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Aristocratic Women's Kinship Ties in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Flanders and Champagne

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ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN'S KINSHIP TIES IN TWELFTH- AND THIRTEENTH-
CENTURY FLANDERS AND CHAMPAGNE

by

Sydne Reid Johnson

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Sydne Reid Johnson

ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN'S KINSHIP TIES IN TWELFTH- AND THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FLANDERS AND CHAMPAGNE

Sydne Reid Johnson, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2019

Georges Duby pioneered the study of family and marriage in medieval France, but his models for family and marriage have since either been accepted or rejected. I take a middle approach in that some models still are applicable to describing marriage and family, while others require reevaluation. Duby argued that during this period women were treated with suspicion in their husband's households, marriage was essential for the future of both families, and that family connections were deteriorating. In this thesis, I will explore family ties within the kinship network of the aristocracy of Flanders and Champagne in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with an emphasis on women's roles within these networks. It was during this period of "transition" that narrative dynastic histories were popular among the principalities and will serve as the primary source of my investigation. I will take case studies of women from both Flanders and Champagne and analyze their relationship with their families and trace common themes. I will argue that the model for familial ties was similar in both Flanders and Champagne that women were trusted members of the household, marriage created alliances that were essential for the families, and that familial ties were not deteriorating in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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CHAPTER I

NOT INTRUDERS BUT PARTNERS

Georges Duby pioneered the study of family and marriage in medieval France, but his works have since been reevaluated by scholars. Some still adhere to the marriage and family models that Duby constructed in the early 1980s, while others wholeheartedly reject them. I take a middle approach to the works of Duby, neither adhering wholly to his models nor rejecting them entirely. For example, Georges Duby notes:

1. The marriage pact was essential to the future of both houses. Thus, the decision was too important to be left to the individuals concerned and was therefore made by those who had the responsibility for the two families. 2. The agreement had different consequences for the two families. One of them introduced a foreign body into its midst, the bride who became part of the household. To some extent, this woman always remained an intruder, the object of tenacious distrust, of suspicion that was was [sic] invariably focused upon her should some unusual misfortune befall her husband.¹

The first statement has proved true, that marriage was a weighty decision and was usually made by families rather than individuals, but the second statement must be broken apart. Marriage did have consequences for both families to an extent, but foreign women were not an object of distrust or suspicion. Women coming from foreign countries, such as Blanche of Navarre, faced various challenges in their marriage, including linguistic ones. Even women coming from different counties could also face similar challenges. Marie of Champagne, as well as Clemence of Burgundy, Marie of France, Emma of Tancarville, and Christine of Ardres were “foreigners” (that is, from different lordships) in the household of their husbands. Although these women were

¹ Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: two models from twelfth-century France*, trans. Elborg Forester (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5-6.

considered foreign, they still were trusted to rule the county in the stead of their husbands and care for their children. The models for marriage and family were portrayed in similar manners for both Champagne and Flanders, but still retained their own nuances. Family and kinship networks were an important means for aristocrats to form alliances and protect their position in the comital institution against the rising power of the king.

According to Georges Duby, the custom of male inheritance prior to 1180 was patrilineal and also primogeniture, but that this was not the case in the following century.² This meant that only the eldest son would inherit and his marriage would receive priority or the marriages of his younger siblings might be restricted, according to Duby. This is not the case in Flanders and Champagne. Male inheritances did not undergo many changes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, younger sons did indeed marry and inherit, but often it was through their wives. Sometimes men did not inherit because they died or because they married into a family where they could inherit a more substantial amount from their wives' relations. Furthermore, women began to inherit castles if there was not a direct male heir and share in the inheritance with her sisters, and women also inherited counties, which they then were able to pass to their children.³

The introduction of this thesis will take a three-tiered approach. First, I will discuss the historiography of aristocratic women from Georges Duby's works until the present and discuss the influence of Georges Duby on these works. Second, I will present definitions of "family" and "kinship" as they will be used in this thesis. Finally, I will describe the main primary sources for the following chapters. The chapters themselves will be organized quite differently. The second

² Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 10-11; Also see Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 82-83.

³ Theodore Evergates, ed. and trans., *Feudal Society in Medieval France: Documents from the County of Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 51.

chapter will contain three case studies from the county of Champagne and will analyze familial ties within the group. The third chapter will have four case studies from Flanders and will also analyze familial ties. The final chapter will compare the familial ties from both counties and offer conclusions. This approach will allow the presentation of the families of the counties separately and identify the themes within the county before comparing themes among the kinship group in the final chapter.

