine what was happening in Sicily at this time.

Undeterred by the regency of the pope or the *Familiares*, Markward pressed forward into the kingdom, declaring that the last testament of Emperor Henry VI granted him the regency of the kingdom on Frederick's behalf. Markward von Anweiler would be Walter's greatest foe in the *Regno* until the latter's death in September 1202. It is, therefore, of interest to this study that his career before the arrival of Walter of Brienne is considered.

Markward of Anweiler had been involved in the emperor's attempt to amalgamate the kingdom of Sicily and the Holy Roman Empire since the reign of Barbarossa. Indeed, it was Barbarossa who

¹⁶⁰ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 21.

¹⁶¹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxii: Powell, *Deeds*, pp. 21 - 2.

elevated him to a position of trust amongst the nobles of his domain.¹⁶² Acting as an intimate of the young king Henry VI, Markward had been present at Henry's first encounter with government. Such a position ensured that he witnessed firsthand the dynamics behind the governing of the Empire and the motivations of the kings. Once Henry had died, with his wife firmly established as the regent of Sicily and the possibility that she had perhaps been involved in a plot against his life, it was naturally left to Henry's closest advisors to continue his policy and desire to unite the two kingdoms under one ruler.

Van Cleve's defence of Markward stemmed from a belief that Markward 'bore the brunt of this effort [to preserve Henry's policy]' and that from the time of Henry's death in 1197 until his own death in 1202, this was Markward's only motivation, Van Cleve argued 'as trusted friend of the dead emperor and as partisan of the Hohenstaufen interests, to defy the Pope,'¹⁶³ However, he did not address Markward's armed struggle against Constance's regency, which can be viewed only as a direct affront to the interest of the young king, Frederick II, who after years of attempting to unify Empire and kingdom, was perhaps the best person to fulfil this dream.¹⁶⁴ Van Cleve appeared to disregard this era of history altogether. Moreover, he attempted to bolster Markward's policy of acting with *carte blanche* in Sicily by adducing Philip's inability to pursue Henry's policy because of the crowning of the anti - king, Otto.¹⁶⁵

Concerned for the kingdom, the pope sent Gregory, cardinal deacon of Santa Maria of Portico, as his representative to Sicily to oversee the affairs of the kingdom with Constance's *Familiares*.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Markward had amassed an army and was threatening to seize the strategically placed monastery of Monte Cassino, which served as the gateway into the kingdom of Sicily. Innocent sent his cousin, Lando of Montelongo, the Rector of Campagna, with almost fifty knights and a hundred archers to aid the beleaguered abbot of Monte Cassino.¹⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, when Markward, in the spring of 1199, suggested that the infant in Innocent's custody was not the child of Constance and Henry VI, the pope was reluctant to continue negotiations. Again, Markward offered to reconcile

¹⁶² Van Cleve, *Markward*, p. 16.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Van Cleve, *Markward*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 23.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

himself with the unity of the kingdom and the papacy, but the pope went a step further and insisted that Markward swear an oath to obey the ‘apostolic mandates’ on all matters for which he had been excommunicated.¹⁶⁸ Although prepared to acquiesce to the spiritual demands, Markward was unwilling to do so in affairs of the kingdom unless he deemed them to be just. But, when the pope refused to allow him to tweak the oath, Markward, perhaps in a show of good faith, agreed to the pope’s terms without conditions only to perform a *volte face* shortly thereafter. Indeed, when the pope sent men to him to receive his oath, Markward stalled when his supporters balked at the terms. He wrote to the pope that neither for God nor man would he observe the pope’s terms.¹⁶⁹ Hostilities broke out anew and Markward again launched an invasion of the kingdom.

The pope’s lack of both political and military strength is illustrated here by his inability to muster an adequate army to defend the kingdom. He was in desperate need of a champion. Weakness of power notwithstanding, he did, however, make an attempt by dispatching his noble cousin James, two hundred mercenaries and Cinthius, the cardinal priest of Saint Lawrence in Lucina, legate of the Apostolic See.¹⁷⁰ This was the state of the kingdom when Walter, Sibylla and Elvira arrived at the pope’s court in Rome in May 1200.

Was Walter on Crusade in Sicily?

In her study on political crusades, Rebecca Rist argued that ‘When calling for crusades against political enemies, popes invoked the Theory of the Two Swords – a theory of relation between spiritual and temporal power’.¹⁷¹ Of the development of the crusades into various forms, Purcell suggested ‘..it was an easy step from the crusade in defence of the recognised papal states to crusade for possession of states over which the pope claimed suzerainty, as for example Sicily’.¹⁷² Whilst Keenan claimed in her article entitled ‘Innocent III and the First Political Crusade: A Comment on the Limitations of Papal Power’ that the pope did, as clearly illustrated in a letter which survives from 1199, offer crusade indulgences for the campaign in Italy ‘*universis procedentibus contra eos in hac*

¹⁶⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 25.

¹⁶⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ R.A.C. Rist, *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198 – 1245* (London, 2009), p. 14.

¹⁷² M. Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy: The Chief Instruments of Papal Crusading Policy and Crusade to the Holy Land from the Final Loss of Jerusalem to the Fall of Acre 1244 - 1291* (Leiden, 1975), p. 19.

nequitia perdurantes illam concedimus veniam peccatorum quam in defensionem terrae orientalis transfretantibus indulgemus' it is not likely that these indulgences extended to Walter's campaign or that Walter considered himself (or was considered by Pope Innocent III) on crusade whilst in Italy.¹⁷³ The letter in question, which was dispatched on 24 November 1199, was sent to the Sicilian people on the heels of a failed attempt in February 1199 to rally them to the papal cause by taking up arms against Markward's forces.¹⁷⁴ In this letter, Innocent compared Markward to Saladin '*quod factus sit contra vos alius Saladinus*', he recounted Von Anweiler's atrocities against the Church and suggested that his actions had made the region vulnerable to attacks from infidels '*quae si, quod absit, in Saracenorum potentiam deveniret, nulla de caetero recuperationi Hierosolymitanae provinciae fiducia remaneret*'.¹⁷⁵

Of this letter, Keenan noted

Many of Innocent's proposals in the February letter must have died stillborn, for the passing is not recorded. Whatever was said in the conference at Rome, the Tuscan rectors in fact produced no troops, not even for money. Neither did the Lombards or any of the other allies on whom Innocent had counted in February. Not even the victorious army from the March materialized to go South.¹⁷⁶

Given this lack of response, it is clear that the letter dated November 1199 was merely a desperate cry necessitated by Innocent's failure to rally the Sicilians in February. At this point, having lost faith in the *Familiares* and his 'allies', the pontiff was prepared to offer heaven itself in order to enforce the observance of his rights as pope and gather men to his cause.

'Against the German menace Innocent looks in two directions...expecting money from Sicily, troops from northern Italy'.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, at this point, it is unlikely that the pope was concerned with recruitment outside of the region and there is no record of this 'crusade' ever having been preached throughout Christendom. Most succinct is Flori's assessment of crusades outside of the Latin East as

¹⁷³ E. Keenan, 'Innocent III and the First Political Crusade: A Comment on the Limitations of Papal Power'. in *Traditio* 27 (1971), p. 231: *Die Register Innocenz' III*, II, 414.

¹⁷⁴ *Die Register Innocenz III*, II, 411–14.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 411 - 12.

¹⁷⁶ Keenan, 'Innocent III', p. 238.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 236.

being ‘neither institutional nor permanent, but a product of circumstances [*conjoncturelle*] that could be revoked, which clearly could not have been the case with an authentic crusade’.¹⁷⁸

Let it not be forgotten how diligently and cautiously Walter secured his lands before leaving for Sicily having had no cause to believe that his lands would enjoy the same protection afforded to crusaders on the crusade in the Holy Land. That ‘lordless’ lands would be placed under the protection of the Church was a key incentive for recruitment to the crusade. It is difficult to imagine how negatively impacted the crusades would have been had the pope failed to offer papal protection of those lands however untenable.

Also, the author of the *Gesta* does not mention crusader privileges, indeed, it seems almost an afterthought to the pope to elicit the assistance of the nobles of France and then only within the limited scope of the count of Brienne’s immediate kin. The pope did not call for a crusade, he specifically requested the aid of a few prominent nobles of Champagne. In the face of such evidence, it is clear that the forced crusader privileges of the letter of November 1199 did not extend to either the count of Brienne or any others outside the kingdom of Sicily. That is not to say, however, that Innocent did not closely associate Walter’s campaign in the *Regno* with the Fourth Crusade. In a letter to the nobles of Sicily dated 1200 he remarked *utpote quem dilecti filii, Campaniae et Flandriae comites, proxima linea consanguinitatis attingunt, qui jam cruces signaculum assumpserunt, in terrae sanctae succursum et ipsius comitis subsidium profecturi*.¹⁷⁹ Ostensibly, Innocent himself drew a distinction between Walter’s campaign and the Fourth Crusade, which further bolsters the argument. Indeed, support of this demarcation can be found in the wording of the text whereby he stated that the counts of Champagne and Flanders had set out in aid of the Holy Land *and in aid of Walter*.

Neither of these counts accompanied Walter to Italy, so it is possible that in this context, Innocent viewed the campaign as an extension of the Fourth Crusade. However, in that same sentence, Innocent stated *deliberavimus quid esset agendum, utrum scilicet eum ad regis traheremus obsequium, an patermur hostilem animum assumere contra regum*.¹⁸⁰ Here, Innocent noted that he

¹⁷⁸ J. Flori, ‘Pour une redefinition de la croisade’, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 47 (2004), p. 337 as translated in N.J. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006), p. 5.

¹⁷⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

had been uncertain of what to do with Walter, but surely the pope would have known the intentions of a lord intent upon crusade (or an extension thereof) in Italy? Moreover, if Walter's mandate was crusade (political or religious), his actions would have fallen under the aegis of the papacy. Indeed, had Walter's position been known as that of crusader, Innocent would have had no cause to consider him a threat to the kingdom, *hostilem animum assumere contra regnum*.¹⁸¹

Perhaps the strongest evidence that Walter was not considered a crusader in Italy is the following sentence from the pope's letter, in which he stated *Cognoscentes ergo, petitionem ipsius, secundum ea quae intelleximus, esse justam, favorem ei apostolicum super ipsa petitione duximus impendendum, ne, si ei forsitan justa negaremus, quasi desperans, regni hostibus adderetur, vel per seipsum fortior regis fieret inimicus, et fieret error novissimus pejor priore*.¹⁸² Note that in this passage, as in the extracts discussed above, Innocent evidently had two choices, either he accepted Walter's claim to his wife's lands or risked making another enemy in the war against the Hohenstaufen. Nothing is mentioned of crusader vows nor is Walter spoken of as the pope's champion of papal reform. It is clear that this alliance was one of convenience and mutual benefit and not one of crusade.

To reiterate, this very problematic suggestion that Walter was indeed on crusade remains mired in contradictory evidence and thus it seems that whilst crusader vows may have been extended, and men may have been expected to leave the Holy Land to fight on behalf of the pope in Italy, as noted by Villehardouin when speaking of a regiment of crusaders in Corfu during the Fourth Crusade who 'With help from the people of Corfu they would, once the army had departed, send word to Count Walter of Brienne, who held Brindisi at that time, that he should send ships to take them there', it is not likely that Walter or the pope considered his activities to be that of a crusader.¹⁸³

Whilst it cannot be known for certain the colour of the cross Walter affixed to his clothing nor its position, if he wore one at all, it is certain that the only privilege that the pope explicitly granted him was the protection of his wife's lands once he had reclaimed them, *et nobis tam Regis tutelam quam regni balium assecurabit proprio juramento, et quod bona fide pro posse suo ad defensionem regis et*

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30.

¹⁸³ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, pp. 34 - 5: Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 31.

regni and that there was no direct mention or suggestion that Walter was on crusade in Italy within the text.¹⁸⁴

The Campaign in Sicily

Walter Arrives with a Small Army in Sicily and Markward's Fateful Mistake

When Walter left for Brienne, the kingdom of Sicily was almost in Markward's grasp and his leading knight, Diepold, continued to successfully campaign. When Walter arrived in Rome, the anonymous of the *Gesta Innocentii* stated 'Count Walter of Brienne, however, arrived quickly in Rome with the small but effective body of knights he had collected, but some mocked his foolhardiness for planning to enter the kingdom with such a modest force'.¹⁸⁵

Disappointment in Walter's army was clearly felt by all allies throughout the kingdom, but none were as disappointed as the pope. Notwithstanding the presence in Walter's retinue of that great count, Walter of Montbéliard, whom the *Gesta Innocentii* had specifically named as a most desirous ally, the pope was reported to have been extremely dissatisfied with the size of the army, although given the passion with which the nobles of Champagne, traditionally dedicated crusaders, took the cross for the Fourth Crusade he must have had some sense of realism about the situation. Moreover, his adversaries now held fortified places at the entrance of the kingdom.

Perhaps adding insult to injury, upon his arrival in Rome, Walter launched into a defence of his army by pleading financial ruin, which he obviously had not mentioned at his first meeting with the pope. Begrudgingly, the pope 'took pity and granted him fifty ounces of gold out of which he might collect a force of knights with whose aid he might enter the kingdom'.¹⁸⁶ It was at this time that the pope also gave him letters of introduction for the counts and barons, castellans and citizens of the kingdom so that he might more easily find aid.¹⁸⁷ In truth, Innocent could not have expected Walter to receive much aid from the nobility of Sicily and Italy. Peter, count of Celano preferred to remain

¹⁸⁴ As noted by Purcell in her work *Papal Crusading Policy*, 'the cross which was assumed for crusades other than one to the Holy Land, was distinguished by its colour, or the position in which it was worn' (Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy*, p. 70 n.79): *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁶ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 37.

¹⁸⁷ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 37: CACB, 118, 125: *Historica diplomatica*, I, 80 - 5.

neutral whilst his son, Bernard, languished in prison at Rocca d'Arce.¹⁸⁸ Yet another Sicilian noble, Richard of Aquila, count of Fondi, had openly joined the cause of Diepold, whereas the Grand Justiciar of the mainland was himself in need of assistance against the Germans.¹⁸⁹ Thus, having received as much support as the pope was prepared to proffer, Walter did not remain long in Rome, he gathered his forces, perhaps with ranks swelled with mercenaries provided by Innocent's coin, and crossed into the Terra di Lavoro.

His first victory was the taking of the castle of Chietie whose citizens seem to have given up without protest.¹⁹⁰ Shortly thereafter, he set out for Capua where he was denied entry to the city by the residents. With the gates of the city closed to the count of Brienne, Diepold prepared to meet his enemy in battle and marched his army around Capua to take up position before the city.¹⁹¹ The battle took place on 10 June 1201 near the bridge of Agnella.¹⁹² There were severe casualties on both sides, but in the end, Walter was victorious and Diepold was soundly beaten.¹⁹³ Walter's triumphs moved the *Familiars* to action and they wrote a letter in the name of the young king Frederick II to the pope confirming their support and asking forgiveness for not having done so sooner.¹⁹⁴

Innocent replied in a letter that was both censorious and forgiving. He wrote 'If only you knew that when you were younger, and even now, when you are established, the Apostolic See received you under its protection when you lost both your parents'.¹⁹⁵ The pope goes on to inform the king of the great danger that he undertook to keep him safe, 'And even in the kingdom our hand did not fail you, in fact we, through our brethren and knights, prevented the attack of the madman Markward, who raged with barbaric fierceness against your trusty men'.¹⁹⁶ Innocent was also sure to inform Frederick of the sacrifice of others, 'Of course, if you consider the truth, the Count of Brienne has brought more to you on one day than some who, with our own goods "widen their phylacteries and lengthen their

¹⁸⁸ For Peter of Celano, cf. K. Hampe, 'Mittelalterliche Geschichte', in *Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte*, ed. by K. Höhn (Gotha, 1922), I, 19.

¹⁸⁹ *Eracles*, 236: Winkelmann, *Philipp von Schwaben*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁰ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 37.

¹⁹¹ *Annales Ceccanenses*. MGH XIX, 295.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p. 291.

¹⁹³ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 37.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

tassels” have profited you as long as they have lived’.¹⁹⁷ After he admonishes his young ward, Innocent offers to welcome him and his *Familiaries* back into the grace of the papal see.¹⁹⁸

Frederick II and the Brienne

As previously established in this study, the Brienne and the Hohenstaufen were distantly related through marriage. Further, in chapter three, it was suggested that this kinship had been acknowledged by Frederick Barbarossa and Erard II of Brienne, a matter that culminated in Erard’s praise of Barbarossa in an extant charter that dates from the year 1166.¹⁹⁹ It is likely that this association was unknown to Frederick II who, having spent the majority of his life in Sicily, was more a child of that region than the strife - torn Empire that had belonged to his father and his grandfather. With his mother, Constance, having been accused of plotting against his father, the disregard of his rights as the son of Henry VI in favour of those of his uncle, Philip as well as the machinations of other factions within Sicily against his authority, Frederick’s council was rightly suspicious.

Walter had entered the kingdom of Sicily not as the king’s kinsman or crusader, but rather as yet another claimant to territory in Sicily and, perhaps more importantly, as the husband of the woman whose family Frederick’s parents had condemned to imprisonment and banishment from their rightful domain. Past, arguably insignificant, familial association aside, Walter of Brienne was an immediate threat to the young king. Indeed, upon Walter’s appearance at court in 1200, the *Gesta Innocentii* remarked, ‘For the count himself seemed, not without reason, to be suspect to Frederick, the boy - king of Sicily, son of the emperor, as one who intended to avenge the injuries of his family’.²⁰⁰

Whether Frederick ever ceased his suspicions of Walter’s intentions remains a mystery. It can be argued that at the apogee of his power, as leader of the army of Sicily and one who held great influence, Walter could have pressed his wife’s cause as the rightful heir of the kingdom. That the count of Brienne seemingly never sought this recognition of his rights strongly suggests to the modern reader that Walter had never intended to have himself crowned as king of Sicily. And yet, Frederick’s

¹⁹⁷ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 44.