Historiography

Duby wrote three books on the subject, which were pioneering works for the study of marriage, but, like all of the topics discussed here, his models are now being reinvestigated and revised. In his 1978 work, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France*, Duby develops what he calls the aristocratic and the ecclesiastic models of marriage. According to Duby, these models are in conflict with one another since one was built to protect social order and the other to protect moral order. He also argued that families primarily focused on the marriage of the eldest son in order to secure ancestral inheritances.⁴ While Duby speaks broadly about marriage in part one of his analysis, he brings in a case study for part three. The case study come from *The History of the Counts of Guines* by Lambert of Ardres, which is a text rich in detail concerning family life in northeastern France. In this work Lambert of Ardres “describes the past of two lineages, that of the counts of Guines and that of the seigneurs of Ardres, which had just become allied through marriage.”⁵ From this case study, Duby draws the conclusion that by the thirteenth century there was a reconciliation between the two models of marriage.⁶ What, then, changed?

⁴ Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 10-11.

⁵ Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 85.

⁶ Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 109-110.

Duby argued that in the twelfth century there was a change in familial relationships in France. Prior to the twelfth century, the family was comprised of women who married to strengthen social ties, primarily to men below their social station, and the eldest son would inherit the family's property. After the twelfth century, younger sons began to inherit property which fractured familial properties.⁷ Several historians, such as Livingstone and Evergates, have rejected these models in their works and asserted that a change did not occur in the twelfth century, but rather that younger sons did indeed marry and that women were valued members of the household throughout the central Middle Ages.

A decade later, Duby wrote another book concerning marriage called *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*. This work functions as an extension of *Medieval Marriages* as a more detailed, chronological examination of the social structures of marriage. Also like his previous study, he includes opposing views of marriage. Instead of calling these views the aristocratic and the ecclesiastic models, he refers to them as the view of the knight and the view of the priest. In his conclusion, Duby states:

But perhaps it is wrong to speak of two models and two sides. On the one hand, the young were opposed to the old. On the other, the heretics were opposed to the rigorists. And in between were the conciliators who eventually won the day. The "older" members of society came to terms with the church mediators, and this agreement made it possible for the two models of marriage to adapt to each other, setting up the basic framework for a new pattern of marriage that was to last for centuries.⁸

We see again the argument for the reconciliation of the opposing views of marriage, which came to fruition in the thirteenth century. Duby also suggests that the rise of heretical groups and nunneries was due to women's disillusionment with aristocratic marriage.⁹ Since there are mainly

⁷ Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 1-22.

⁸ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: the making of modern marriage in medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 284.

indirect references to women in sources, historians rarely know the thoughts or motives of medieval women. Duby raises an important question, “But how much do we really know?”¹⁰ It is this challenge that many historians have been attempting to answer.

Amy Livingstone examined aristocratic family life in the region of the Loire in her 2010 work, *Out of Love for my Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000-1200*. Livingstone narrowed the focus of her work by primarily analyzing the nuclear family, although she does assert that extended family were often involved in the lives of the nobility.¹¹ Although the work itself concerns family, it is framed around the roles of women in family life, such as their value and status as members of the household.¹² She challenges “an older model [of family life] that asserts that aristocrats implemented a family dynamic aimed at supporting only the line of the eldest son to the exclusion, and detriment, of other kin.”¹³ This model, posited by Georges Duby, emphasizes that family life underwent a change in the eleventh century which resulted in the exclusion of other kin who had previously been included.

Theodore Evergates also challenges this older model of family in his 2007 book, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300*. This work overlaps in the time period with Livingstone’s work and follows a similar construction, although they are dealing with different regions in France. Both authors discuss the life course of members of the family, inheritance, and the relationship between husbands and wives.¹⁴ Evergates, however, deviates from Livingstone’s

⁹ Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*, 107-122, 123-138.

¹⁰ Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*, 284.

¹¹ Amy Livingstone, *Out of Love for my Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000-1200* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 27.

¹² Livingstone, *Out of Love for my Kin*, 3.

¹³ Livingstone, *Out of Love for my Kin*, 3.

approach to family in that he includes an appendix that contains a prosopographical register and quantitative tables, which list the lengths of marriages, number of children produced per marriage, and the longevity of men and women.¹⁵ Evergates and Livingstone were also working with different sources. The county of Champagne did not produce any regional or local annals or chronicles for the period in questions, so Evergates had to utilize documentary sources, which include charters, letters, and administrative registers, instead of narrative sources.¹⁶ Livingstone's study, on the other hand, analyzes a wider variety of sources. Chronicles, *gesta*, literary sources, obituaries, charters, letters, and hagiographies are all utilized in Livingstone's work.¹⁷

Some historians focus on the structure of marriage, or how marriages are arranged, while others analyze how marriages ended in the Middle Ages. In 2014 D.L. d'Avray compiled twenty case studies about the dissolution of marriages. D'Avray concentrates specifically on cases in which the pope, which became the foundation for a companion volume to this work called *Papacy, Monarchy, and Marriage, 860-1600*.¹⁸ While Duby was concerned with the social aspects of marriage, d'Avray focuses on the legal proceedings of the dissolution of marriage. This is an extensive examination of the documents concerning divorce, but d'Avray does not provide a conclusion for the work, but he gives some of his own interpretation in the introduction to each

¹⁴ "Life course" refers to the general path that an aristocratic man or woman's life would follow. This includes their age at marriage, duration of marriage, profession, likelihood of remarriage, number of children, and longevity. Evergates includes the data in quantitative tables that display the life course trends in the county of Champagne.

¹⁵ Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 205-246.

¹⁶ Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 3.

¹⁷ Livingstone, *Out of Love for my Kin*, 5-6.

¹⁸ D.L.D'Avray, *Dissolving Royal Marriages: A Documentary History, 860-1600* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

chapter. Most of the argument, however, points towards and creates a foundation for his following book.

Papacy, Monarchy, and Marriage, 860-1600, unlike its counterpart, is organized thematically rather than chronologically. It contains many case studies, like the previous work, but they are more integrated into the chapters. In this work, d'Avray lays out his intention immediately by stating, "this study tries to uncover the rationalities underlying the ways popes dealt with the marriage problems of kings: above all with dissolutions and dispensations," and that, "whether it was a question of dissolving marriage or of getting a dispensation to marry a relative, kings were not emperors in their own domains."¹⁹ D'Avray relates his argument to that of Georges Duby. D'Avray argues that three general tendencies of marriage posited by Duby's aristocratic model of marriage from *Medieval Marriage*, "polygamy polygyny, serial, and endogamy," are supported by his research.²⁰ These first two practices potentially involved the remarriage of men and women who were separated, but their divorce was not necessarily approved by the church, so they were technically still married to their original spouse. The last tendency meant that men and women typically married within their own social class. Thus, we can see that even though many historians are revising the work of Duby, his models still receive some support.

Not all sexual unions fell into the realm of marriage. As with society today, relationships and family do not always conform to legal categories but are rather more complicated. In 2012 Ruth Mazo Karras wrote *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* in order to fill a gap in scholarly discourse about relationships and expand from Georges Duby's models. Karras's work parallels John Boswell's 1994 work *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern*

¹⁹ D.L. D'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy, and Marriage, 860-1600* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

²⁰ D'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy, and Marriage*, 240.

Europe,²¹ but instead of discussing “same-sex unions,” she focuses on “opposite-sex unions”²² in her work. Karras divides her book into four sections. Karras analyzes the church’s involvement in recognizing the validity of a union; evaluates marriage in which one partner was of a lower social status, lower economic status, or a different religion; explores both priests’ relationships with their wives, whom they were compelled to leave behind, as well as other unions; and explores couples who for economical or familial pressures or just for the sake of preference, did not marry.²³ Within these chapters, Karras provides many case studies to demonstrate different types of unions. Karras argues that there were more unions than just marriage and that some of these other unions were considered preferable to marriage. In studying families, one must also acknowledge more complicated relationships such as unions not legally condoned and illegitimacy.

Terminology

The height of production of these dynastic histories in both counties was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although economic, literary, and even political matters have been thoroughly investigated in these principalities, aristocratic families have not been as thoroughly explored. Unfortunately, Champagne does not have a wealth of narrative sources to enlighten the modern reader on the topic of family. The word “family” itself is an elusive and ambiguous term that is the descendent of the Roman word *familia*, whose meaning extended beyond familial relations and included the household staff, slaves, or even an entire estate. Amy Livingstone noted the complexity of the medieval family:

There were many layers to “family” in the medieval world. Family was of immense importance to medieval people since a person’s standing in society was determined by his or her family

²¹ John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* (New York: Villard Books, 1994).

²² Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 8.

²³ Karras, *Unmarriages*, 25, 68, 115, &163.

and that individual's place in it. But "family" also connoted relationships and affective ties. The conjugal unit of parents and children provided the focus of most noble families, but extended kin, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, also played key roles in the lives of the noble born. An aristocrat's concept of family stretched out to include "relatives," affinal as well as natal kin, and reached back to "ancestors" of previous generations. Family relationships were dynamic.²⁴

The definition of "family" in this thesis will include the nuclear family plus close family relations. These were the relatives with whom women had the most contact and interacted with in their daily lives. Rather than studying a family in the full sense of the original Latin term, this study will have a narrower focus.