¹⁹⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 47.

¹⁹⁹ CACB, 68 and E. Perard, *Bourgogne*, pp. 253 - 4.

²⁰⁰ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 29.

later aggressive behaviour towards Walter's brother further supports the suggestion that the emperor never acknowledged the sacrifice the Brienne had made on his behalf.

Frederick's most recent biographer, Abulafia, is quite stern in his condemnation of the elder Brienne. Of Walter's arrival in Sicily, he remarked 'the pope dangled before him the rights to the county of Lecce, held by Tancred before he became king of Sicily in 1190, on condition that he acknowledge Frederick as rightful king and renounce any residual claim through his father - in - law Tancred'.²⁰¹ However, there is no truth to the suggestion that the pope 'dangled' anything before Walter, indeed, the *Gesta* makes it quite clear that it was Walter who requested the restoration of Tancred's lands to his family.²⁰²

Abulafia's language further hints at an unspoken alliance between Walter of Brienne and Innocent III which would, by association, pit both men against the regalian interests of Frederick II with the pope more concerned with the preservation of his own rights in the *Regno*. This thinly veiled implication cannot be supported by the evidence, for as the *Gesta Innocentii* clearly stated Innocent was also suspicious of Walter's true motives.

Abulafia does not reserve his condemnation exclusively for the Brienne. He went on to note 'The papacy did not possess the military might to defend its vassal. To that extent, Innocent was an inappropriate, even incompetent, protector of his ward's just rights'.²⁰³ This dismissal provides fodder for several obvious objections in the face of the absence of Abulafia's pick for Frederick's protector in lieu of Innocent III and with the young king's kinsmen preoccupied with vying for rights to the Empire. Indeed, Abulafia seems to be of the mind that neither Walter of Brienne nor Innocent III was intent upon the preservation of Frederick's interest. All of this despite the fact that the evidence does not support his proposition because the young and vulnerable king grew into maturity unscathed by the violent conflict waging around him all whilst having no champions independent of the influence of either the pope or Walter of Brienne, the council of *familiares* being little more than an extension of the papacy.

²⁰¹ Abulafia, *Frederick*, p. 97.

²⁰² *ibid.*

²⁰³ *ibid.*

Of Walter's later reluctance to move against the pope's detractors, and at the time, Frederick's captors, Abulafia argued, 'Walter of Brienne seemed happier to consolidate his rule in Apulia and was disinclined to lead the promised papal army into Sicily to deliver the king'.²⁰⁴ In further defence of Walter, it should be noted that he had, at this point, succeeded in what he had set out to do in Sicily, which was to secure his wife's lost patrimony of the counties of Lecce and Taranto. He had pledged himself to Innocent as his champion and he had promised to preserve Frederick's interests only until such a time as he had regained this territory. As far as Walter was concerned, his mandate had been successfully fulfilled.

What is perhaps the most worrying of Abulafia's conjectures is that 'the fault in Innocent's policy lay in his support for this adventurer [Walter of Brienne]. Walter's lack of enthusiasm for a Sicilian campaign is seen to prove how little advantage he brought the pope'.²⁰⁵ Indeed, Abulafia would have his readers believe that Walter's three to four year successful campaign, which witnessed his defeat of Markward's forces even whilst terribly outnumbered, does nothing to vouch for the advantage that he brought to Innocent III and his ward, Frederick II. Curiously, only a paragraph after this claim, Abulafia seemed to inadvertently contradict his earlier assertion when he claimed, 'Walter of Brienne's death was the stimulus to a reassessment in the papal curia of policy towards Sicily. It rapidly came to be seen that, since no champion was to hand, a compromise with the southern war - lords was necessary'.²⁰⁶ A compromise that had not been necessary when Walter of Brienne was alive.

As late as 1246, Frederick II would express his general mistrust of Walter's true intentions in the Regno. He remarked in a letter, *Othonem de Saxonia veterem adversarium nostrum et domus nostre in imperatorem in nostrum prejudicium consecravit; qualiter comitem G. de Brenna, qui velut gener Tancredi regis instrusi mortem nostram et sanguinem sitiebat, sub defensionis nostre specie misit in regnum*.²⁰⁷ Forty - six years later, Frederick's interpretation of his actions towards Walter at this moment supports the suggestion that a transference of his hostility from one Brienne brother to the other is not a farfetched assumption, namely his later dealings with Walter's brother John who would

²⁰⁴ Abulafia, *Frederick*, p. 101.

²⁰⁵ Abulafia, *Frederick*, p. 102.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Historia Diplomatica*, VI, 389.

become king of Jerusalem and Frederick's father-in-law. Indeed, memories of this tumultuous family association were not soon forgotten by either side as there would be yet another son of Brienne who would not forget the past conflict between the Hohenstaufen and his family and the blood feud would manifest itself during the wars in Cyprus when Walter of Brienne's son, Walter IV, actively campaigned against the then fifty - five year old Frederick II.²⁰⁸

Despite the fact that even in his youth, Frederick's suspicions of the Brienne interests were thought to be wholly misplaced to his contemporaries, it ultimately fell to Innocent III to remind Frederick of Walter's sacrifice in protecting him from those who would seek to do him harm.²⁰⁹ Perhaps this sacrifice may serve to qualify Innocent's later support of the Brienne family and John of Brienne's nomination to the throne of Jerusalem.

Walter Successfully Reclaims Lecce and Continues to Protect the Interests of Frederick II

Turning now back to events in the *Regno*, Walter's successful conquest of Lecce in 1201 completed the recovery of his wife's lands as agreed with the pope. Unfortunately, he was not permitted to linger and enjoy his victory. He left Lecce in early October and started along the coast towards Barletta, which had previously submitted, but now emboldened by the nearby presence of Diepold, closed its gates to Walter. Caught between the uncooperative city of Barletta and Diepold's forces, Walter was understandably discouraged. His low morale was perhaps exacerbated by the lack of manpower at his disposal as he was travelling with only a few of his men, the supporters roused by the pope had yet to arrive. However, true to form, he was not prepared to surrender. On the morning of the battle, on the bank of the river between the bridge of Cannae and the Lake of Salpi, on the same field where Hannibal had met the Romans, Walter and his men knelt with hands on swords and received blessings and absolution from the papal legate before riding out to meet the enemy on 22 October 1201.²¹⁰ Walter yet again proved himself to be a consummate warrior - knight and despite being heavily outnumbered, he was victorious.

²⁰⁸ Matthew Paris, *Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, in *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*. 6 vols (London, 1874), {MP}, IV, 1244, 342; M.D. Sturdza, *Dictionnaire Historique et Généalogique des Grandes Familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople* (Paris, 1999), p. 507; MP, V, 1251, 218 - 20.

²⁰⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 44.

²¹⁰ *Ann. Cecc.*, p. 295; *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 46.

Diepold's army attempted to flee; some were captured, some were cut down by the sword and others were drowned in bogs and swamps.²¹¹ The *Gesta Innocentii* recorded that it was at this time that there were rumours of a miraculous illuminated golden cross that appeared before Walter's army as he rode into battle.²¹² Indeed, the observance of this miracle, although it may have been reported by a few or many who were there, is clearly an attempt by the author of the *Gesta Innocentii* to bestow divine approval on Walter and his army. Miraculous appearances were a fixture of the crusades, indeed, the First Crusade had been marked with the appearance of the Holy Lance that signaled a change in fortune for the crusader army.²¹³ Ostensibly, the *Gesta Innocentii*'s author was intent upon convincing his audience that Walter's success in the *Regno*, even when greatly outnumbered, was approved by God himself.

Frederick is Betrayed

In October 1201, Markward gathered his forces and marched on the city of Palermo and after a siege the city fell to him on 18 October.²¹⁴ Two weeks later, Markward marched against Castellamare, where the young king was being protected inside the heavily fortified castle. When the castle fell, Frederick II was captured by Markward. Neither Markward's kidnapping of the king nor his powers as regent halted the pope's progress in establishing papal administration over the territories successfully held by Walter of Brienne. Indeed, Innocent confidently boasted in a letter to the bishop of Palestrina in November 1201 that his champion, Walter of Brienne, was prepared to go into battle with Markward.²¹⁵ However, with the slow passage of time between this letter and action by the count of Brienne, it seems that the warrior - champion was uncharacteristically reluctant to leave the mainland and travel to Sicily in pursuit of Markward. Were the long - harboured suspicions of Frederick II coming true? Was Walter content to leave the king as Markward's captive to claim the kingdom for himself? Innocent would not be deterred and he dispatched another letter to the Sicilians

²¹¹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiv: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 46.

²¹² *ibid.*

²¹³ *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 65 - 71.

²¹⁴ K. Hampe, 'Aus der Kindheit Friedrichs II' in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 22 (1901), pp. 593, 581.

²¹⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, v, xxxix.

requesting that they support the count of Brienne and Lecce who was campaigning in Sicily in the interest of the young king.²¹⁶

In September 1202, he sent yet another letter to Walter of Brienne, urging him to move against Markward and, perhaps in strong support of the suggestion that Walter was satisfied with his conquest of his wife's patrimony and required nothing more, Innocent felt it necessary to reassure him that his lands would be secure. To raise funds for the campaign (or a bribe under the guise of financial assistance), Innocent offered Walter a loan of 3,000 ounces on the revenues of Apulia and the Terra di Lavoro.²¹⁷ If Walter lacked confidence, he was not alone for Markward also offered Innocent terms whereby he would accept a payment of money and leave the *Regno*.²¹⁸

Given Innocent's next move, one must wonder if he was failing to consider the interests of his allies as he sought to introduce yet another potentially divisive party into the struggle of the kingdom, an ally that would undoubtedly further alienate the count of Brienne. Indeed, he began to consider an old plan formed by the Empress Constance to arrange a marriage between Frederick II and a Spanish princess that would offer Frederick the promise of protection by the king of Aragon who was, incidentally, a distant cousin of the count of Brienne, although it is unlikely that Innocent had knowledge of this kinship.²¹⁹ The union was sought with Sancha, the younger sister of King Peter II of Aragon. In conjunction with his mother, he agreed to Innocent's terms and called for the freeing of Frederick and offered to provide troops to secure his release.²²⁰ Ultimately, the Papal - Spanish alliance broke down and nothing came of the negotiations.²²¹

His reluctance indicates that Walter never desired the crown of Sicily; moreover, there exists no text that suggests he was considering leaving for the Levant or even a return to his county at this time. Indeed, by this time, the crusade was in trouble. According to Queller, 'Crusaders were not arriving [in Venice] soon enough or in sufficient numbers....In this overestimation of the number of the

²¹⁶ *Opera Omnia*, 214, v, xxxviii.

²¹⁷ CACB, 130: *Opera Omnia*, 214, v, lxxxiv.

²¹⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxx: Powell, p. 47.

²¹⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xi, iv: *Opera Omnia*, 214, *Epist.* v, li: *Historica diplomatica*, I, 90.

²²⁰ *Opera Omnia*, 214, v, li.

²²¹ D.J. Smith, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon: The Limits of Papal Authority* (Burlington, 2004), pp. 28 - 9.

crusaders...lies the reason for the failure of the Fourth Crusade'.²²² In September 1202, the Fourth Crusade was about to set out from Venice and, it is doubtful that Walter would have had the financial backing to join the crusade.

Heretofore, he had been the victor in every instance when pitted against Markward or Diepold. He had successfully reclaimed Lecce and Taranto although his hold was tentative. It is possible that Walter was simply exhausted and saw no further need to act on behalf of a boy-king who had unceasingly doubted him and his allegiance and had now, through no fault of Walter's, fallen into the hands of the enemy. Walter had done much to secure the mainland where, only after papal coaxing, he had eventually been assured of the support of the nobles. Sicily would prove a difficult challenge. On those occasions whereby Markward's agents had been in proximity, the nobles of the mainland had sided with him.²²³ This time, Markward and Frederick II would be present on the island and the pope's influence was not as strong. Although he eventually agreed, it was done in a spirit of great reluctance.

Markward Dies and Walter is Triumphant

In the middle of September, having left Palermo to claim Messina, Markward arrived at the town of Patti where he died, either in consequence of a botched surgery for kidney stones or a severe attack of dysentery.²²⁴ Innocent's relief was evident in a letter he wrote to the bishops of Palermo and Monreale, 'God, who after troublous days, gives days of comfort, and after weeping and groaning brings rejoicing; who wields the rod of punishment over the sinner and takes away lawful things from the unholy'.²²⁵

Walter of Brienne's Death by Negligence

Innocent turned his attention to Walter of Brienne. He sent James, his cousin and marshal, to Apulia and appointed both James and Walter as master and justiciar of Apulia and the Terra di Lavoro. He gave James the castle of Barletta. Walter had his own castle at Lecce. Innocent further ordered the

²²² D.E. Queller and T.F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 2nd edn (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 44 - 5.

²²³ Van Cleve, *Markward*, pp. 131, 133, 136, 158, 163, 168.

²²⁴ For the name of the town, cf. *Brev. Chron.*, p. 893: for the cause of his death, cf. *Ryccardus de Sancti Germano Annales*, MGH XIX, 332 and *Opera Omnia*, 214, *Epist.* IX, CXCV both of which support the case of dysentery and *Opera Omnia*, 214, XXXV, which reports his death due to surgery for kidney stones.

²²⁵ *Opera Omnia*, 214, V, LXXXIX, Van Cleve's translation, p. 202.

surrender of Montepiloso, which had been granted to him in the name of the young king Frederick and Walter was ordered to aid James in securing Montepiloso.²²⁶ Once the city was secured, Walter and James made their way to Campagna to visit Innocent who was severely ill in the city of Anagni. Soon rumours spread of the pope's death and many cities rebelled against Walter, with his agents being either cast out or killed.²²⁷ The cities of Malterra, Brindisi and Otranto were lost; moreover, James's men at Barletta laid siege to his fortress and forced the castellan to hand over control of the castle.²²⁸

James and Walter stayed with Innocent until he successfully recovered and it was only then that they were able to venture forth into Apulia and attempt to reclaim the lands lost and put down the rebellion. Walter campaigned successfully against the Germans, he captured Terracina and besieged the Torre Maggiore. Buoyed by his success in battle, Walter became lax in caring for his person. Indeed, there are reports that he went about without armour and recklessly dismissed his personal guard. When his lieutenants approached him about this, he purportedly responded arrogantly that the Germans would not dare to attack unarmed Franks.²²⁹

And so it was that when Walter besieged Diepold's fortress of Sarlum, his negligence was revealed to the enemy by spies and at dawn one morning in June 1205, whilst he was resting naked in his tent, Diepold attacked. Many of Walter's men were killed and the count himself was captured, though he had fought bravely and was mortally wounded by arrows and lances.²³⁰ Barely conscious, he was taken to Diepold's fortress as a captive. Several days after he was set upon, Walter was allowed access to a priest and received the sacrament of penance and the *viaticum* before he died.²³¹ He was interred in a little church in Sarno called Santa Maria della Foce.

The county of Sarno was located in the northern part of the Principality of Salerno and it bordered the duchy of Naples and the county of Avellino. The history of the region remains ambiguous as there is no further record of the counts of Sarno after 1138 and it is probable that the county fell under

²²⁶ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxvii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 48.

²²⁷ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxviii: Powell, *Deeds*, pp. 48 - 9.

²²⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxviii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 49.

²²⁹ *ibid.*

²³⁰ *ibid.*

²³¹ *ibid.*

control of the duchy of Naples or the county of Avellino. Today, Sarno is approximately 35 km southeast of Naples, easily accessible by train. Upon arrival, there are ruins of a castle, which overlook the city and may very well be those of Diepold's castle of Sallerum, however there is no evidence to suggest or disprove this.²³²

According to the official church history, Santa Maria della Foce was a church in time of peace and a stronghold in times of war. In the year 1000, it is believed that the church was submerged during a great flood. Inside the new edifice completed in the 1970s in the left aisle are ancient stone steps (which, at the time of researching this section, had collapsed) that led down into the twelfth century church. Inside the church, near the altar is buried Walter of Brienne, his headstone reading simply: *Gaulterus Brienne comes et imperator hic sepultus euit ann dni MCCV*.

As previously mentioned, at the time of his death, his widow, Elvira, was pregnant with his heir. Shortly after her husband's death in 1205, she was quickly married off to James, count of Tricarico, in order to ensure that Walter's lands remained secure and their marriage was not consummated until after the birth of the Brienne heir.²³³ Unknown are the actions of Walter IV for the first twenty - one years of his life. He does not appear in the charter evidence until 1221 when John, then king of Jerusalem, relinquished his regency over the county and encouraged the countess of Champagne, Blanche, to recognise Walter as the count of Brienne.²³⁴

Walter IV was never able to claim Lecce and Taranto in his father's name and married, instead, into the Lusignan ruling house of Cyprus and Jaffa.²³⁵ Had he ever desired to do so, he was forced to wait thirty - nine years after his father's death to exact his revenge on the Hohenstaufen. He participated in the war that raged in Cyprus against the supporters of Emperor Frederick II, then fifty - two years old. He also fought at the battle of Gaza on 18 October 1244 where he was captured and

²³² A town rarely touched by tourist, my mother and I sought the assistance of the local police who were kind enough to provide transport some 5km outside of Sarno to the small church of Santa Maria della Foce.