"Kinship" can also be a problematic term to get a full sense of the meaning. Livingstone in the quote above identifies "extended kin" as "grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins," as well as going even farther into the distant past of ancestors.²⁵ Hans Hummer also points out that "studies of kinship generally presume that kinship can be treated as a consistent and basic principle of human social organization and that its patterns can be derived from historical records by tracing genealogical connections between individuals within a kin group," but that bonds often extended beyond blood relations and that the concept of "kinship" did not exist in medieval Europe.²⁶ Kinship is a construction to identify social organization. Men and women were also able to create a hierarchy within the organization of family and kin. They had the agency to favor or support one tie over another. For example, a countess may choose to support the claim to the county made by one nephew over another nephew. Thus, family relationships can be dynamic. So, David Herlihy argues that in the central Middle Ages "women no longer serve as the nodules through which pass the surest kinship ties. The daughter is treated as a marginal member of her father's lineage, and

²⁴ Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, 27.

²⁵ Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, 27.

²⁶ Hans J. Hummer, *Visions of Kinship in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1-5.

after her marriage, her children will leave it entirely; their allegiance passes to her husband's line."²⁷

The entirety of this study is on "kinship" because I am comparing the comital houses of Champagne and Flanders, which shared extended family (see Appendices), in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This thesis will explore the biological and personal connections within a kinship group, but with an emphasis on close family ties. I will focus on women's roles in the family unit and their participation and active engagement in kinship networks. While politics often drive relationships among the aristocracy, this study will not focus on political relationships, such as between vassals and lords, but will provide political background for reference. Rather, this study will take a social approach and focus on gender history. I will study "the social organization of the relationship between the sexes," which Joan Wallach Scott presents as one of the definitions of gender history, as well as relationships between women themselves.²⁸ This thesis will explore the kinship ties among aristocratic families in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Flanders and Champagne as well as the status of women within these networks. I will argue that the model for familial ties was similar in Flanders and Champagne, although the source documents are quite different, and that the family ties and social networks were not deteriorating in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that women held a valuable and powerful place in the family, and that women were not held under suspicion, as has been previously asserted by Georges Duby.

²⁷ David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 82.

²⁸ Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History*, Rev. ed., Gender and Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 28.

Sources

The main narrative sources for my study would be classified as what Leah Shopkow calls a “Dynastic History.”²⁹ Dynastic histories, although they can often be read like annals since they usually follow a set chronological framework, focus on the lineage of a certain prestigious family, whether the royal family of the area or counts or lords. These types of histories, which include genealogies and family trees, are actually quite rare in relation to other historical sources such as charters, but in certain areas, such as Flanders, Champagne, and Hainaut, they became quite prominent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁰ Shopkow argues that dynastic histories did not arise from the “comital family’s sense of self,” but rather from an institutional need.³¹ Champagne, fortunately, did not experience as many crises over successions as did Flanders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which may account for the lack of locally created dynastic histories.

If, as Shopkow suggested, these histories stemmed from an institutional need, the aristocracy of Champagne did not have as great a need as Flanders or Hainaut. Dynastic histories were meant to bolster the relationship between the family and the domain, as well as confirm their legitimate claim to power. The writers of these histories, however, were not part of the family whose history was written. Clerics wrote dynastic histories, but often the monasteries at which the histories were written had connections to the family. Some histories were written to please the patron, but dynastic histories were also written for an audience other than the family in order to strengthen the institution.³² Nonetheless, they can provide evidence that close family ties played an important role in the lives and even the rule of the aristocracy.

²⁹ Leah Shopkow, “Dynastic History,” in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 217-248.

³⁰ Shopkow, “Dynastic History,” 219.

³¹ Shopkow, “Dynastic History,” 242.

Dynastic history rose in popularity as counties formed into more distinctive territories under counts and countesses. Jean Dunbabin states that after the Treaty of Verdun, the area that was once controlled by Charlemagne fractured and separated into political entities that still remained connected to each other. During this time, the power of the king lessened while the authority of counts strengthened, and this continued up until the twelfth century when the king's power grew once more (Dunbabin attributes this change to Philip Augustus).³³ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the kings had more authority over the counts than they had previously held. It was in the midst of this reshuffling of power that narrative dynastic history formed from earlier comital lists and genealogies. The reformed authority of the king could threaten the position of the comital family, but narrative dynastic histories affirmed the families' place in the institution.³⁴ The ecclesiastics who wrote the narrative histories focused on comital families and the counts' and countesses' political connections.

The authors of all the sources of this thesis were contemporaries with the political and social events which they included in their works. This is not to say that the authors did not write about counts who predeceased them, such as Lambert of Ardres beginning his narrative with Siegfried arriving from Denmark to Guines in 928, but the historians focused mainly on the history that greatly affected the contemporary counts and recent events.³⁵ The legendary ancestry of the counts, which usually began the narrative, are rather short sections compared to contemporary or near-contemporary history. The following chart provides a brief overview of my main sources.

³² Shopkow, "Dynastic History," 234.

³³ Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making: 843-1180*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2000), 256-257.

³⁴ Shopkow, "Dynastic History," 244.

³⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, trans. Leah Shopkow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 58.

Title	Author	Patron	Date	Place	Genre	Language
<i>A letter from Blanche of Castile, queen of France</i>	Blanche of Castile	(to Blanche of Navarre)	1212	To Champagne	Documentary History	Latin
<i>A letter from Richard, king of England</i>	Richard the Lionheart	(to Marie of France)	Late twelfth century	To Champagne	Documentary History	Old French
<i>Actes des Comtes de Flandre</i>	N/A	N/A	1071-1128	Flanders	Documentary History	Latin
<i>Chronicle of Hainaut</i>	Gislebert of Mons	Baldwin V of Hainaut (VIII of Flanders)	1191-1194	Hainaut	Narrative Dynastic History	Latin
<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>	Orderic Vitalis	N/A	1136-1141	Normandy	Narrative Religious History	Latin
<i>The Cartulary of Blanche of Champagne</i>	N/A	Blanche of Champagne	1225 (presented)	Champagne	Documentary History	Latin
<i>The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres</i>	Lambert of Ardres	Baldwin II and Arnold II of Guines (V of Ardres)	Late twelfth century	Guines (Flanders)	Narrative Dynastic History	Latin
<i>The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai</i>	Herman of Tournai	N/A	1142	Flanders	Narrative Religious History	Latin

Figure 1
Summary of Sources

Not all dynastic histories were written at the prompting of a count or countess. Often, they did not have any involvement in the construction of the narrative. Shopkow writes:

The choice of how to structure a history, of course, may not have been made by the subjects of the history; even the decision to write a history may have been made by someone else; finally, the family that was the ostensible subject of the history may not have been the intended recipients thereof. There is considerable evidence that many of the surviving genealogical and dynastic histories were composed at monasteries associated with the dynasty and that the choice of what to write and how to write it, and even whether to write it at all, lay with the clerical authors of such histories rather than with the patrons; these histories reflect the needs of the institution rather than those of the patrons.³⁶

Lambert of Ardres and Gislebert of Mons did have counts as patrons, but probably did not write their narratives at their bequest. Lambert of Ardres wrote his history for Baldwin II, the count of Guines and husband of Christine of Ardres, because he had offended him and was seeking to enter back into the Baldwin's good graces.³⁷ He also wrote for Baldwin II's son, Arnold II of Guines (and V of Ardres).³⁸ Gislebert of Mons wrote his history for Baldwin V of Hainaut and VIII of Flanders.³⁹ His history does not begin as far back in time as Lambert of Ardres, but rather begins with Count Hermann and Countess Richilde who ruled Hainaut in the mid-eleventh century.⁴⁰ Gislebert focused more on contemporary family history.

Herman of Tournai did not write for a patron, but rather for the monks of Saint Martin and for himself.⁴¹ He was detained in Rome while waiting for a response from the pope and decided to write a history of the monastery.⁴² Unlike Lambert and Gislebert, Herman's narrative was not meant to focus on comital families, but because the comital family of Flanders was so connected

³⁶ Shopkow, "Dynastic History," 234.

³⁷ Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 2-3

³⁸ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 54.

³⁹ Laura Napran, introduction to *Chronicle of Hainaut by Gilbert of Mons*, trans. Laura Napran (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), xvii-xviii.

⁴⁰ Gilbert of Mons, *Chronicle of Hainaut by Gilbert of Mons*, trans. Laura Napran (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 3.

⁴¹ Herman of Tournai, *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, trans. Lynn H. Nelson (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 11.

⁴² Herman of Tournai, *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, 11-12.

to the church, he added a substantial amount of information about the comital family of Flanders. Similar to Lambert and Gislebert, Herman focused on contemporary events, such as the murder of Count Charles the Good and the subsequent civil war.

The Cartulary of Blanche of Champagne and the *Actes des Comtes de Flandre*, however, are entirely different because they are not narratives. They were collections of official documents issued during the reign of specific counts or countesses. Interestingly, the Cartulary of Blanche was compiled specifically for the use of the countess in her retirement.⁴³ The *Actes des Comtes de Flandre* covers a broader timeframe in that it has documents from the reigns of Robert I, Robert II, Baldwin VII, Charles the Good, and William Clito. These documents provide familial information, especially concerning who counts or countesses called on when they were faced with conflict.