²³³ *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH SS XXII, p. 498: *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxviii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 50: James is one of the men whom Innocent offered to Walter to assist him in his campaign against Markward. Cf. *Opera Omnia*, 214, V. LXXXIV.

²³⁴ CACB, 148.

²³⁵ *Eracles*, 360: *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH XXII, 498: Alberic of Trois - Fontaine, 'Chronicon', p. 933.

taken in chains to Cairo where Matthew Paris reports he was held in a Saracen prison where he either died or was killed.²³⁶

Walter's Legacy

Walter's relationship with the child Frederick II and Innocent III was one of great complexity. Three driven men attempting to share a common purpose whilst overcoming their own ambitions. It was a difficult situation and it seems logical that there would be a degree of mistrust between them. Walter's contribution and his sacrifice to both the Hohenstaufen and papal cause was not fully appreciated by either party. However, the Brienne's relationship with the Hohenstaufen was to have one final chapter. Years later, Frederick II would express his lingering feelings of mistrust towards Walter's activities in Sicily during the emperor's minority. And perhaps influenced by this memory from his childhood, when he married Walter's niece and became king of Jerusalem, he ostracized Walter's brother, John from both his daughter and his kingdom.²³⁷

It is difficult to say how much influence, if any, Walter had on his brother John's upbringing; he was absent from his county from 1201 and never returned. Although there is no record of *chansons* being composed in his honour, one can imagine that tales of his heroic feats reached the literary hotbed of Champagne. Soon on the heels of that prominent figure of the Third Crusade, Andrew of Brienne, was there another Brienne acquiring a high profile throughout Christendom.

What influence did this have on John? Had the lure of the East called to him at a young age when he learnt of his uncle's sacrifice? Had his brother's success in Sicily made him hunger for an adventure 'outré - mer'? Two noble and well - documented deaths within one generation; indeed the Brienne had arrived.

At the time of Walter's departure, John of Brienne was likely to have been around seventeen years old. The count of Brienne's numerous victories and his unfailing loyalty to the papacy throughout his campaign in the *Regno* was surely not to be forgotten by Innocent III without whose support John would have never hoped to succeed to the throne of Jerusalem, something illustrated by the praise

²³⁶ MP, IV, 1244, 342; M.D. Sturdza, *Dictionnaire*, p. 507; MP, V, 1251, 218 - 20.

²³⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 152 - 4.

Innocent lavished upon Walter.²³⁸ In a letter to the young Frederick II, Innocent remarked ‘Of course, if you consider the truth, the Count of Brienne has brought more to you on one day than some who, with your own goods “widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels” have profited you as long as they have lived’.²³⁹ Clearly this count of Brienne had achieved great honor in the eyes of the papacy and by extension, the house of Brienne.

In order to understand John as king of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople, this thesis will examine John as a young man, his upbringing in Brienne, his regency over the county and lastly, the nomination that would set the course of his life.

²³⁸ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxiii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 44.

²³⁹ *ibid.*

Chapter Five

John of Brienne and his Nomination to the Throne of Jerusalem

In this chapter, this thesis will conclude with an examination into the early years of John's life up until his nomination to the throne of Jerusalem. This section will include an analysis of his regency whilst his brother was campaigning in Italy as well as a consideration of the events taking place in the kingdom of France and the region of Champagne. This will explain how John's early career set the stage for the successes (and failures) in his later life.

John and His Siblings

John of Brienne was the fourth son of Erard II, count of Brienne and Agn  s of Montb  liard. The charter evidence suggests that his parents were wed in, or around, 1166 and by the year 1177, Agn  s had given birth to three sons; Walter, William and Andrew.¹ In the previous chapter, it was established that the eldest son, Walter, had a tutor as early as 1177, therefore when first mentioned in a charter of the abbey of Saint Loup in 1177, Walter was likely between the ages of nine and ten, an adolescent pupil in 1184 and a mature young man when he succeeded his father in 1192.

For all but the eldest son, the dynasty had run short of titles to bestow. As discussed in chapter three, the imparting of the title 'lord of Ramerupt' on John's uncle by his grandfather likely caused a rift between the brothers that led their contemporaries to believe that Erard purposefully left his brother to die at Acre in 1191: *Frater eius comes Brenensis non inscius preterivit collapsum, vocatus quidem subsistere timuit et gloriam, quam casus obtulerat, ignavia declinavi*.² Upon Andrew's death, his title fell to his son, Erard of Brienne, who is known to posterity for having campaigned against Blanche of Champagne in the mid - thirteenth century for control of the county of Champagne.³ In consequence of the title having passed to the Ramerupt line, John's second eldest brother, William, was left without title. John's third eldest brother, Andrew, last appeared in the extant charters in 1181 and it is possible that he died shortly thereafter. There may have been other sisters, but the name of

¹ St.L, 56.

² *Itinerarium*, p. 315; Nicholson, *Chronicles of the Third Crusade*, p. 80.

³ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, pp. 40 - 1.

only one, Ida, is known as she was mentioned as being the sister of John of Brienne who married Arnoul of Reynel, lord of Pierrefitte and of Cirey, *Ele fu fille de Hernol de Rihnel et de Yde, la suer dou roi Johan*.⁴

William of Brienne, Lord of Pacy - Sur - Armançon

William of Brienne featured prominently in the annals of Brienne at this time. In their father's charters, William was often mentioned in the company of the heir and when Walter succeeded their father as count of Brienne upon his death in Acre, William's presence continued.⁵ In 1198, during the war between the kings of France and England, William was one of the securities put forward by Thibaut of Champagne when the latter did homage to Philip Augustus.⁶

Buckley suggests that in 1199, William was married and within that same year he died, but this is incorrect.⁷ William and his wife, Elisabeth of Courtenay, lady of Placy - sur - Armançon, had two children, probably twins, and there is no cause to believe they were born within days or months of their father's death. The year of William's marriage to Elisabeth of Courtenay remains ambiguous. What cannot be denied, however, is that this marriage did much to improve William's circumstances for he took his wife's title and is identified as *Guilluame de Briene de Panci* by the continuator of William of Tyre.⁸

Although William's role in both his father and his brother's administration remains uncertain, he made a formidable alliance when he became a close friend of Thibaut III, the young count of Champagne. As previously mentioned, he had stood as one of the securities for Thibaut when he did homage to Philip Augustus. Such was the intimacy of their relationship that in October 1201, the count of Champagne gave to the abbey of Saint - Michel of Tonnerre a rent for the soul of his deceased friend, William of Brienne, *En octobre 1201, it était mort, et Thibaut donnait à l'abbaye de*

⁴ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines mentions, 'sororibus', but nothing more [Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 879]: *Eracles*, 332.

⁵ William is mentioned along with Walter in charters dating from 1181, 1184, 1185, 1186, and 1189. Cf. CACB, 81, 85, 91, 93, 95, 99.

⁶ CACB, 108.

⁷ Buckley, 'The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne', p. 319. Buckley cites E. Petit, *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de la Race* (Dijon, 1887), II, 466, 471. Although the ES is the only source which names William and Elisabeth's children, they are mentioned without names in a charter of the CACB, n. 119 dated March 1201.

⁸ *Eracles*, 235.

*Saint - Michel de Tonnerre une rente pour le repos de l'âme de sou ami défunt.*⁹ Conversely, it may be convincingly argued that William's most powerful alliance was not that which was made with the count of Champagne, but rather that which was secured through marriage into a family whose wealth and importance was widely known throughout Christendom.

William of Brienne Marries Eustachie of Courtenay, Lady of Pacy - Sur - Armançon

William's wife was Eustachie of Courtenay, lady of Pacy - sur - Armançon, who was related to all of the ruling families of the Latin East and the ruling house of the kingdom of France, the Capetians. Her father was Peter I of France who himself was the son of King Louis VI of France (d.1108), the brother of King Louis VII of France and the uncle of Philip Augustus. Her mother was Elisabeth, lady of Courtenay, heiress of the European branch of this house and the great-granddaughter of Joscelin I, lord of Courtenay and Elisabeth of Montlhéry, one of the powerful clan so frequently mentioned already. Perhaps in recognition of this family's exalted status, Peter, son of one king of France and brother to another, took his wife's title and became 'lord of Courtenay'. Elisabeth and Peter are known to historians of the crusades for having journeyed to the Holy Land in the company of Henry of Troyes and Robert of Dreux for the purpose of fighting Saladin in 1179.¹⁰

William's marriage into a family with strong crusader connections served to continue to strengthen Brienne ties to the Levant. Indeed, this is not the first occasion that the Brienne had married into the house of Montlhéry, although at some distance. As discussed in chapter two, William's great - great - great uncle, Ebles of Roucy and his wife, Sybilla of Apulia had a daughter, Mabile who married Hugh II, lord of Le Puiset, the son of one of the four Montlhéry sisters (Alice and her husband, Hugh I 'Blavons' of Le Puiset).¹¹ The second eldest sister, Melisende of Montlhéry, married Hugh I of Rethel (Le Bourcq) and their son, Baldwin II would go on to become the second king of Jerusalem after his relative, Baldwin I.¹² The youngest sister, Hodierna of Montlhéry married Walter of St - Valéry and the third eldest sister, Elisabeth of Montlhéry married Joscelin I of Courtenay and it was

⁹ HCC, IV, 88, n.b.

¹⁰ WT, II, 1003. Peter returned from France upon the coronation of Philip Augustus and the Peace of Gisors on 28 June 1180. Cf. A. Cartellieri, *Philipp II August, König von Frankreich* (Leipzig, 1899 - 1922), I, 77. Peter died in Palestine in 1183.

¹¹ OV, VI, 100.

¹² Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, pp. 615 - 16.

this sister who was the great - grandmother of William of Brienne's wife, Elisabeth. Also of note is Elisabeth's eldest brother, Peter of Courtenay, who was named as emperor of Constantinople in 1216, a distinction later to be held by John of Brienne, which indicates that both families later shared similar lofty aspirations in the Latin East.¹³ More importantly, William must be added to the growing list of notable Brienne sons upon whose dynastic advances John stood in order to claim the throne of Jerusalem. To further reinforce the influence of William's marriage on John's later career, the Courtenay and Montlhéry connections must be examined.

The Courtenay and Montlhéry Connection

The founder of the Montlhéry family, Guy of Montlhéry had been a powerful figure in the Île - de France in direct consequence of the numerous castles in his possession. In a chapter on the Montlhéry in his book *First Crusaders*, Riley - Smith lists this family, along with the Le Puiset, as one of those troublesome families that had dominated the territory around the king's demesne in the eleventh century.¹⁴ Although Matthew of Edessa, an Armenian near - contemporary, observed that they were known for their religiosity, the Montlhéry were morally flawed. For example, Matthew describes Baldwin I as being devout and pure but he takes care to note that these traits were 'offset by his ingenious avariciousness in seizing and accumulating the wealth of others, his insatiable love for money and his deep lack of generosity'.¹⁵ Indeed, parallels can again be drawn between the two dynasties as excommunication was pronounced against the Brienne in consequence of their quarrels with the monastery of Montiérender purportedly due to avarice. It cannot, however, be denied that the Montlhéry were more prolific crusaders than the Brienne, perhaps due to the sheer size of their family. Riley - Smith noted, 'Two of Guy and Hodierna's sons, the husbands of two of their daughters, six grandsons, a granddaughter and her husband, and the husband of a great - granddaughter took part in the First Crusade'.¹⁶

¹³ WTC XVI, 292 - 3.

¹⁴ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 170.

¹⁵ Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, trans. A.E. Dostourian, in *Armenia and the Crusades* (Lanham, 1993), pp. 221 - 2.

¹⁶ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 171.

In the early twelfth century, the Montlhéry allied themselves with the Courtenays when Baldwin Le Bourg (the future Baldwin II) gave Joscelin of Courtenay, who had also been on the First Crusade, a large fief centred on Turbessel and comprising most of the frontier with the principality of Antioch.¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, he quarrelled with Joscelin, imprisoned him and accused him of disloyalty before exiling him and reclaiming his lands. Subsequently, Joscelin travelled south to Jerusalem where he was granted the lordship of Galilee on the frontier with Damascus.¹⁸ Soon after this grant, other Montlhérys arrived, including Hugh II of Le Puiset who had journeyed to the Holy Land with his wife, Mabile who was a Brienne cousin. When they arrived in 1108, he was given Jaffa by King Baldwin, which was the most strategic holding in the Latin East.¹⁹

Whilst this Brienne cousin was reaping the benefits of his relationship with the Montlhéry, another Brienne cousin, Barisan the Old, founder of the prominent house of Ibelin, had likely also arrived. Barisan rose swiftly to prominence, rather uncommon for someone who appears to have been a rear - vassal; by the 1160s, the Ibelin were one of the leading noble families of Palestine.²⁰ Indeed, if nothing else, his ascent to affluence and influence attests that family connections were all - important in the Levant.

By 1118, the Montlhéry and their cousins who had journeyed to the Levant, were firmly settled there in positions of status. Indeed, by the time of the marriage between William of Brienne and Elisabeth of Courtenay, her cousins formed a veritable 'Who's Who' of the nobility of the Latin East. This union was undoubtedly a very good match for a younger and titleless son of the Brienne. The established family connections between all of the families were now almost a century old at the time. As in every case with the counts of Brienne, it is near - impossible to determine how this marriage came about; however, it is likely that William needed no prodding at the opportunity to marry a member of the famed Montlhéry clan, even if she was a member of the less prominent European branch. Unfortunately, their children do not appear to have been able to capitalise on their illustrious origins and they are known only through one charter from the annals of the counts of Brienne. After

¹⁷ Ibid: WT, I, 483.

¹⁸ WT, I, 528 - 9, Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 172.

¹⁹ Mayer, H.E. 'The Origins of the County of Jaffa,' in *Israel Exploration Journal* 35. 1985, pp. 40 - 5; Murray, *Crusader Kingdom*, p. 129.

²⁰ Edbury, *John of Ibelin*, pp. 3 - 10.

William died in 1199, Elisabeth moved on to arguably more prominent unions. The year after his death, she married William of Champlitte, prince of Achaea in Greece and the grandson of count Hugh I of Champagne.²¹ He died in October 1205 and six years later she married William I of Champagne, count of Sancerre.²²

John's Ambiguous Childhood

As the youngest surviving son, there is little doubt that John of Brienne was intended for the Church at his birth and that he was likely reared, for a good part of his childhood, in a monastery. Buckley warns that the works of previous Brienne historians such as Lafiteau and Bréhier should not be seriously consulted on the matter of John's childhood.²³ And whilst the works of Lafiteau and Bréhier were cautiously referenced on matters of fact as neither of them are properly annotated, the anecdotal narrative of John's childhood found in each of these sources should not be readily dismissed.

There are two reasons why the account of John's childhood, as retold in Lafiteau and Bréhier's work, is of some merit: firstly, as discussed in chapter one, there is a distinct possibility that at the time that both men were writing there was a collection of manuscripts relating to the history of the Brienne in the castle of Brienne and this collection, which was later sold off, may have substantiated the narratives. Secondly, whilst conducting research in Troyes, was found a short monograph written by Marie - Henri d'Arbois Jubainville, in which he undertook a scholarly examination of the traditional story of John's childhood.²⁴ Although Jubainville subscribed to the now archaic belief that John of Brienne was an octogenarian when he was crowned king of Jerusalem, he is without question a respected historian of the region of Champagne who also served as chief archivist of the Aube in the late nineteenth century. It is his monograph that strongly supported the suggestion that the legend of John's early childhood deserved closer examination.

²¹Riley - Smith, *The Crusades*, p. 181.

²²ES, III, 681.

²³Buckley, 'The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne', p. 316.

²⁴M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Recherches sur Les Premières Années de Jean de Brienne, Roi de Jérusalem, Empereur de Constantinople* (Troyes, 1856).

It would seem the earliest source containing the anecdote is the *Chronicle of Rains*, known perhaps more famously as the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Rheims*.²⁵ In the most recent translation of the text, Robert Levine noted that the narrative was 'likely composed in the early 1260's by a man known only as the minstrel of Rheims'.²⁶ Levine also posits that to call it a 'chronicle' is misleading for the author not only 'shows very little interest in dates, or in a strictly chronological structure', but also 'because many of its incidents and all of its direct discourse are fictional'.²⁷ Of its credibility, Levine remarked that it is 'unreliable, entertaining and difficult to classify'.²⁸ This discrepancy becomes glaringly apparent in the minstrel's treatment of the career of Philip Augustus. Indeed, he 'fabricates victories where there were no battles, elides Philip's problems with women and the consequent difficulties with legitimatising Agnes' children, and makes no mention of the negative actions attributed to the king by Rigord'.²⁹ It would therefore be safe to say that the *Récits* is more literature than chronicle. That aside, it is not to say that there was not some truth to the anecdote of John's childhood because the author was a quite possibly a near contemporary of John of Brienne.

In the *Chronicle*, the author stated that even though John did not have a clerical vocation, he was destined for an ecclesiastical life from birth, *si vot li quens Gautiers que Jehans ses fuis fust clers: mais il ne le vot iestre*.³⁰ The *Chronicle* continues by recounting John's flight from Brienne and his subsequent refuge at Clairvaux where it is said a monk of this abbey, his mother Agnés of Montbéliard's brother, served as his protector *ains s'enfui à Clerevaus, où il avoit un oncle, frère sa mère; aui li faisoit livrer çou que mestiers li estoit*.³¹ The identity of this protector has proven to be a contentious issue (within the contentious narrative) for historians who have examined the *Chronicle* in the past. Indeed, Jubainville questions whether this brother was in fact a third brother of Agnés of

²⁵ Jubainville relies here on the edn of the chronicle published in 1838 by M.L. Paris, which was copied from the manuscript in the Imperial Library at the Sorbonne [*La Chronique de Rains*, ed. L. Paris (Paris, 1837)]. There exists another edn entitled the *Chronicle of Flanders and of the Crusades*, published by Smet, which was copied from a manuscript conserved in Belgium [*Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, ed. J.J. Smet. 4 vols (Brussels, 1836), III, 612 - 15].

²⁶ R. Levine, *A Thirteenth - Century Minstrel's Chronicle* (Lewiston, 1990), p. 1.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Levine, *Chronicle*, pp. 3 - 4.

³⁰ *La Chronique de Rains*, p. 83.

³¹ *ibid.*

Montbéliard (also Montfaucon).³² Her eldest brother, Amadeus, was the count of Montbéliard, the second eldest brother, Raynald disappears from record in 1148 and her youngest brother on record, Thierry, was the archbishop of Besançon.³³ None of these men appear to be the brother mentioned in the *Chronicle of Rains*; however, as Jubainville suggests, the possibility that there was a further brother who has thus far escaped notice cannot be dismissed.³⁴

The *Chronicle* continues with this protector providing for the fourteen - year - old John and welcoming him at Clairvaux *et il prenoit en gré çou qu'on li faisoit, car il estoit jouenes, de l'eage de XIII. aus.*³⁵ During his fourteenth year, knights of his lineage, who were on their way to tournament, passed before the walls of the abbey *Et avint .I. jour que chevaliers valier de son linage aloient au tournoient..*³⁶ Arriving at the entrance, they saw standing before the gates a child of great beauty with presence and a distinguished air *et virent l'enfant Jehan qui estoit à la porte; et le virent biel enfant, et bien tailliet et bien sanbloit gentius - home.*³⁷ Captivated by him, they stopped and asked for his identity to which someone replied, 'He is the son of the count of Brienne'. *Si s'ariestèrent à le porte et demandèrent qui cis enfens estoit? Et on lor dist qu'il estoit fîus le comte Gautier.*³⁸ The knights then asked how this child had come to be at Clairvaux to which the reply was that he did not want to be a cleric that he was of good heart and destined for a different life *et s'en estoit affuis à Clerevaus, pour çou qu'il ne voloit mie iestre clers. Et li chevalier disent qu'il faisoit bien et li venoit de boin cuer et de gentil.*³⁹

It is then, the *Chronicle* relates, that one of the knights sent forth his squire to fetch the child, John was then led to a pack horse where he was hoisted atop and he rode off with these knights, his kinsmen, to the tournament *si le fisent predre à escuier et monter sour un soumier, et le menèrent avoec aus en tournoi.*⁴⁰ It then states that John joined his kinsmen on the tournament circuit and that

³² Jubainville, *Jean de Brienne*, p. 2, n.2.

³³ AVD, II, p. 546 : ES, XI, 134.

³⁴ Jubainville, *Jean de Brienne*, p. 2, n.2.

³⁵ *La Chronique de Rains*, p. 83.

³⁶ *ibid.* p. 84.

³⁷ *ibid.* p. 84.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

he grew and became strong.⁴¹ He was quickly promoted to the role of squire where he was sometimes involved in the mêlées and in consequence of this he learned the ways of a knight *où il li livrèrent ronchi, puis le menèrent de marche en marche et de tournoi en tournoi. Et tant crut li enfanset enforcha qu'il sot bien aidier son ami en la plus grant priesse deu tournoiment: et tant servi que il ot .XXIII ans.*⁴² At the age of twenty - four, he was placed in the service of the lord of Châteauvillain *Et quant li sires de Castiel - Vilain à cui il siervoit, vit et coneut son sens, si vot pour sa proèche qu'il fust chevaliers et le fist chevaliers. Et fu preus et cehvalierous, et le tint de maisnie.*⁴³

The placement of John of Brienne with the lord of Châteauvillain is also a contentious issue. Bréheir believed that John was placed with this family, but argued that the lord of Châteauvillain featured in John's history much sooner than the narrative observed. He suggested that it was Simon of Broyes who recognised John at Clairvaux and therefore it was Simon who taught him to handle a sword and become a knight.⁴⁴ Buckley believes that Bréheir took this information from Lafiteau's work in which he stated, *Cependant la Providence, pour le tirer d'un état si contraire à son inclination, permit que Simon de Broyes, Seigneur de Château - villain, son grand - oncle passant par Clairvaux, le recontra devant la porte du monastere et le reconnût.*⁴⁵ This cannot be true, for as Buckley observed, Simon of Broyes, the great - uncle of John of Brienne, had died in 1132.⁴⁶

The suggestion that John was placed within the household of a noble family must be questioned. Evergates noted, 'There is no evidence in Champagne for the practices described by Orderic Vitalis in the Anglo - Norman realm, where well - born boys were placed at the royal court or a court - like household of powerful barons and relatives for socialization with their peers'.⁴⁷ He makes particular reference to the practices of the counts of Champagne, when he noted that they 'are not known to have gathered the sons of their barons for training and acculturation in their palaces in Troyes or

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Bréheir, 'Jean de Brienne', p. 698.

⁴⁵ J. - F. Lafiteau, *Histoire de Jean de Brienne, Roy de Jérusalem et Empereur de Constantinople* (Paris, 1727), p. 11.

⁴⁶ Longnon, *Documents*, I, 456A. Evergates noted in his work on Champagne that Simon I of Broyes was amongst the first of the nobility of Champagne to seal a document with his own seal, which he did in 1131. Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 29.

⁴⁷ Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 152.

Provins, nor did the barons maintain households of young relatives or the sons of their knights for that purpose'.⁴⁸ Evergates seems the authority on this issue.

The Extant Charter Evidence Regarding John's Early Years

It is likely that John of Brienne was born between the years 1177 - 1178. As previously discussed, in 1177, Erard lists his children as Walter, William and Andrew, *liberis meis Galtero, Guillelmo, Andrea*, in a charter of Saint Loup, and it is possible that John is not mentioned with his brothers here because his mother was pregnant with him at this time.⁴⁹ If Walter, the eldest son, was in possession of a tutor in 1177 and his parents were married no later than 1166, he was likely born between 1167 - 8 and was nine or ten years of age at this time. If his parents had a child every other year or every two years, that would place the birth of William between the years 1169 - 70 and that of Andrew, the youngest child mentioned, in the years between 1170 - 77 with him being a very young boy at the time of the charter of Saint Loup. If the Byzantine historian, Acropolites, is to be believed when years later he noted that John of Brienne appeared to be eighty years old when he saw him in 1231, this means that John's eldest brother, the heir, had to have been in his early thirties in 1177.⁵⁰ This is impossible for as previously noted, Walter had a tutor in 1177.

John's early career in Brienne, fully examined later in this chapter, but mention briefly here, also supports the suggestion that he was born c.1178. As previously discussed in chapter four, in 1192, John's brother, Walter, succeeded their father to the county of Brienne when Erard died from illness at Acre in the Levant. The age of majority for counts in Champagne in the twelfth century was twenty - one.⁵¹ In order for Walter to have succeeded his father as count of Brienne, he would have had to be at least twenty - one years of age at this time. The timeframe for the births of Erard's sons would place Walter at twenty - three or twenty - four at the time of his succession and thirty - six at the time of his death in 1205. And more importantly, it would place John of Brienne at the age of

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ St.L., 56.

⁵⁰ 'After the death of the king, Baldwin would rule over them as emperor, having grown older: for the king was exceedingly old, having lived about 80 years or even longer. I myself saw him and was greatly impressed by the man's size which surpassed that of others by far in every dimension, both in height and girth [*George Akropolites: The History*, ed. R. Macrides (Oxford, 2007), p. 184].

⁵¹ HCC, IV, 1 n.a. In his book, *Arisocracy*, Evergates noted that the lesser lords (those who were not counts) were able to succeed at the age of fifteen [*Evergates, Aristocracy*, pp. 98 - 9].

fourteen when his eldest brother became count and twenty - two years old when he began to act as regent of the county in his brother's absence. Indeed, had John been born any later than 1179, he would not have been able to serve as regent of the county for he would have been considered a minor. As previously mentioned, John also had a sister, Ida of Brienne, who was quite possibly the youngest child. She wed Arnoul de Reynel.⁵²

The Brienne dynasty's practice of marriage into families of prominence, as had recently been followed by William of Brienne, was enabled by the growing eminence of the Brienne name. However, to marry two other lesser sons off into prominent families when the Brienne treasury had been virtually depleted, as evidenced by various loans that Walter of Brienne acquired from the pope and Philip Augustus for his campaign in Italy, would have been near impossible.

Andrew may have been trained as a knight in the hope that he would be able to make his fortune either at his brother's hearth or perhaps on the tournament circuit in which the Brienne were participants.⁵³ Again, to rear one son as a hearth knight may have been equitable, but to rear two as such would have been extravagant.

As discussed above, it seems certain that John was intended for the Church upon his birth. He had, after all, been named for his uncle, the abbot of Beaulieu since 1157, who had been very close to his father. Indeed, from Erard's first extant charter which dates from 1161 until he left for the Holy Land, Abbot John often witnessed his brother's charters.⁵⁴ Indeed, it is likely that before his birth, John's future with the Church had been all but decided.

John as Child - Oblate

Most of the religious houses in and around Brienne in the twelfth century were Praemonstratensian, which according to the foundation narrative, was an order that was founded on Christmas Day 1121 by men who took vows to live 'according to the Gospels and sayings of the apostles and the plan of St Augustine'.⁵⁵ They formally adopted the Rule of Saint Augustine and wore a habit of bleached wool

⁵² *Eracles*, 332.

⁵³ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, pp. 3 - 4; Villhardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ CACB, 67; N. Vignier, *Histoire de la Maison de Luxembourg* (Paris, 1619), p. 195.

⁵⁵ Norbert, archbishop of Magdeburg, *Vita*, ed. R. Wilmans, in MGH XII, 683. For an indepth description of the foundation of this order, cf. H.M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 1 - 25.

which earned them the name 'the white canons'.⁵⁶ It is probable that John was expected to be accepted into the abbey of Beaulieu under the tutelage of his uncle and namesake who served as abbot there.

Shortly after his arrival, John's instruction would have begun. Prior to the literary movement which swept Champagne in the twelfth century, the disparity between the lettered and the unlettered was a distinction made by society as a whole. Nicholas of Clairvaux, who had received his early education at the Benedictine monastery of Montiéramey in Troyes was the personal secretary to Saint Bernard for about six years (1146 - 52) and then worked at the court of Henry the Liberal, held the popular belief that the *literati* were superior to laymen.⁵⁷ Nicholas himself belonged to the *literati* and believed that his prowess in letters and his refined tastes defined him as a man of great intellect. By definition knights were excluded from sophistication and learning by definition for the *laici* were generally believed to be *illitterati* just as the *literati* were understood to be *clerici*, except, of course, in those cases where the layperson was a noble heir as in the case of Walter of Brienne.⁵⁸

It was during the great age of the court of Champagne as a literary centre that this distinction was lost, at least in the Champagne region by the example set by Henry himself who was a layman with the taste and sophistication previously reserved only for the learned. It was at his court that the union of clerics and knights gave birth to a new class of men, the courtly knights, who 'managed to speak for the aspirations of both orders'.⁵⁹ Putter suggests that it was Nicholas himself who did much to close the gulf that separated the knightly classes from that of the learned when he became the secretary of Henry of Champagne, taking on the title *carissimus magister*, which suggests that he viewed himself as an educated cleric and not a monk.⁶⁰

Regardless of this amalgam, the interaction between the two groups was not without its problems. Putter observed, 'while the mutual suspicion and rivalry between the two orders, expressed in

⁵⁶ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 142.

⁵⁷ A. Steiger, A, 'Nikolaus, Mönch in Clairvaux, Sekretär des hl. Bernhard,' *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner - ordens*, XXXVIII (1917), pp. 41 - 50.

⁵⁸ For a full exploration of the terms *literati* and *clerici* and *illitterati* and *laici*, cf. H. Grundmann, 'Litteratus - illiteratus', in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* xl (1958), pp. 1 - 65. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066 - 1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1993), pp. 226 - 30.

⁵⁹ A. D. Putter, 'Knights and Cleric at the Court of Champagne: Chrétien de Troyes's Romances in Context', in *The Ideals and Practices of Medieval Knighthood*, 5, ed. C. Harper - Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 265.

⁶⁰ Putter, 'Knights and Clerics', p. 244. On the espousal of the title *magister* by clerics, cf. R.W. Southern, 'The Schools of Paris and the School of Chartres,' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*. ed. R.L. Benson, et al. (Cambridge, 1982: repr. Toronto, 1991), pp. 134 - 5.

Nicholas's letter and in other texts from the twelfth century, suggests conflicts and tensions, these may themselves be symptomatic of closer contacts'.⁶¹ So public was this division that some have argued that it gave birth to a new genre of literature, that of works centred on the courtly knight.⁶² In the twelfth century, cleric took on a new meaning, particularly in the context of the *miles clericus*, when the term was used in reference to a knight who possessed some of the literary skills and sophistication that before this time, the clerics thought was singular to themselves.⁶³ Based on his later literary output, it seems likely that John of Brienne was indeed a *miles clericus*, who had been trained in early childhood as a monastic, found the life of a cleric oppressive and sought an escape. If true, John was not an iconoclast. Indeed, there were sufficient numbers of young men whom had escaped the cloister to justify Louis VII's asking Henry the Liberal 'why he was squandering his patrimony on effeminate clerics, *delicatos clericos*, for whom the austere and therefore "manly" life in the monastery was too taxing'.⁶⁴

The *Chronicle of Rains* suggests that John determined at an early age he had no desire to become a cleric. It is possible that whilst under his uncle's tutelage at the abbey of Beaulieu John decided he had no religious calling. He may have confided this to his uncle, who may have spoken to John's father on his behalf. This seems likely if the *Chronicle* is believed, which stated that John was loath to rebel against his father's will. Nevertheless, the *Chronicle* stated that he fled to Clairvaux, where he was taken in by some knights of his kin on their way to take part in a tournament. This is contentious as it is unlikely – and technically forbidden – that John would have fled one religious house for another, perhaps more alien monastic environment. Moreover, it seems highly improbable that the abbot of Clairvaux would have welcomed the fugitive son of a count as powerful as the count of

⁶¹ Putter, 'Knights and Clerics', p. 244. For a full discussion of the rivalry, cf. S. Krüger, 'Verhöflichter Krieger' und miles illitteratus' in *Curialitas: Studien zu Grundfragen der Höfischritterlichen Kultur*, ed. J. Fleckstein (Göttingen, 1990), pp. 326 - 9.

⁶² G. Tavani, 'Il dibattito sul chierico e il cavaliere nella tradizione mediolatina e vulgare', in *Romanisches Jahrbuch* xv (1964), pp. 51 - 84.

⁶³ Putter, 'Knights and Clerics', pp. 244 - 5; Clanchy, *Memory*, pp. 228 - 30.

⁶⁴ Putter, 'Knights and Clerics', pp. 251 - 52: 'Laudature Henricus prudenter respondisse': *Ex chronico Anonymi Canonici Laudunensis*, ed. M. Bouquet, et al. in RHGF, XIII, 578 - 80.

Brienne. Also, the dates do not support this suggestion, for John would appear as a witness to his eldest brother's charter in 1192, the year of Walter's succession to the county.⁶⁵

It is, therefore, unlikely that John was reared on the tournament circuit. What is likely to have occurred is that after he expressed his discontent with the stringent life of the monastery, his family found a place for him in the household of an old family friend and/or kinsman, with them having no place for him within the county. Perhaps as suggested in the *Chronicle of Rains*, this friend was the lord of Châteauvillain.⁶⁶

Buckley argued that contrary to Lafiteau and Bréheir's conjecture, John's guardian could not have possibly been Simon of Broyes, lord of Châteauvillain for he died in 1132 and this is likely true.⁶⁷ However, that is not to say that it could not have been another lord of Châteauvillain. As noted, the Brienne and the house of Broyes were related, both being descendants of the house of Roucy. The Broyes were a wealthy family indeed they were one of only three noble houses in the region of Champagne who held two castles at the start of the twelfth century; those of Broyes and Beaufort in Brienne.⁶⁸ In 1048, Hugh I Bardolf, lord of Broyes, participated in the Council of Senlis where Walter I, count of Brienne was also in attendance. He died c.1058 and his son, Barthelemy of Broyes succeeded him as lord of Broyes. Barthelemy married Elisabeth of Valois who was the lady of Châteauvillain and Arc - en - Barrois in 1065. And when he died suddenly, his minor son, Hugh II Bardolf of Broyes was given as ward to count Thibaut I of Champagne.⁶⁹

When he reached his majority in 1085, Hugh Bardolf II, lord of Broyes, inherited the lordship of Châteauvillain.⁷⁰ In 1096, he took part in the First Crusade.⁷¹ He married, in yet another mention in this chapter, Emmeline of Montlhéry a daughter of Lithuaise, vicomtesse of Troyes and Miles the Great, lord of Montlhéry. From her he had a son, Simon I of Broyes, whom Buckley believes was the

⁶⁵ CACB, 104.

⁶⁶ *La Chronique de Rains*, p. 83.

⁶⁷ Buckley, 'The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne', p. 316: Lafiteau, *Jean de Brienne*, p. 11: Bréheir, *Brienne*, p. 698.