Having sketched the sources briefly, chapters two and three will now turn to analyzing aristocratic women and their families in Champagne and Flanders.

⁴³ Theodore Evergates, ed., *The Cartulary of Countess Blanche of Champagne*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 10.

CHAPTER II

FAMILY IN THE COUNTY OF CHAMPAGNE

The county of Champagne is well-known for its connection with Chrétien de Troyes and the cultural and economic prosperity experienced under Count Henry I, the Liberal.⁴⁴ Unlike Flanders, however, which developed political cohesion as a principality rather quickly in the ninth and tenth centuries, Champagne took more time to reach similar levels of cohesion, although both regions' economies relied upon trade.⁴⁵ Theodore Evergates designates Count Hugh (1093-1125) as the "first authentic count of Champagne in the sense that his counties of Troyes, Bar-sur-Aube, and Vitry were commonly identified with the region called Champagne, as distinct from the county of Meaux in Brie."⁴⁶ The first count of Flanders was Baldwin I "Iron Arm," who "established the basis of his family's fortune"⁴⁷ by marrying Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald in 861. He ruled Flanders until 879.⁴⁸ Champagne, however, developed dynastic histories more quickly after formation than Flanders. It took Flanders nearly 300 years after the county formed to create expansive and detailed dynastic histories, whereas Champagne attracted the attention of writers of dynastic histories within two generations of the first count.

⁴⁴ Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 1.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Hallam, "The King and Princes in Eleventh-Century France," in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 53, no. 128 (1980), 146 & 148.

⁴⁶ Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 7.

⁴⁷ David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, *Medieval World* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), 16–17.

⁴⁸ Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 17.

While the counts of Champagne do not have a chronicle, history, or any annals dedicated entirely to themselves, Gislebert of Mons, who wrote about the area of Hainaut, includes information about aristocrats in Flanders and Champagne. His work, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, covers events during the late twelfth century and provides details concerning marriages of the nobility. He was the cleric and later chaplain under Baldwin V of Hainaut, the father of Baldwin IX of Flanders who married Marie of Champagne, the daughter of the countess of Champagne, Marie of France.⁴⁹ As a chaplain under Baldwin V, who reigned from 1191-1194 as count of Flanders and was count of Hainaut about twenty years prior to his wife Marguerite's inheritance of Flanders, Gislebert was contemporary with the history that he was writing.⁵⁰ The chronicle provides a clear account of the events that surrounded Baldwin V of Hainaut, and thus Gislebert himself, and events that occurred in the not too distant past that affected Baldwin V, who was the patron of *Chronicon Hanoniense*. His history ends in the year 1194 as Baldwin V of Hainaut's (or VIII of Flanders) son, Baldwin IX, inherits the county of Champagne.

The Cartulary of Blanche of Navarre also adds details and insights into the life of Countess Blanche of Champagne. It is a copy of charters and letters composed during the reign of Countess Blanche. It was presented to the countess in 1225 after she had retired and her son, Thibaut, succeeded her.⁵¹ In this chapter, I will focus on the lives of Marie of France, Marie of Champagne, and Blanche of Navarre as case studies of familial ties in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Champagne. These women were chosen for various reasons. The first reason has to do with logistics. It is often difficult to obtain information about women in the medieval period, and even

⁴⁹ Laura Napran, introduction to *Chronicle of Hainaut by Gilbert of Mons*, trans. Laura Napran (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2005), xvii-xviii.

⁵⁰ Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 74-75.

⁵¹ Theodore Evergates, *The Cartulary of Countess Blanche of Champagne*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 10.

more so to study their relationships. This requires multiple sources and for such sources to have adequate information to draw conclusions. These three women are discussed in varying sources and it is possible to analyze their lives and relationships since we are given more information about their lives. The second reason for choosing these three women is that they had prominent connections that they were able to utilize. These women had powerful familial ties that they were able to use and that gives a clearer picture of who countesses were able to call upon in times of distress, or, in the case of Blanche of Navarre, which familial connections could threaten their own position. I included Marie of Champagne, countess of Flanders, in this section because of her close ties to the other two women as the daughter of Marie of France and sister-in-law of Blanche of Navarre. Her case is so closely interwoven with that of her mother that it was logical to keep them in the same section, although Marie of Champagne married Baldwin IX and became the countess of Flanders.

In this chapter, I will provide case studies of these three countesses and explore their different familial connections. Then, I will compare the three women as well as point out some prevailing trends in Champagne. Finally, I will conclude with some final thoughts about family networks in twelfth- and thirteenth- century Champagne.

Marie of France, Countess of Champagne (r. 1164-87, 1190-1198)

Marie was born in 1145 and was one of two daughters born to King Louis of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine.⁵² After the annulment of the marriage of her parents, which Gislebert states

⁵² Marie of France is also referred to as “Marie of Champagne” in scholarly literature. Marie of France’s daughter, also named Marie, is referred to as “Marie of Champagne” as well. For the purposes of this essay Marie, the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Louis, will always be referred to as “Marie of France” and Marie, the daughter of Marie of France and Henry I, will always be referred to as “Marie of Champagne;” Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, ed. William Arndt, *Scriptores XXI* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1963), 515. “Tempore sepe dicti comitis Balduini, Yolendis comitis filii, Ludovicus rex Francie regnabat, qui uxorem habuit ducissam Aquitanie, ex cuius parte Aquitaniam iure hereditario habuit, de qua filias duas habuit, que duobus potentissimis in Francia fratribus, Henrico scilicet comiti Campanensiet Theobaldo comiti Blesensi, maritate fuerunt;” Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut by Gilbert of Mons*, trans. Laura Napran (Woodbrdug: The Boydell Press, 2005), 51; Theodore Evergates “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” in *Aristocratic*

was on account of “hints by envious and treacherous men, who were not wanting their own lord king of France to be so powerful.”⁵³ Marie remained in France after the annulment and soon she was engaged and married to Henry I, count of Champagne, and her sister was married to Henry’s brother, Thibaut V, the count of Blois (see Appendix A).⁵⁴ Her father King Louis was remarried to Constance, the daughter of the king of Castile, and then was remarried again after the death of Constance to Adela, the sister of Henry I and Thibaut V.⁵⁵ From this point until 1179, Marie vanishes from the source. Marie of France is mentioned in other source documents that give the reader some information about her life, but Gislebert does not mention her again until he discusses her in conjunction with her children and the death of her husband.⁵⁶

Marie’s son, Thibaut, was born in 1179 and was the youngest of four children, after Henry II, Scholastique, and Marie of Champagne.⁵⁷ Prior to his death, Henry I was very active in arranging marriages for his children, and Gislebert does not mention Marie arranging these contracts with Henry I. Only the fathers are mentioned while the marriage contracts were formed. Henry engaged their daughter Marie, later Marie of Champagne, to Baldwin IX of Flanders, the son of Margaret and Baldwin V of Hainaut (VIII of Flanders), and he engaged their eldest son, Henry II, to

Women, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 77, Ebook Central Academic Complete.

⁵³ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 515. “Cum autem invidorum et perfidorum suggestionibus, qui domum suum regem Francie tam potentem esse nolebant;” Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 52.

⁵⁴ Evergates, “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” 77. Marie of France and Henry I, The Liberal, were married for seventeen years (1164-1181).

⁵⁵ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 515. “Ludovicus rex duxit uxorem Alam, sororem predictorum comitum, scilicet Henrici comitis Campanensis et Theobaldi comitis Blesensis, qui filias eius habebant uxores;” Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 52.

⁵⁶ Evergates, “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” 77.

⁵⁷ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 528. “Ipsa autem die Maria Henrici comitis uxor ibidem filium peperit Theobaldum;” Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 72.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Margaret and Henry.⁵⁸ While Henry I arranged the marriages of their children, it fell to Marie to see them through. Henry I returned to the Holy Land in 1179, leaving Marie in charge, and then returned in 1181, only to perish soon after.⁵⁹ The engagement of their eldest son, Henry II, had been broken off due to Elizabeth's marriage to the king of France, so the recently widowed Marie renewed the alliance with Hainaut and Flanders by engaging Henry to Yolende, the daughter of Count Baldwin of Hainaut.⁶⁰

Thus, it was not until the death of her husband that Gislebert of Mons begins to mention Marie's role in the arrangement of the marriages of her children. Marie was very conscious about creating strong political and familial alliances with powers within France and even those outside of France. Marie of Champagne, Marie of France's daughter, did fulfill the engagement and married Baldwin IX of Flanders, solidifying the relationship between the two counties. Scholastique married William V Count of Mâcon-Vienne, Thibaut (later Thibaut III, count of Champagne) married Blanche of Navarre, and Henry II, after several broken engagements, married Isabella of Jerusalem.⁶¹ It was not infrequent that aristocratic widows themselves would remarry. Theodore Evergates even argues that widows tended to remarry more often than widowers; 52% of widows and 33% of widowers remarried in his study of the county of Champagne.⁶² It would

⁵⁸ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 528 and 519-520. Within the marriage contract, Gislebert mentions that if one of the sons were to die prior to the marriage, that the next surviving son would succeed the marriage; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 72, and 60.