⁶⁸ Bur, *Champagne*, p. 238.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 217.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*: J.Richard, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne et la Formation du Duché : du XI au XIV Siècle* (Paris, 1954), p. 30 n.4.

⁷¹ Riley - Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 248: *ibid.*

Simon implied by Lafiteau and Bréheir to be the guardian of John of Brienne. But, as noted, Simon died in 1132.⁷²

It is possible that Lafiteau and Bréheir were inclined to name Simon as John's guardian because of his marriage to Felicia of Brienne, who was John's great aunt, having been the daughter of Erard I, count of Brienne and his wife Alix of Ramerupt.⁷³ They had a son Hugh III of Broyes who went on to succeed Simon as lord of Broyes and Châteauvillain, who died in 1199 and was buried at Clairvaux.⁷⁴ In an interesting turn, Hugh III had a son, Simon of Broyes, who went on to succeed his father in 1199.⁷⁵ It seems likely that this was the Simon of Broyes mentioned by Lafiteau and Bréhier who was, in fact, John's cousin.⁷⁶

It appears logical, although as established by Evergates, unusual, that after his discontent with the cloister, John would have been entrusted to this wealthy family so that he may learn the ways of a knight. Moreover, with his brother Andrew having died in or shortly after 1181, John could now perhaps take Andrew's place at Walter's hearth. John's later career would certainly suggest this as a likely scenario, for whatever faults he had as king of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople, he was proficient at arms and more than capable of leading an army into battle. Hardly the pursuits of one who had been reared for the whole of his childhood in an abbey.

His education may have also paved the way for his reception back into the bosom of his family. Walter III, as count of Brienne, may have looked upon John's education as an investment in the future of the successful administration of his county. Henry the Liberal had regarded his donations to the religious houses, which secured the education of many young men, as an investment in his success. Putter observed that Henry needed written records of the holdings and duties of his two thousand vassals; incoming and outgoing mail had to be written and processed.⁷⁷ Moreover, Henry had to maintain the cash flow from the fairs of Champagne to his treasury and he needed accountants and

⁷² Longnon, *Documents*, I, 456A.

⁷³ 'Chartes d'Andecy (Marne)', in *Collection des Principaux Cartulaires du Diocèse de Troyes Tome IV*, ed. Abbé Laloire (Paris, 1878), 161, p. 259; *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis 13*, MGH XIII, 254.

⁷⁴ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 818, 831 and 877; 'Chartes d'Andecy (Marne)' 169, p. 265.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Hugh III also took as his second wife, Elizabeth of Dreux, who was the daughter of Agnes of Baudement and Robert I of Dreux. Evergates, *Aristocracy*, p. 218.

⁷⁷ Putter, 'Knights and Clerics', pp. 252 - 53.

men to oversee the work. Educated men were in high demand and Walter may have viewed John's return to Brienne as an equitable turn of events from which he was soon to capitalise. Indeed, Henry the Liberal turned the church he founded of Saint - Etienne de Troyes into the headquarters of his administrative and financial operations. He used it as treasury, chancery and library.⁷⁸

Did John Take the Cross, Intent Upon the Fourth Crusade?

By 1192, John had returned to Brienne. Walter was now count and John stood as witness and approved many of his charters. John was likely at least fourteen years of age at this time. The only evidence for John during the early years of his life is from the *Chronicle of Rains* and the charters which make up the CACB.

As a younger son from a family steeped in crusade history, it is likely that John would have been inclined to take the cross as his brother would do on the Fourth Crusade. As a young healthy count, there is no reason to believe that Walter would not marry and have his own children, thus John would not have been under any obligation to stay in the county. However, this may have changed when Walter wed Sybilla of Sicily, particularly when Walter returned from Rome without his wife. Indeed, as Walter's closest surviving male relative, John was charged with remaining in Brienne and acting as regent in his brother's absence. John began approving and issuing charters when Walter returned to Brienne from Rome in 1200 with the intent of raising his army.⁷⁹

John was perhaps twenty - one or twenty - two years old when he issued his first surviving charter and in further testimony of his new role and responsibilities, he had been entrusted with the welfare and estate of his deceased brother William's children. This relationship is peculiar for it was John who administered the estate of these minors and not their mother, Elisabeth of Courtenay, who was alive

⁷⁸T. Evergates, 'The Chancery Archives of the Counts of Champagne,' in *Viator* 16, 1985, pp. 159 - 79. For the contents of his library, cf. Longnon, *Documents*, II, 270 - 71 and P. D. Stirnemann, 'Quelques bibliothèques princières et la production hors scriptorium au xiie siècle', in *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*, n.s. xvii - sviii A (1984), pp. 7 - 38.

⁷⁹ CACB, 115.

and remarried to the famous Fourth Crusader, William of Champlitte who would go on to become Prince of Achaia.⁸⁰

In this charter dated May 1201 in Troyes, John sold Herbisie (likely a pasture, village, or wood) to Thibaut III, count of Champagne who paid him 780 livres, which he then gave to his brother, Walter 'against the heirs of William of Brienne, then deceased'.⁸¹ In 1203 he approves an act on behalf of his cousin, Clarembaud of Chappes.⁸² After this, he disappears for nearly two years before showing up again in April 1205 as regent of the county of Brienne for his young nephew, the newborn Walter IV of Brienne.⁸³

These years were formative in John's development as the man who would go on to take the throne of Jerusalem. At the close of the twelfth century, there were several Champenois families of prominence attempting to closely ally themselves. A son of the Brienne dynasty had married into the house of Montlhéry and Courtenay. The house of Broys had married into the house of Montlhéry and perhaps taken the young John of Brienne into their household and only a generation later was also married into the house of Brienne.

The purpose of this thesis remains the construction of a cohesive history of the counts of Brienne in order to qualify the nomination of two sons of this house to great prominence in the *Regno* and the Latin East. However, a source which is usually credible suggests that John's nomination came about in consequence of his alleged affair with Blanche, countess of Champagne and is fully examined in the next section.

John of Brienne and Blanche of Champagne

In his seminal history of the counts of Champagne, Jubvainville observed, 'Il [John] passait pour avoir plu à Blanche de Navarre, qu'il aurait désiré sans doute épouser, et qui, après la morte de Thibaut III

⁸⁰ For William of Champlitte's career during the Fourth Crusade, cf. Villehardouin, *Conquête*, pp. 14, 41 - 2, 45 - 6, 99 - 100, 62 - 4, 72 - 3, 83 - 4, 91 - 2, 93 - 4, 107 - 10; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, pp. 14, 36 - 7, 39 - 40, 44, 54, 60, 71, 75, 76 - 7, 88 - 9.

⁸¹ CACB, 119: The ES names his heirs as Andrew of Brienne who died before May 1215 and was buried at Auxerre Saint - Etienne and Elvis of Brienne who was married to John, vicomte of Saint - Florentin and died before July 1235.

⁸² CACB, 133.

⁸³ CACB, 135.

en 1201, aurait été pour lui on parti plus avantageux que l'héritière de Jérusalem'.⁸⁴ In order to fully understand the situation that developed in Champagne at the beginning of the thirteenth century, events that took place prior to the regency of Blanche of Champagne must be examined.

In 1197, Thibaut III of Champagne, son of Henry the Liberal and Marie of Champagne, succeeded his brother, Henry II, who in 1192 had been ruler of Jerusalem and died in 1197 when he accidentally fell from a window of his castle.⁸⁵ Thibaut was eleven years old when his eldest brother left for the Holy Land and at the age of nineteen, he was unable to succeed as regent in consequence of his age.⁸⁶ Shortly after his brother's death, he also lost his mother, Marie, who had been acting as regent and had died shortly after hearing of the death of her sister, Marguerite and her eldest son, Henry.⁸⁷ It was Thibaut who, at the age of twenty - two, held the tournament at the castle of Écry, organised by Baldwin, count of Flanders and Hainaut, on the Aisne in December 1199 and was inspired by the preaching of Fulk of Neuilly to take the cross as leader of the movement that would become known to posterity as the Fourth Crusade.⁸⁸

Soon afterwards he met at Soissons with the counts of Flanders and Blois who had also taken the cross, in order to determine a method of organising the crusade in 1200. Each of the barons chose two agents to journey to Venice to enquire after the cost of using their resources to depart for the Holy Land. Villehardouin was one of the men chosen by Thibaut to journey to Venice and when he returned after the deal had been struck with the Venetians in April 1201, he found Thibaut gravely ill.⁸⁹

Thibaut realised he was dying and made his last will and testament whereby he divided the money he would have taken with him on the Fourth Crusade amongst his followers and companions. In turn, the beneficiaries of these monies were to swear that they would join the crusader army at Venice as

⁸⁴ HCC, IV, 661 - 2.

⁸⁵ *Obituaires de Sens*, I, 2.

⁸⁶ HCC, IV, 73.

⁸⁷ *Ex Chronologia Roberti Altissiodorensis, Praemonstratensis Ad.S and Ex Chronicon Turonensi, Auctore Anonymo, S. Martini Turon Canonicon* in RHGF, XVIII, 262, 293: *Chronicon Guillelmi de Nangis, Sive Nangiaci* in RHGF, XX, 748.

⁸⁸ Thibaut was born in Troyes on 13 May 1179. Cf. Gilbert of Mons, *Chronicle of Hainaut*, trans and ed. L. Napran (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 25 - 6: 113. For the Tournament at Écry, cf. RHGF, XVIII, 601: *Eracles*, 243. Phillips, *Fourth Crusade*, pp. 39 - 55.

⁸⁹ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, p. 11 : Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 12 : HCC, IV, 84 - 8.

Thibaut had promised to do. Having ensured the future of the crusade, he died on 24 May 1201 with his family and vassals around his sick bed.⁹⁰

Villehardouin, erstwhile vassal of the county of Brienne and famed chronicler who served as seneschal of Champagne, observed that he left behind a very beautiful wife, Blanche, daughter of the king of Navarre, who had borne him a little girl and was pregnant at the time of her husband's death.⁹¹ Blanche was the daughter of Sancho VI, 'the Wise', king of Navarre who died on 27 June 1194, the sister of Sancho VII, 'the Strong', who had succeeded Sancho VI, and the sister of Berengaria, the wife of Richard the Lionheart who, in May 1191, became queen of England. Thibaut and Blanche were married at Chartres on 1 July 1199 shortly after the death of Richard the Lionheart, when the direct threat to Philip Augustus was over.⁹² Walter of Brienne, and perhaps even John, was in attendance. Indeed, Walter witnessed a charter whereby Thibaut constituted his wife's dowry.⁹³ Blanche and Thibaut's relationship was likely one of great affection, for after his death, she had a monument constructed in his honour near his father in the cathedral of Saint Etienne of Troyes and he was buried there in a coffin of stone.⁹⁴

Thibaut had not named a protector for either his wife or his son, which placed Blanche in extreme difficulty. Of great concern was the fact that Thibaut's brother, Henry II, was survived by his wife and children who had just as much claim to the county of Champagne by right of blood as Blanche's children.⁹⁵ The countess turned to the king of France and the pope for guidance. Philip Augustus had made efforts to increase his royal authority in Champagne by insisting that Thibaut III do homage to him in 1198.⁹⁶ Bradbury acknowledges that Philip Augustus's offer to take Blanche under his

⁹⁰ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, pp. 11 - 12; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, pp. 12 - 13; *Eracles*, 246; Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 878; *Obituaires de Sens*, I, 2.

⁹¹ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, pp. 11 - 12; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, pp. 12 - 13.

⁹² HCC, I, 351.

⁹³ Some of the other illustrious guests were the recently widowed Berengaria, queen of England, Adèle, queen of France, mother of Philippe Augustus and Thibaut's aunt, Geoffrey III, count of Perche, William I, count of Joigny, Geoffrey V, lord of Joinville and seneschal of Champagne, and Geoffrey of Villehardouin. HCC, IV, 89 - 90.

⁹⁴ HCC, IV, 90; P. J. Grosley, *Mémoires Historiques et Critiques pour l'Histoire de Troyes, Omés de Plusieurs Planches Gravées*. 2 vols (Paris, 1811), II, 410 - 419 and *Voyage Archéologique dans le Department de l'Aube*, ed. A.F. Arnaud (Troyes, 1837), pp. 31 - 2; Phillips, *Fourth Crusade*, pp. 80 - 1.

⁹⁵ HCC, IV, 101.

⁹⁶ CAPA, 534.

protection was nothing more than an attempt to bring the prosperous county under his control.⁹⁷ Indeed, he sought to use such rights as he had with regard, for example, to wardship or widows, and was always careful to extract what he could by agreement from any powerful family that required his help, as in those instances where a minor succeeded as head of the family.⁹⁸ Moreover, Philip's policy was to bring the great principalities from a position of autonomy to subjugation.⁹⁹ He would offer her justice and protection, but in return, Blanche would not be able to marry without his consent, she also pledged to him the obedience of her daughter and the child she carried. It is the first condition of her marriage that is the most interesting here, for if the *Eracles* is to be believed, within a few years of this agreement, Blanche and John of Brienne had fallen in love and may have desired to be married, their intentions cut short by Philip Augustus who was alleged to be in love with the countess as well. The *Eracles* stated;

quar il l'avoit sur cuer por ce que dame Blanche, la contesse de
Champagne, l'amoit plus que nul home do monde, et li rois Felipes
amoit la contesse sur totes riens, et meesmement le conte Johan avoit
fait outrage et honte au conte Pierre d'Auceurre, dont moult avoit
pesé au roi, car il estoit son cosin, et por tout ce se voloit il delivrer
de lui.¹⁰⁰

Before the repercussions of this alleged relationship are examined, the relationship between Philip Augustus and the countess of Champagne must be explored in order to define what the king of France stood to lose by a marriage between the houses of Brienne and Blois.

Blanche had also placed under Philip's aegis the castles of Bray - sur - Seine and of Montereau - fault - Yonne and for the cost of guarding these two castles she paid him 500 livres a year. The execution of these three articles was guaranteed by the oath of the inhabitants of Bray, Montereau, Lagny and Meaux who promised to abandon Blanche and take the side of the king against her if she was to become involved in a rebellion against him. The king received the same promise from her knights and all of her vassals; however, missing from the list of vassals was the count of Brienne. And

⁹⁷ Bradbury, *Phillip Augustus*, p. 232.

⁹⁸ J. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus* (California, 1986), pp. 271 - 2.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *Eracles*, 307.

yet, not to be lured by the appeal of romantic conjecture, the best explanation for this is likely that Walter was unavailable to make the oath at that time.¹⁰¹

Philip Augustus's conditions were not unusual, particularly the rendering of castles under his protection as illustrated by Robert of Dreux, the count of Perche in 1211 who admitted; 'I do not have the right to install a castellan in my castle unless he has taken an oath to the king. The men of my county of Dreux will swear never to betray the king, and to serve him as necessary'.¹⁰² In truth, Blanche became regent of one of the most powerful counties in France during a time when the power of the magnates was being reined in by the crown.

These conditions were agreed by the heavily pregnant countess the week following Thibaut's death and around the end of the month, Blanche gave birth to a son whom she named Thibaut after his father and who would go on to become the famed Thibaut the *Chansonnier*.¹⁰³ Both Blanche and Philip Augustus were aware that her regency would be a long one, which is undoubtedly why she sought his assistance within the first few days of her husband's death. It is impossible to prove that there was a romantic involvement between Blanche and John. However, her regency shall be explored a bit deeper in the hope of encountering evidence which would serve to shed some light on these allegations.

In 1205, in what was likely his first act as regent of the county, John sold for 800 livres, to Blanche, the countess of Champagne, the village of Mâcon which had been given in fief by Thibaut III to John without the consent of Blanche and was made a portion of her dowry either upon his death or by Philip Augustus. John's feelings on the selling of this land remain to question; however, it would seem that given his family's dire financial situation, he would have been glad of the coin.¹⁰⁴

Blanche must have known that before long, her nieces, the daughters of Henry II, would seek husbands who were keen to pursue their rights to the county of Champagne. Indeed, the eldest daughter, Alix of Jerusalem, wed the king of Cyprus, Aimery, in an alliance that was confirmed by the pope at the request of Walter of Montbéliard, the regent of Cyprus and Brienne kinsmen (who

¹⁰¹ HCC, IV, 102.

¹⁰² Bradbury, *Phillip Augustus*, p. 226: A. Luchaire, 'Philippe Auguste' and 'Louis VIII', in E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France Depuis les Origines Jusqu'à la Révolution*, III, Pt. I (Paris, 1911), pp. 206 - 7.

¹⁰³ HCC, IV, 103.

¹⁰⁴ CACB, 135.

accompanied his nephew, Walter III of Brienne, to Sicily) on 30 March 1206.¹⁰⁵ It was Blanche who sought the alliance and who paid 150 marks to John of Ibelin to ensure that the marriage took place, as a further indemnity against the threat of these daughters, she offered the second daughter to the king if the first daughter died.¹⁰⁶ The marriage took place in 1208 and Philippa, the youngest daughter, remained in the Holy Land until 1215.

With the daughters of Henry II of Champagne preoccupied in the Latin East, Blanche could turn her attention to rearing her son and the care of her county. She had reasonable cause to believe that Philip Augustus would soon seek to use her to secure an alliance through marriage. His first marriage at the age of fifteen was to a child - bride of ten, Isabella of Hainault, the daughter of Baldwin V, count of Hainault and his wife Marguerite II, countess of Flanders on 28 April 1180.¹⁰⁷ Four years later, he sought a divorce from her on the grounds of consanguinity.¹⁰⁸ She protested and made a dramatic appeal to the public dressed in shift and barefoot. She launched herself on the mercy of the people of France and it was enough to have Philip restore her and she gave birth to Philip's only legitimate heir, Louis, on 5 September 1187.¹⁰⁹ She died on 15 March 1190 whilst attempting to deliver stillborn twins.¹¹⁰

Philip Augustus remained without wife or prospects for the duration of the Third Crusade and when he returned to France, he chose Ingeborg of Denmark as his second wife. They met and married at Amiens on 14 August 1193.¹¹¹ Bradbury suggests that Ingeborg disappointed Philip Augustus in the marriage bed and although this remains ambiguous, she was never his wife in more than name.¹¹² The king sought to divorce Ingeborg, but he could not obtain the approval of the papacy.¹¹³ However, he would not be deterred and he found another wife in the person of Agnes of Méran, the daughter of

¹⁰⁵ *Eracles*, 209, 308 - 9.

¹⁰⁶ HCC, IV, 108; *Eracles*, 309; J.M. Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'Île de Chypre sous le Règne des Princes de Maison de Lusignan*. 3 vols (Paris, 1852 - 61), I, 177 - 9.

¹⁰⁷ *Gisleberti Chronicon Hanoniense*, MGH XXI, 519; Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 868.

¹⁰⁸ Bradbury, *Philip Augustus*, pp. 175 - 6.

¹⁰⁹ MP, II, 317.

¹¹⁰ *Flandria Generosa* (Continuatio Claromariensis) 7, MGH IX, 329; *Obituaries de Sens*, I, p. 312.

¹¹¹ *Balduini Ninovensensis Chronicon* 1182, MGH XXV, 536.

¹¹² Bradbury, *Philip Augustus*, p. 178; *Gesta Innocentii III*, xlviii pp. 93 - 4; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett (London, 1884 - 9), I, 369.

¹¹³ J.W. Baldwin, 'La vie sexuelle de Philippe Auguste' Mariage et sexualité au Moyen âge. Accord ou crise?. *Colloque International de Conques, Sous la Direction de M. Rouche*. pp. 217 - 29; N.B. Bruguères, 'Le Mariage de Philippe Auguste et Isambour de Danemark, Aspects Canoniques et Politiques,' in *Melanges Offererts à Jean Dauvilier* (Toulouse, 1979), pp. 135 - 56.

Berthold IV, count of Méran. He married her in June 1196, but she was never recognised by the papacy nor the clerics in the kingdom.¹¹⁴ France was placed under interdict; however, many of the French clergy ignored it and remained loyal. When Agnes died in 1201, Philip Augustus was able to reconcile with Innocent and although he treated Ingeburg somewhat better, he never seemed to repent of his actions.¹¹⁵ Bradbury remarked, 'he also considered other possible candidates for a new marriage, for example the daughter of Herman the landgrave of Thuringia in 1210, but never pursued this to a conclusion.'¹¹⁶

Given the timing of the death of Agnès in 1201, is it possible that Philip Augustus considered an alliance by marrying Blanche of Champagne? It is unlikely. Strategically, Philip had no cause to seek a marriage alliance with Blanche as he had already elicited conditions which subjugated the county to his will. Moreover, Philip traditionally searched outside of his kingdom for his marriages.

And yet, one of the conditions imposed on Blanche was that she was to obtain the king's permission before marrying and she never married again, why? It may very well be that she vowed to remain chaste, as Jubainville suggests or perhaps she simply did not trust anyone to preserve the best interest of her child.¹¹⁷ Whatever her reasons, there is not enough information to support the suggestion that Philip fell in love with her, nor is there any suggestion that John was in love with Blanche. Indeed, John's insouciance towards his nephew's attempt to wrest the county of Champagne from Blanche would do much to suggest that this alleged relationship between the two was superimposed upon them by a chronicler seeking to explain why this seemingly minor noble of France was nominated to the throne of Jerusalem. It is also likely that Blanche supported John's nomination to the throne of Jerusalem, as noted by Perry 'As king of Jerusalem (and hence as head of the extended Jerusalemite royal family), John would become at least the *de facto* guardian of Alice and Philippa. He could help make sure they were safely married off'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 872: *Rigordi Gestis Philippi II Augusti*, MGH XXVI, 293.

¹¹⁵ *Balduini Ninovensius Chronicon*, MGH XXV, 536: Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 878: *Obituaires de Sens*, I, 321.

¹¹⁶ Bradbury, *Philip Augustus*, p. 185.

¹¹⁷ HCC, IV, 196.

¹¹⁸ Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 60.

John as Count (Regent) of Brienne

When Walter III died whilst on campaign in Italy in 1205, his wife was pregnant with his son and heir who would go on to become Walter IV count of Brienne. Elvira quickly remarried to protect the lands and titles that Walter III had reclaimed on her behalf. She married first the count of Tricarico and after his death she married the count of Tigrino.¹¹⁹ Her son, Walter IV, remained with her in southern Italy leaving the administration of the county of Brienne to John.¹²⁰ John held the county for his nephew not as regent, which was a title that should have rightly gone to Elvira as the widow of Walter III and the mother of the future count Walter IV, but as count of Brienne and this does not appear to have been contested.¹²¹

The suggestion that John was landless and penniless at the time of his regency may not be true. Indeed, Jubainville estimates that the annual revenue of the county of Brienne, at the end of the thirteenth century, was 3,000 livres tournois.¹²² This number, when compared with the estimated revenues from around the same period of time of the counties of Champagne; 43,240*l* 12*s*. 10*d* and Flanders; 37,500*l* is paltry indeed.¹²³ This comparatively small figure also shows that there must have been something else attractive about the Brienne. Moreover, as early as 1201, when he was likely seventeen years of age, John was landed and able to sell his independent holding of Herbissee to the count of Champagne in order to raise funds for his brother's campaign in the *Regno*.¹²⁴ Furthermore, at the time of his nomination to the throne of Jerusalem, he also held in regency, as the 'count of Brienne', the lands of Brienne which were situated between the Aube and the Seine, notably

¹¹⁹ *Opera Omnia*, 214, xxxviii: Powell, *Deeds*, p. 50: F. Sassenay, de., *Les Brienne de Lecce et d'Athènes. Histoire d'une des Grandes Familles de la Féodalité Française* (Paris, 1869), p. 86.

¹²⁰ *ibid*.

¹²¹ For regencies in Champagne, cf. Evergates, *Aristocracy*, pp. 96 - 9. For John holding the title of count, cf. CACB, 136 - 148.

¹²² Jubainville made this estimation in his authoritative work on the history of the counts of Champagne. In 1270, Hugh, count of Brienne, one of the great vassals of Champagne undertook a commitment to pay Thibaut V, for right of relief 2,000 livres tournois. He was acting for the succession of his two brothers John and Hémeric, sons, as was he, of Walter IV, count of Brienne. These 2,000 livres were a portion of the net revenue of John and Hémeric. If one admits that, in accordance with the ordinance of 1224, the three sons of Walter IV had received each an equal part, to find the total of the net revenue divided between them, augment this sum of money and the succession of Walter IV, divided between these three sons, then reunited in the hands of Hugh, it's said that the county of Brienne with its dependances, produced a net revenue of 3,000 livres tournois [HCC, IV, 809]. This sum, however, has been challenged, cf. Sassenay, *Les Brienne de Lecce*, pp. 53 - 4.

¹²³ HCC, IV, 809 - 10.

¹²⁴ CACB, 119.

the lordship of Onjon, Luyères, and the suzerainty of Piney.¹²⁵ These lands were also mentioned in the charter of 1201 and it is possible that John held these lands even then.

For the period of his effective tenure as regent whilst he was in the county from 1201 – 1210 (although Walter III did not die until 1205, John served as ‘regent’ again without holding this title, in his brother’s absence from the county) John made very few donations. His most substantial gift was to give the hospital of Chalette and its dependants, including the hospital of Brienne, to the abbey of Saint Loup, in 1206.¹²⁶ Notably, his first donation was given after his brother’s death, which suggests that John was not in a position to do more than affirm existing donations and oversee any disputes in his brother’s absence. In November of 1206, John stood as the security of Guy of Jully when Blanche, countess of Champagne, declared that in her presence, Miles, count of Bar - sur - Seine was accorded the subinfeudation of Jully, Thors, Ville - sur - Arce, Magnan, etc.¹²⁷ In 1209, John stood as witness to a charter issued by the count of Sancerre.¹²⁸ In April 1210, John gave to the abbey of Bassefontaine, for the repose of his mother’s soul, the barn of Brienne - le - vieille.¹²⁹ In June 1210, John approved a gift given to the monks of Larrivour by his cousin and vassal, Clarembaud, lord of Chappes.¹³⁰ The last extant charter issued by John before he left for Jerusalem was in 1210 when he confirmed the donations of his predecessors to the abbey of Bassefontaine and added an annual charge of a muid of wheat from the mills of Brienne - le - Vieille.¹³¹

John’s activities outside of the charter evidence during these years is unknown, but it becomes clear later that the instruction he received from the administration of his brother and nephew’s county respectively, shaped the man who would go on to be king. It is possible that during this time, he immersed himself in the culture of his homeland. Champagne was witnessing a great age of literary enlightenment and John was a willing and eager participant as the poetry that has been attributed to

¹²⁵ Longnon, *Documents*, no. 2533.

¹²⁶ CACB, 136.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, 137.

¹²⁸ CACB, 138; E. Martène, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*. 5 vols. Reprint of 1717 ed (Farnborough. 1968 - 69), I, 814.

¹²⁹ CACB, 139; *Gallia Christ*, XII, 618C.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 142.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, 143.

him shows.¹³² He held the county of Brienne as count until his nephew came of age in the 1220s, when without qualm, John handed the county over to his nephew.¹³³

John's Nomination to the Throne of Jerusalem

With the deaths of Erard II, count of Brienne and his brother, Andrew of Ramerupt at Acre, the focus of this study turned from the Holy Land to that of the *Regno* where papal interest and the interest of the Hohenstaufen faction in Germany conflicted. Married into the royal house of Sicily, Erard II's son, Walter III of Brienne became the champion of the young Frederick II and the pope, Innocent III. And whilst war was raging in Italy, the Fourth Crusade was underway in the Levant. In order to understand the conditions in the Holy Land that facilitated John's nomination to the throne of Jerusalem, the events that took place in the Holy Land in the years between the end of the Third Crusade and the calling of the Fifth Crusade must first be examined.

The Crisis of Succession in Jerusalem and the Failure of the Third Crusade

The succession crisis in Jerusalem intensified upon the death of Baldwin IV in the late spring of 1185. Raymond of Tripoli became regent for the late king's nephew, a boy also named Baldwin. Although stepfather to Baldwin V, Guy of Lusignan was ruled out as a possible regent given the High Court's lack of faith in his ability to rule and the general distrust that many nobles of the Holy Land felt towards Guy.¹³⁴ Raymond was also subject to various safeguards and, in order to preserve the rights of young Baldwin V, the High Court made several rulings to restrict the count's power as many believed that he wished to make himself king.¹³⁵

Baldwin was a sickly child and it was little surprise that he did not live long; he died at Acre in 1186 and his mother Sybilla acted swiftly to secure her authority in the face of Raymond and the Ibelin clan's obvious ambitions. With the help of the patriarch of Jerusalem and powerful nobles such

¹³² *Histoire Litteraire de la France*, ed. Dom Antoine Rivet de La Grange, etc. 41 vols (Paris, 1683 – 1981), 23, 638 – 39.

¹³³ *ibid.*, 148: Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 6.

¹³⁴ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, pp.115-16; Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs*, pp. 205-6; R.C.Smail, 'The Predicaments of Guy of Lusignan', in: *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, eds. B.Z.Kedar, H.E.Mayer and R.C.Smail (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 159-76; P.W.Edbury, 'Propaganda and Faction in the Kingdom of Jerusalem: The Background to Hattin', in: *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. M.Shatzmiller (Leiden, 1993), pp. 173-89.

¹³⁵ Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs*, pp. 206-7.

as Reynald of Châtillon she was able to negotiate an agreement whereby she would succeed to the throne if she set aside Guy of Lusignan. On this basis she was duly crowned queen, but in a brilliant piece of political theatre Sybilla selected Guy as her 'new' husband and he was subsequently crowned king.¹³⁶ Inevitably, controversy followed: Raymond of Tripoli urged Isabella and her husband, Humphrey of Toron, to openly rebel against Sybilla, but they refused, placing the well-being of the kingdom over any interest they may have had in ruling.¹³⁷ Shortly after Humphrey had paid homage to Guy and Sybilla, Guy marched on Tiberias. Raymond of Tripoli reacted by placing himself under Saladin's protection and allowing Muslim troops into Tiberias to strengthen his garrison against Guy, which was almost certainly an act of treason.¹³⁸ Guy retreated.

In the winter of 1186-87, Reynald of Châtillon attacked a Muslim caravan travelling between Cairo and Damascus, an act that gave Saladin the justification to break the ongoing truce with the Franks. His victory at the Battle of Cresson in May 1187 forced Raymond to renounce his agreement with Saladin and swear homage to Guy, but by this time the sultan was determined to mount a major offensive. Long-standing tensions between the rival Frankish groups helped to generate the strategic errors that resulted in the crushing defeat at Hattin on 4 July 1187; Reynald of Châtillon was killed and Guy of Lusignan taken prisoner.¹³⁹ The fall of Jerusalem followed on 2 October 1187.

Saladin failed to capture Tyre in July 1187 because of the arrival in the Holy Land of Conrad of Montferrat, the uncle of the young Baldwin V and son of William V of Montferrat.¹⁴⁰ Saladin went on to capture Acre in that same month.

The sultan released Guy in 1188 after the king promised to give up the fight for Outremer, a promise that he immediately broke by travelling to Tripoli and Antioch to gather his forces and reunite his family.¹⁴¹ Guy marched on Acre, intent upon laying siege. In the spring of 1189, he led a

¹³⁶ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, pp. 132-3; Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs* p. 220; J.P. Phillips, *Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades* (London, 2009), pp. 124-5.

¹³⁷ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, pp. 135-6; Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs* p. 220.

¹³⁸ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 141; Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs* p. 223; M.A. Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties Between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East: Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in the Period of the Crusades*, tr. P.M. Holt, revised, edited and introduced by K. Hirschler (Leiden, 2013), pp. 250-7.

¹³⁹ B.Z. Kedar, 'The Battle of Hattin Revisited', in: *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. B.Z. Kedar (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 190-207; Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs*; p. 231.

¹⁴⁰ Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 404.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 406.

small contingent to Tyre to press his rights there, but was rebuffed by Conrad of Montferrat who forbade him from entering the city. A king without a kingdom, Guy focused his attention on the siege of Acre.¹⁴²

On 8 June 1191, not long after the death of Erard II of disease in the crusader camp in 1190, Richard I, king of England, arrived at Acre, signalling the beginning of the end of the siege. By 12 July, the Muslim garrison at Acre had surrendered.¹⁴³ Neither Richard I nor Philip Augustus had been willing to abandon their long-standing rivalry and this became manifest in Palestine when they chose to align themselves with the two claimants to the throne of Jerusalem. The crowned king, Guy of Lusignan, was supported by Richard whilst his opponent, Conrad of Montferrat, a Brienne cousin, was backed by Philip Augustus.

Tyerman noted: 'it says much for Philip's political weakness and Richard's practical dominance that, in spite of the French king having the favour of a majority of the important local Outremer barons and with most of the crusade leaders being his vassals, Conrad's succession remained blocked.'¹⁴⁴ With the terms of the capitulation of the commanders in Acre mediated mainly by Conrad of Montferrat, he continued to place himself in a position of great importance. Indeed, for his efforts, Conrad received in compensation 10,000 dinars, whilst the two kings, Philip Augustus and Richard I, proceeded to divide the spoils of Acre between themselves.¹⁴⁵ For reasons of political expediency, Philip soon intended to depart for home. Pressured by the nobles of the Holy Land and his knights whom he would leave behind, Philip Augustus and Richard held a council to settle the dispute between Guy of Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat. In the course of the siege of Acre, King Guy had lost his wife (Sibylla) and their daughters to illness and this meant – in conjunction with his unpopularity in some quarters – that his hold on the throne was weakened. Conrad, meanwhile, regardless of his own marriage to a Byzantine woman, and that of Isabella to Humphrey of Toron, had acted rapidly to enhance his own position by marrying the princess of Jerusalem, the sole surviving blood-line to the throne. Tyerman summarises: 'On 28 July, after a two - day hearing on the merits of

¹⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 406-7.

¹⁴³ Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 450.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453; Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 162.

the claims of Guy and Conrad to the throne of Jerusalem, the two kings announced a compromise that reflected Richard's ascendancy. Guy was to remain king for life, but the succession would devolve after his death on Conrad and Isabella and their heirs.¹⁴⁶ Having left behind the bulk of his soldiers, Philip's departure was likely not entirely upsetting to Richard. However, Conrad of Montferrat had relied heavily upon Philip Augustus's support to further his cause.

Tensions between Conrad and Guy continued with the latter's standing so badly tarnished by the events of 1187, plus, more importantly, the issue of the blood-line moving to Isabella, that Richard was forced to accept political reality. At another council in early 1192 it was decided that Conrad should be crowned king of Jerusalem while Guy was awarded the rich consolation prize of Cyprus. Before he could take the crown, however, Conrad was murdered on 28 April 1192.

Once again, a new king had to be found and within a week, Henry of Champagne married the twenty-one year old princess Isabella of Jerusalem to become her third husband.¹⁴⁷ Henry was an ideal candidate, having been related to both factions of the crusader army, grandson of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine and the nephew to both Richard I and Philip II. And yet, even this strategic marriage, which should have done much to minimise the internecine conflict within the crusader army, was incapable of saving the Third Crusade. Shortly thereafter, Richard was unable to convince his allies to attack Egypt and with the king unwilling to besiege Jerusalem itself, coupled with troubles back in the West, as well as his own serious ill-health, the crusade came to end. While it had not recovered Jerusalem, it had at least enabled the Franks to consolidate their hold on the coast.¹⁴⁸

A large-scale expedition launched by Emperor Henry VI of Germany sought to extend the work of the Third Crusade further and captured Beirut in September 1197, but the same month, the emperor died, thus ending the campaign. Only weeks earlier, Henry of Champagne had died when he fell from the window of his palace at Acre. His loss created yet another succession crisis in Jerusalem. His widow, Isabella had several children from her many marriages, with Henry having been her third husband; she was the mother to three young daughters, the eldest, Maria, at five years of age, was the daughter of Conrad of Montferrat, the youngest two were the daughters of Henry of Champagne.

¹⁴⁶ Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 454.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp. 190-1.

Although she had weathered three marriages, Isabella was yet in her twenties when Henry died and she was still the legitimate queen of Jerusalem, having been the daughter of Aimery I, king of Jerusalem and his wife, Maria Comnena. In January 1198, she married King Amalric of Cyprus (brother of Guy of Lusignan, who had died in 1194), a seasoned ruler with obvious family links to the crown and nobility of Jerusalem (his first wife was related to the Ibelin, Queen Isabella's half-brothers). Seven months later, the recently elected Pope Innocent III sent letters to the West calling for a new crusade to the Holy Land in what would result in what has become known to posterity as the Fourth Crusade. In 1204, the Fourth Crusade culminated in the sack of Constantinople by the crusader armies.¹⁴⁹

Primary Sources on John's Nomination to the Throne

In January 1198, Isabella of Jerusalem, the direct heir to the kingdom, married for the third time in her relatively young life, on this occasion, her husband was Aimery I, king of Cyprus, who was crowned a few days later as Aimery II, king of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁰ He was one of the brothers of Guy of Lusignan, the former king of Jerusalem. Of Aimery's youth, Hamilton noted

Aimery, one of Hugh VIII's younger sons, came to Syria some years later and he too was captured in battle by the Muslims but was ransomed by King Amalric. Aimery was one day to become king of Jerusalem himself and the story of how in his youth King Aimery had been ransomed by King Amalric passed into the folklore of the Latin East, for people were struck by the similarity of their names. Ernoul later credited Aimery with having been the lover of Agnes of Courtenay, again, it is impossible to know with what truth.¹⁵¹

Aimery served as constable of Jerusalem in 1181 for about ten years.¹⁵² He succeeded his brother, Guy, as lord of Cyprus in 1194.¹⁵³ When Henry of Champagne, king of Jerusalem, died in September

¹⁴⁹ J.P. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (London, 2004).

¹⁵⁰ For his election to the throne of Cyprus, cf. *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 287, 303 and for his marriage to Isabella of Jerusalem, cf. *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 310.

¹⁵¹ Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs*, pp. 97 - 8.

¹⁵² *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 173.

¹⁵³ *ibid.* p. 287.

1197, Aimery was named as a possible suitor for the widowed Isabella of Jerusalem. Aimery died in 1205, without leaving a male heir to the throne.¹⁵⁴ The heir to the throne of Jerusalem was Maria of Montferrat, the eldest daughter of Isabella and her second husband, Conrad of Montferrat who succeeded her mother in 1206 as Queen of Jerusalem during the regency of John of Ibelin, lord of Beirut.¹⁵⁵ A few years after King Aimery's death, it was determined that Maria, was of an age to get married. The great nobles of the land were summoned, led by Patriarch Albert of Jerusalem, who was a Lombard, and it was decided that they needed an able - bodied knight who was capable of defending Jerusalem against its enemies.¹⁵⁶

Both of the primary sources that recount John's nomination agree that the decision to nominate John and his subsequent acceptance were handled in one delegation from the Holy Land to King Philip Augustus's court in France in 1208.¹⁵⁷ The *Eracles* observed that a contingent of men were sent to speak to Philip Augustus about the nomination and the king selected John after calling a council to find a man worthy of the hand of the heiress to Jerusalem. The *Eracles* remains the most detailed account of John's nomination

Li rois manda por le conte Johan de Briene, et li dist que Dex li avoit
envoiez grant honor se il la voleit recevoir, car l'on li offroit la
corone et le roiaume de Jerusalem, ou Nostre Sire Jeshu Crist fu
coronez; et li dist que se il voloit ceste offre recevoir par lui, il li
prometoit s'aye et son conseil. Li cuenz Johans fu moult liez de cele
chose quant il l'entendi; si se agenoilla devant le roi, et l'en mercia
moult de ce que il li avoit fait si grant honor que il l'avoit esleu a si
grant dignete; car il entendoit bien que ce estoit meu de lui.¹⁵⁸

According to the account in the *Eracles*, Philip Augustus wanted John out of the county of Champagne on account of the residual bad feelings after the conclusion of a war that had broken out

¹⁵⁴ *Eracles*, 305: *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 407.

¹⁵⁵ *Eracles*, 305.

¹⁵⁶ Edbury, *John of Ibelin*, pp. 30 - 2. King Peter II of Aragon had also been considered a likely candidate, but his circumstances (mainly that he was married at the time) prevented the match from taking place [J. Vincke, 'Der Eheprozess Peters II von Aragon (1206 - 1213)', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens* 5 (1935), pp. 108 - 89, cf. Smith, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon*, pp. 71 - 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, p. 408 : *Eracles*, 306 - 8.

¹⁵⁸ *Eracles*, 307, n.c.

between Peter of Courtenay and Hervé of Donzy during the 1190s *et meesmement le conte Johna avoit fait outrage et honte au onte Pierre d'Auceurre, dont moult avoit pesé au roi, car il estoit son cosin, et por tout ce se voloit il delivrer de lui.*¹⁵⁹ Whilst this does much to explain why Philip may have thrown his weight behind John's nomination, it may also explain why John was considered a worthy option for the throne of Jerusalem. Indeed, during this brief war in 1190 John may have proven himself a capable military leader, which partly explains how someone who quite possibly spent his formative years in a monastery would go on to achieve such military esteem as to become the leader of the Fifth Crusade.

It has been suggested that this account may not be entirely accurate because the contemporary Capetian chroniclers did not capitalise on the fact that Philip Augustus had been charged with selecting a king for the throne of Jerusalem which, given the popularity of the crusades in France, is indeed odd.¹⁶⁰

The *Chronicle of Ernoul* is more succinct in its assessment of the nomination, the author noting

La s'acorderent tout del mander et de lui donner le demoisieie, et de lui faire roi. Il appareillierent messages, si l'envoierent querre. Li message vinrent à lui en France, là où il estoit et se li disent que cil de le tiere d'Outremer le mandoient por faire roi. Quant il oï ce, se dist qu'il en prenderoit conseil. Atant s'en ala li cuens Jehans de Braine al roi, et li dist qu'ensi faitement l'avoit on mandé por estre roi en le tiere d'Outremer. Et li rois li loa bien qu'il I alast. Et I ala, et arriva à Acre, et on le rechut à grant honor et à grant signourie. Puis ala à Sur, et espousa le dame, et porta corone.¹⁶¹

However, despite its brevity, it is likely that this account was considered to be more credible at the time as both Robert of Auxerre and Alberic of Trois Fontaines appear to have used this account when referencing John's nomination; it seems the *Eracles* version was not used as widely.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ L. Ross, 'Relations between the Latin East and Western Europe, 1187 - 1291' (Unpublished Thesis, University of London, 2003), p. 26.

¹⁶¹ *Chronique d'Ernoul*, pp. 408 - 9.

¹⁶² Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 890: Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, ed. O. Holder - Eger, MGH XXVI, p. 273.

Edbury noted that the criticism levelled against John's nomination was not unlike that directed against Guy of Lusignan a generation before; 'there were some who said that if he [Philip Augustus] had really had the best interests of the Holy Land at heart he would have found someone who was of greater rank and wealth and who would have been better able to alleviate the poverty of the land'.¹⁶³ It is likely that John was agreeable to this match and actively pursued it because it was his nephew who was the rightful heir to the county of Brienne.

Brienne Family Connections in Jerusalem at the Time of John's nomination

With the claim of Henry of Champagne's two daughters threatening Blanche's regency, the latter had a vested interest in John's nomination to the throne of Jerusalem. Perhaps through John, Blanche hoped to ensure that her own regency, not unlike his tentative hold on the county of Brienne as count-regent with both ruling in the absence of the rightful heirs, was secure by overseeing the marriage of those two daughters. But, were there others in Jerusalem who may have supported John's candidacy? Did the old bonds created through various marriage alliances and kinship strengthen John's nomination?

One such kinsman may have been Walter of Montbéliard. Walter was John of Brienne's uncle through marriage, as John's mother, Agnes of Montbéliard, was Walter's sister.¹⁶⁴ Walter has also been previously mentioned in this thesis as having accompanied his nephew, John's brother Walter III, on his campaign in Italy. Evidence suggests that Walter's relationship with the Brienne was close, because when Walter of Brienne had encountered difficulty raising men to accompany him to Italy on campaign, Walter of Montbéliard chose to join his cousin's retinue intent on Sicily, thus postponing his plans to participate in what would become known as the Fourth Crusade.¹⁶⁵

It is of interest to note that both Perry and Hamilton suggest that Walter of Montbéliard was not the uncle of John of Brienne, but rather his cousin. Perry relies on Hamilton's essay 'King Consorts of Jerusalem and their Entourages from the West from 1186 to 1250' as his source, whilst in the essay, Hamilton relies upon the work of W.H. Rudt de Collenberg who created a Montbéliard family tree in

¹⁶³ Edbury, *John of Ibelin*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁴ *Eracles*, 234, DHC I, 244

¹⁶⁵ Villehardouin, *Conqueste*, pp. 10 - 11; Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 12.

his work *Familles de l'Orient latin XIII - XIVe siècles*.¹⁶⁶ Collenberg's work was referenced and no mention was found of a primary source for his suggestion that Agnès Montbeliard, countess of Brienne was not the daughter of Amadeus Montbéliard, but rather that she was in fact his sister. Indeed, it remains puzzling that recent writers would adduce a secondary source over the *Eracles* and the work of Longnon who has done extensive work on the families of France during the time of the crusades.¹⁶⁷ In light of the absence of this primary source in Collenberg's work, both the author of the *Eracles* and Longnon are likely correct when they note that Walter of Montbéliard was indeed the uncle of John of Brienne. This close kinship may also serve to explain why in the face of such difficulty in finding men who had not pledged themselves to the Fourth Crusade, Walter III of Brienne was able to entice Walter of Montbéliard to defer his participation in the Fourth Crusade to journey with him on campaign in Italy.

It is unclear when Walter of Montbéliard left his nephew's campaign in Sicily to join the Fourth Crusade; however, evidence suggests that between 1201 and 1205, he arrived in Jerusalem where King Aimery offered his daughter Burgundia in marriage and made him constable of Jerusalem.¹⁶⁸ Edbury suggests that by the time of this marriage, Walter of Montbéliard had been living in Jerusalem for at least two or three years.¹⁶⁹ The position of constable was of great importance in the kingdom of Jerusalem became as commander of the armies, 'the constable not only performed a major function in a war - ridden country, but exercised his power in the only sphere where the standing of the king was never challenged'.¹⁷⁰ Prawer describes the perogatives of the constable with perhaps the most important being that 'During expeditions he became the judge of the army under martial law...He represented their [knights, sergeants and squires] demands and on occasions their claims before court. It seems that in such cases he even presided over the court in the king's absence'.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 47, n. 89; B. Hamilton, 'King Consorts of Jerusalem and their Entourages from the West from 1186 to 1250, 19 n.45, in *Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als Multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, ed. H.E. Mayer (Munich, 1997), p. 19; W.H. Rudt de Collenberg, *Familles de l'Orient Latin XIII - XIVe siècles* (London, 1983), p. 130.

¹⁶⁷ *Eracles*, 316; Longnon, *Compagnons*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁸ *Eracles*, 234 - 5, 316; Longnon, *Compagnons*, pp. 10 - 11.

¹⁶⁹ P. W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191 - 1374* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 41.

¹⁷⁰ J. Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), p. 124.

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, 125.

The potential to exercise influence while holding the role of constable was presumably quite considerable. On the death of King Aimery I in 1205, in a controversial move, Walter of Montbéliard assumed the regency of the kingdom of Cyprus.¹⁷²

Another key player in the Holy Land at this time was John of Ibelin. John of Ibelin was the first cousin of John of Brienne, as John of Brienne's maternal aunt, Alice, had married John of Ibelin's father, Philip of Ibelin who was the fourth son of Balian of Ibelin, Lord of Nablus, Rama and Mirabel and his wife, Maria Comena, the widow of King Aimery I of Jerusalem.¹⁷³ He was also closely linked to the throne of Jerusalem not only through his mother, who had married a king of Jerusalem, but through his half - sister, Isabella, who was the daughter of Maria Comena and her second husband, King Aimery I of Jerusalem whom Maria married upon the death of Balian of Ibelin.¹⁷⁴

Edbury suggests that these marriages 'underpinned many of political alignments in the years that followed', but whereas Edbury limits the scope of his investigation to the Ibelin and the Montbéliard union, the Brienne should be considered as well. Given the familial links between these three families, one would not be remiss in supposing that John's nomination was directly influenced by the existence of these powerful factions in the Holy Land. Perhaps not so much through Philip Augustus, who had his own reasons, whatever they may have been, for John's nomination, but mainly through Blanche of Champagne who needed a champion to temper the influence of Henry of Champagne's heirs. As nephew to Walter of Montbéliard, whose position as constable of Jerusalem and regent of Cyprus was august, and the first cousin of John of Ibelin, who was a blood relative of Isabella of Jerusalem, John may have been seen by Blanche of Jerusalem as someone who would defend her cause.

John may have also received support from a powerful kinsman cleric. Archbishop Clarembaud of Tyre, as noted by Perry, was quite possibly a member of the Broyes family, which would make him related to John of Brienne through John's great - aunt Felicia who had married Simon I of Broyes

¹⁷² *Eracles*, 305: J. Riley - Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174 - 1277* (London, 1973), pp. 38, 108, 187: Edbury, *Cyprus*, p. 42.

¹⁷³ RRH, 841a: *Lignages*, p. 64, n.17.: Edbury, *John of Ibelin*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁴ Alberic of Trois - Fontaines, 'Chronicon', 933: Mas Latrie, *Chypre*, III, 608.

(d.1132).¹⁷⁵ Indeed, Clarembaud of Tyre and Walter of Montbéliard both participated in securing the marriages of Henry of Champagne's daughters, perhaps lending more support to the suggestion that John's nomination may not have been sealed by the support of Philip Augustus but rather by that of Blanche of Champagne.¹⁷⁶

By the time of John's nomination a faction of Champenois nobles were actively involved in the politics of the Holy Land, having reached their zenith with Henry II of Champagne as king of Jerusalem.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, as this thesis has shown, familial connections and strategic marriage alliances were of great importance to the nobles of Champagne and France as a whole. Moreover, the Brienne had come into prominence with the courageous actions of Andrew of Brienne on the Third Crusade and the successful Italian campaign conducted by the papal champion, Walter III of Brienne, both of which would have been in living memory during the time of John's nomination. In addition to the support that John may have received from his king and the countess of Champagne, the Brienne name would have been well - known, if not illustrious, at this time.

John landed at Acre on 13 September 1210 and was married to Maria of Jerusalem on the next day.¹⁷⁸ He was crowned on 3 October 1210 at Tyre as John I, king of Jerusalem.¹⁷⁹ His coronation signalled the culmination of the Brienne dynasty's ascent to prominence in both France and Outremer. Without a doubt, when John accepted the crown, he did so from the shoulders of his ancestors who had come before and done much to steer the dynasty towards the throne of Jerusalem.

¹⁷⁵ Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 62; B. Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: the Secular Church* (London, 1980), p. 248. For Simon and Felicia's marriage, cf. 'Chartes d'Andecy (Marne)' 161, p. 259; *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis* 13, MGH XIII, 254.

¹⁷⁶ Perry, *John of Brienne*, p. 62.

¹⁷⁷ *Eracles*, 193 - 4.

¹⁷⁸ *Eracles*, 308 - 10.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has set out to establish the progression of the Brienne from minor sub - counts within the county of Champagne into a dynasty with strong crusading roots who achieved advancement through beneficial marriages which culminated in the nomination of John of Brienne to the throne of Jerusalem in 1210.

From as early as the tenth century, the counts of Brienne were politically active within their county as evidenced by the conflict between the first recorded count of Brienne, Englebert I, and King Louis d'Outremer in 961.¹ The charter evidence suggests that as early as the eleventh century, the Brienne had not yet come under the power of the count of Champagne, with the charters paying due deference to the king of France. During the tenure of Walter I of Brienne (1035 - 1089), the likely grandson of Englebert I, Brienne became a prosperous territory. Evergates observed that there were three counts ancillary to the count of Champagne in the Balliage in the eleventh century; the Brienne, Bar - sur - Seine and Ramerupt.² As previously noted in this thesis, in testament to their effective use of marriage, within a century, both the houses of Bar - sur - Seine and Ramerupt would be ruled by a son of the house of Brienne.

Other important developments occurred in the dynasty during the eleventh century. Indeed, the Brienne's roots in the ideology of holy war extend back to the era of the Reconquest of Spain, over twenty years prior to the start of the First Crusade in 1063.³ The first great ancestor of the Brienne, Ebles II of Roucy, took part in the Reconquest in a role that many have styled as 'proto - crusader'.⁴ He also married a daughter of Robert Guiscard, which would give the Brienne its first links to what soon became one of the most prominent families of the Levant, the rulers of Antioch. Ebles of Roucy's sisters also served to strengthen these familial ties with Felicia of Roucy going on to become the queen of Aragon and mother to three successive kings of that region while Beatrice of Roucy produced a son, Rotrou of Perche who through his depiction as a crusader in *La Chanson d'Antioche*

¹ Ph. Lauer, *Le Règne de Louis IV d'Outre - Mer*, in *Annales de l'Histoire de France à l'Époque Carolingienne* (Paris, 1900), pp. 17 - 8, 26 - 9; Lauer, *Louis IV*, p. 218. 'Deux seigneurs pillards (prædones), les frères Joubert et Anjoubert, avaient élevé une forteresse à Brienne'. Cf. C. Kalckstein, *Geschichte des Französischen Königthums unter den Ersten Capetingern* (Leipzig. 1877), p. 277, n. 3.

² Evergates, *Troyes*, p. 97.

³ *Epistolae Pontificum Romanorum Ineditae*, pp. 43, 82.

⁴ Bull, *Knightly Piety*, pp. 70 - 86.

is firmly enshrined in historiography as a knight of great courage.⁵ Within the county of Brienne, advantageous marriages were being made as early as the mid - eleventh century when Walter I, count of Brienne, wed Eustachie, the daughter of Miles III, count of Bar - sur - Seine whose title would be passed on to the eldest son of this union. A generation after Ebles' activity in Spain, his nephew, Erard, count of Brienne, would probably participate in the First Crusade and journey to the Holy Land as a pilgrim.⁶ At the time of Erard's death c.1125 the Brienne dynasty had begun to further increase the family's standing through marriage, crusading and pilgrimage.

Therefore, by the time the call came to take the cross for what would become known as the Second Crusade, the Brienne dynasty - like many other families - had started to acquire a tradition of involvement in the Holy Land. In testament to this, Erard's son, Walter II, count of Brienne took part in the Second Crusade of 1147 and he took his son along with him. Walter made two advantageous marriages that would continue the process of increasing the rank of the counts of Brienne. The first marriage was to a daughter of Andrew of Baudement, whose relatives included Pope Calixtus II, Renier of Montferrat and Robert I of Dreux, the brother of King Louis VII of France.⁷ The second marriage was to Adélaïde of Soissons, the daughter of John of Soissons who was the great - grandson of Richard I, duke of Normandy.⁸

After Walter's death, his son came to inherit the county of Brienne as Erard II, count of Brienne and when he embarked upon the Third Crusade, it was his second campaign in the Holy Land. The feats of Erard and his brother Andrew would produce the first widespread mention of the Brienne in contemporary crusading texts. Andrew's death at the siege of Acre and Erard's apparent indifference concerning his brother's fate on the battlefield did much to increase the profile of the Brienne, casting one brother as hero, the other a man without honour.

⁵ Bisson, *Aragon*, p. 16: A. Duchesne, 'Prevues de l'histoire de la maison de Broys et de Chateau - villain', *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Dreux et de quelques autres famille*. (Paris, 1631), pp. 15 - 6 and O. de Romanet, *Géographie du Perche et Chronologie de ses Comtes* (Mortagne, 1890 - 1902), pp. 50 - 1. Cf. R. Courtin, *Histoire du Perche* (Marseille, 1980). P. J. Odolant - Desnos, *Mémoires Historiques sur la Ville d'Alençon et sur ses Seigneurs* (Alençon, 1787), I, 294. For more on the *Chanson d'Antioche*, cf. *La Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. S. Duparc - Quioc. 2 vols (Paris, 1976 - 78) and the translation *The Chanson d'Antioche : An Old French Account of the First Crusade*, trans. S. B. Edgington and C. Sweetenham (Farnham, 2011).

⁶ MT, 146: CACB, 21: M1, II, 321 - 3.

⁷ Thompson, *Perche*, p. 87: Stroll, *Calixtus II*, p. 8: Hamilton, *Leper King*, p. xxi

⁸ *Genealogiae Scriptoris Fusniacensis* 11 and 12, MGH, SS, XIII, 254.

In a further step up the hierarchy, around the year 1166, Erard married Agn  s of Montfaucon, daughter of Amadeus of Montfaucon, count of Montb  liard.⁹ The sons of this union, Walter and John, would rise far beyond the prominence suggested by the earlier careers of their forefathers. Walter would marry the exiled heiress to the throne of Sicily and wage war against the Hohenstaufen interest in the *Regno* on behalf of the papal see. John would serve as regent for the county of Brienne subsequent to his brother's death and until the majority of his nephew. It was during this time that he became king of Jerusalem (1210 – 1212, regent, 1212 – 1225) and later, emperor of Constantinople (1229–1237).

It is interesting to compare the Brienne to some of the other well - known dynasties of the crusades. When John of Brienne was nominated to the throne of Jerusalem, many undoubtedly questioned whether or not there were more deserving, better - positioned families available; families with more august political connections and perhaps with roots firmly in the crusading tradition and the politics of the Levant. And whilst, before this present work, these questions may have caused pause amongst scholars of the crusades, the evidence laid out in this thesis has attempted to address these points. How different were the Brienne from the Lusignan? The Montlh  ry? The Le Puiset? How alike? Whilst not as prolific as the Montlh  ry, who sent sixteen of their family to reclaim Jerusalem during the First Crusade, nor as powerful in their native France as the Lusignan, the Brienne also proved themselves to be devoted to the cause of holy war and pilgrimage. And whilst perhaps more similar to the Le Puiset and the Ibelin in rank, neither the Le Puiset nor the Ibelin ever reached the status that the Brienne achieved in the Holy Land.

However where one may seek similarities in these families in order to justify the allegedly inexplicable nomination of Brienne, it is clear that the Brienne benefited more from the differences. Jerusalem had already witnessed the reigns of three 'outsiders', Fulk V of Anjou, a son of the Montfort who had achieved status in his native land, had ties to the royal families of England and France, and had been on pilgrimage, would marry the heiress of Jerusalem, Melisende in 1129 and become king of Jerusalem in 1131. But it was precisely due to Fulk's expectation of sole rulership that he tried to sideline his wife and also promote men of Anjou to places of importance in his

⁹ *Eracles*, 234: DHC, I, 244.

government. Thus he provoked what was, in effect, a civil war with the revolt of Hugh of Jaffa (another Brienne kinsman).¹⁰ Moreover, the reign of Guy of Lusignan would have been fresh in living memory and the disastrous losses the kingdom suffered under his rule. Unlike these two men, however, Henry of Champagne, who married Queen Isabella I and was known as her consort, was sought by King Richard I to rule the realm; perhaps in deference to his wife's position, he styled himself count palatine of Troyes and only once used the title 'lord of the kingdom of Jerusalem'.¹¹

By the end of the twelfth century, through marriage alliances, crusading tradition and pilgrimage, the attention garnered by the Brienne on the Third Crusade by the acts of Erard and Andrew coupled with Walter's illustrious campaign in Sicily where he served as papal champion, the Brienne reached a point where whilst not as powerful as their contemporaries such as the Lusignan or Champagne, the counts had become men of note. With this elevated status, the presence of distant kin and a faction of Champenois in the Holy Land, as well as John's marital eligibility as a strong, mid - ranking noble, his nomination to the throne of Jerusalem was not without logic.

¹⁰ H.E. Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans: The New Men of King Fulk of Jerusalem', *American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989), 1 - 25; Phillips, *Defenders*, pp. 59 - 60.

¹¹ F. Suard, 'Henri I, Comte de Champagne et la Troisième Croisade (1190 - 1192),' in *Les Champenois et la Croisade*, ed. Yvonne Bellenger and Danielle Queruel (Paris, 1989), pp. 39 - 54.

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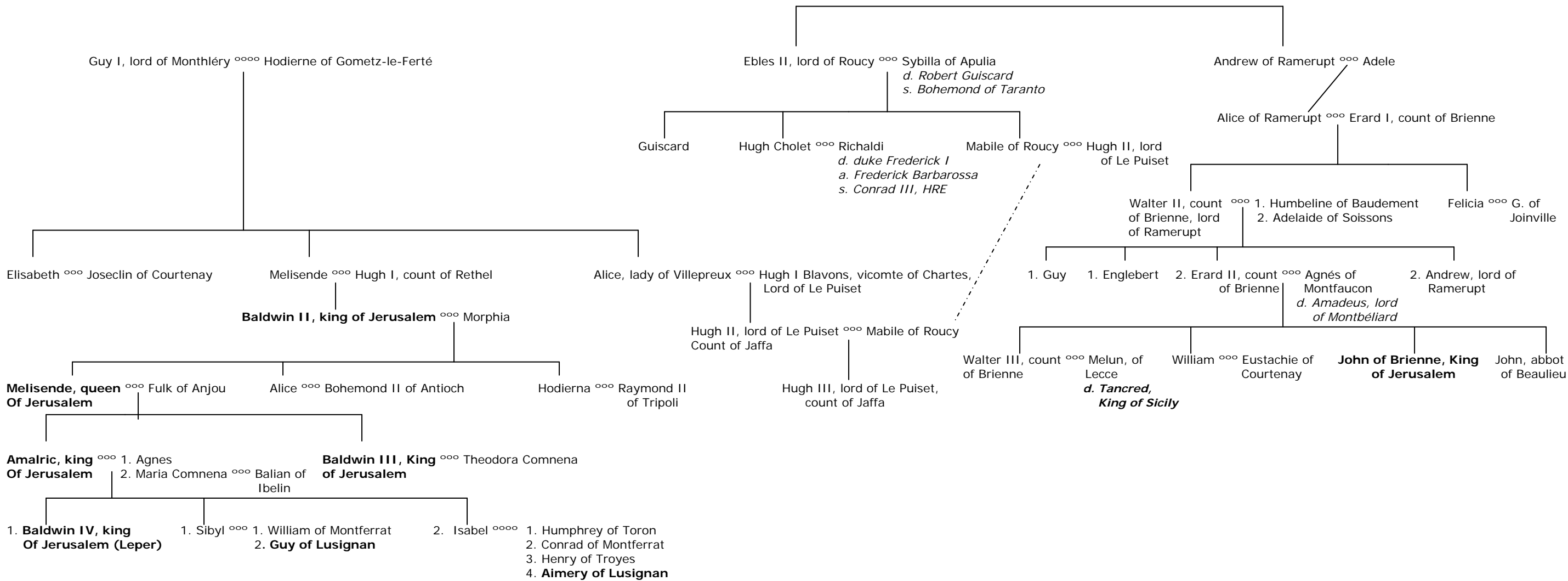
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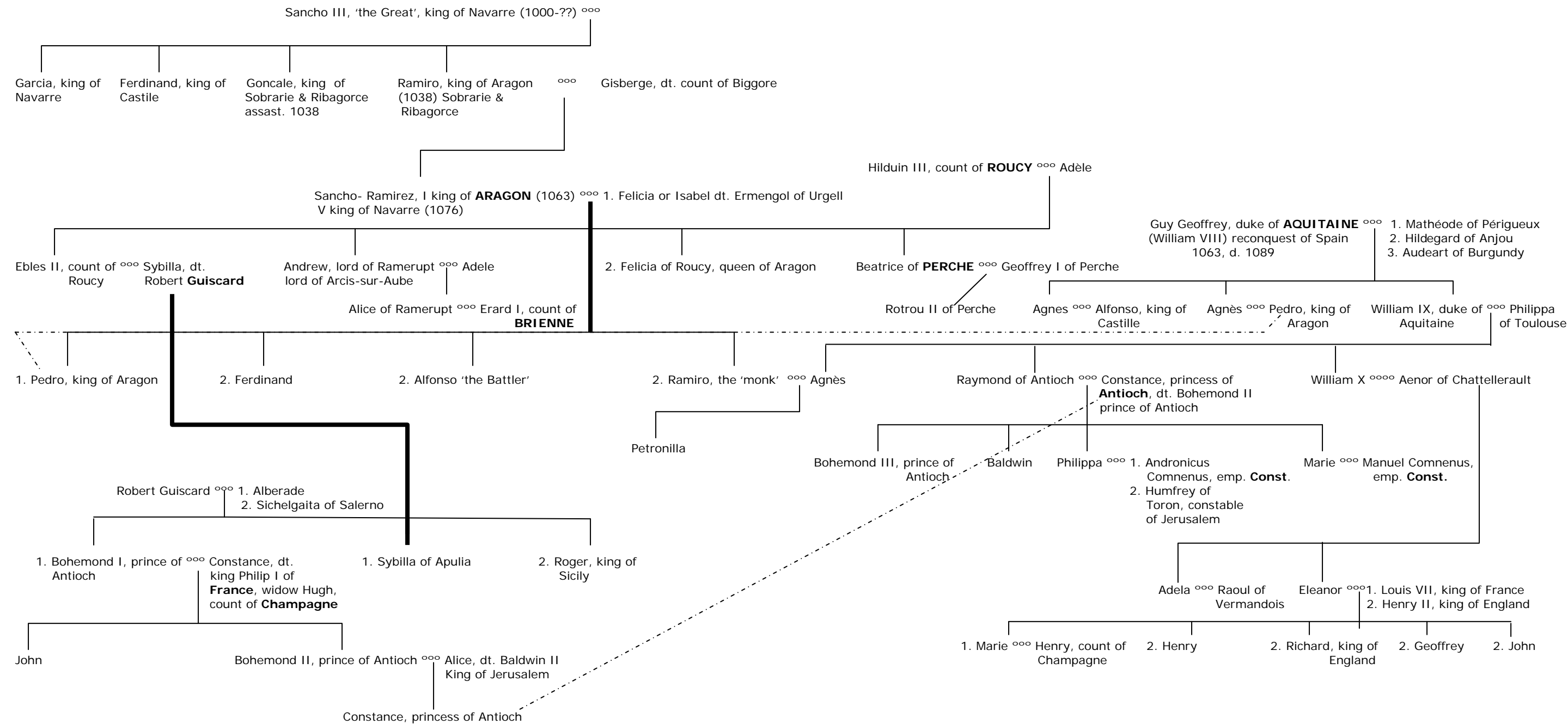
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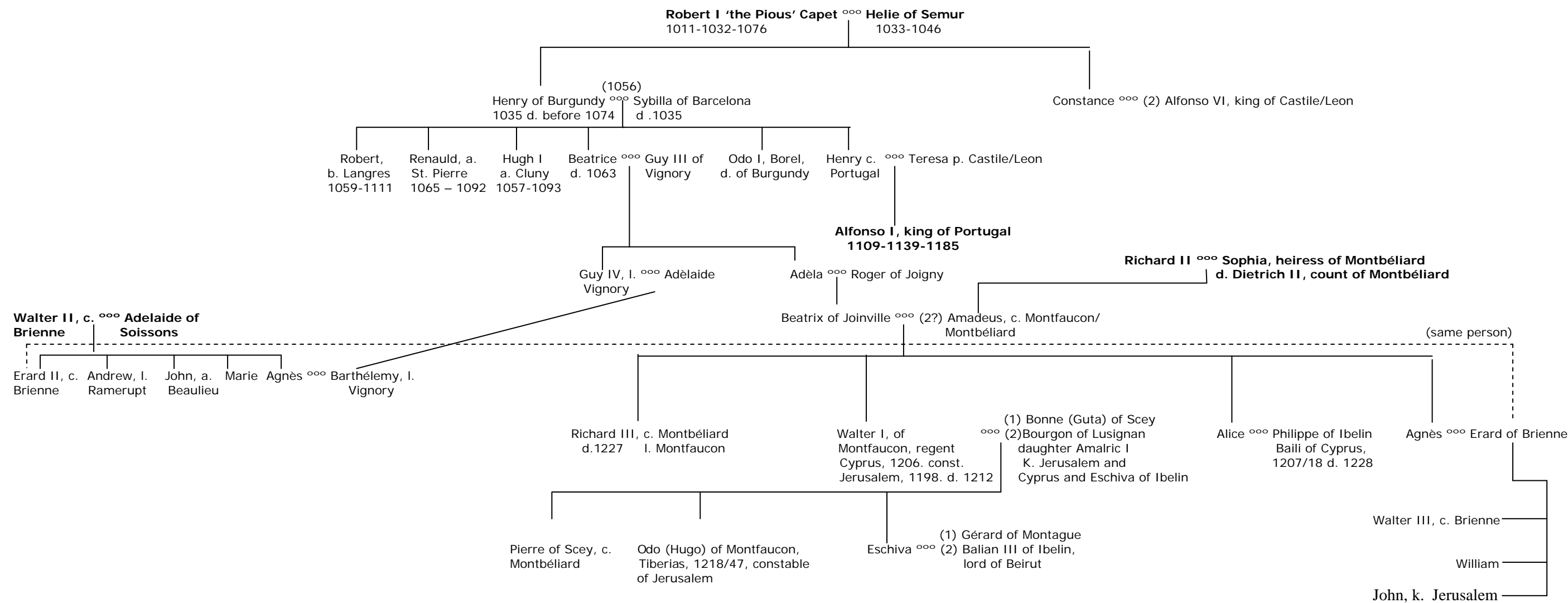
Houses of Brienne, Le Puiset, and Jerusalem



Houses of Aquitaine, Aragon, Brienne, Capet, Roucy and Perche



Brienne/Soissons/Burgundian/Montfaucon/Montbéliard/Vignory/Ibelin/Castile-Leon



Houses of Brienne, Normandy, Flanders, Burgundy and Apulia