⁵⁹ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 77; Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 530. "Anno Domini sequente 1181. per mediators quosdam, defuncto Henrico sepedicto Trecensi comite Palantino, eius uxor vidua Maria comitissa eiusdemque Henrici fratres, Willelmus scilicet Remensis archiepiscopus et Theobaldus Stephanus comites, cum sepeantea bis iuratas, quia per matrimonium Elizabeth regine Francorum in parte lese videbantur, renova verunt, multorum iramentis interpositis;" Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 76.

⁶⁰ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 529-530; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 74-76.

⁶¹ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 80.

seem reasonable, then, that a widow with four young children would remarry. Marie of France, however, did not remarry, although an opportunity did present itself. She came close to marrying Philip of Flanders prior to 1184, but, unfortunately, they were too closely related. Laura Napran notes:

Prior to his betrothal to Mathilde, Philip tried to marry Countess Marie of Champagne, widow of Count Henry I and King Philip's half-sister, attempting to obtain papal dispensation, as he and Marie were related by affinity through his late wife Elizabeth of Vermandois.⁶³

Although Philip attempted to receive a papal dispensation, the relationship ended and Philip married Mathilde, the sister of the king of Portugal in 1184.⁶⁴ It may seem strange that Marie was not able to marry Philip since Marie's father was able to marry the sister of her husband, but customs of consanguinity were constantly in flux during the twelfth and thirteenth century and there were also changed in canon law. According to David D'Avray:

The twelfth was a century of frequent annulments because the extensive laws of 'forbidden marriage' enabled great men to work the Church's own system to change wives almost at will. . . . But things were about to change. Philip II of France's frustrated attempts to get Pope Innocent to approve of his break with Ingeborg of Denmark anticipate a new, more rigorous, matrimonial world [the thirteenth century].⁶⁵

After this brief opportunity of potential remarriage, Gislebert does not mention any sort of engagement, or even potential engagement, with Marie of France.

Familial connections could also prove useful when contracts were threatened to be violated. Marie had arranged marriages for her son Henry and her daughter Marie to the children of Margaret and Baldwin V of Hainaut (VIII of Flanders), but had to call upon her family to ensure that the

⁶² Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 160.

⁶³ Laura Napran, "introduction," 91-351; also see Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 541.

⁶⁴ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense* 541; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 91.

⁶⁵ D.L. D'Avray, *Dissolving Royal Marriages: A Documentary History, 860-1600* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-4.

marriage agreements would be honored. Baldwin VIII had delayed the marriage, for reasons the author does not give, between Marie of Champagne and his son, Baldwin, even though they had reached the sufficient age for marriage.⁶⁶ Marie of France then called upon her half-brother King Philip of France, the archbishop of Reims, Count Theobald, Count Stephen, and the Duke of Burgundy for support.⁶⁷ In the end they were able to force Baldwin's hand and the marriage between Baldwin and Marie was allowed to move forward, although Henry II later did not marry Baldwin's daughter. Betrothals often involved more members of the family than just the bride and the bridegroom. In the contract established between two families for a betrothal, if either the bride or the bridegroom did not survive to the marriage then the next oldest sibling would take their place. This type of betrothal contract involved the entire nuclear family.⁶⁸

Marie's service to her family, moreover, expanded beyond securing marriages for her children, and consequently securing alliances for Champagne. She also was called to serve as regent for her son Henry II when he joined the Third Crusade in 1191.⁶⁹ Henry later died during this crusade so Marie had to serve as regent again for her youngest son Thibaut III, about eighteen at the time.⁷⁰ She served as regent up until her death in 1198 and her son Thibaut III succeeded as comital lord and married Blanche of Navarre.

⁶⁶ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550. "cum filius suus primogenitus Balduinus et Maria comitisse Campanensis filia annos ad hoc haberent sufficientes;" Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 104-105.

⁶⁷ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 105.

⁶⁸ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 520; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 60.

⁶⁹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense* 572-573. "Eodem tempore, Henricus comes Campanensis satis iuvenis, cruce Domini saignatus est, iterque Iherosolimitanum arripuit, unde pre ceteris principibus et eciam regibus gloriam et honorem habere meruit;" Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 139-140; Also see Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 79.

⁷⁰ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 579; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 150; Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 79. It was customary in Champagne that at twenty-

Aside from her familial relationships that she maintained in France, Marie of France also had good standing with her Plantagenet half-brother, Richard. Marie received a letter from her brother while he was captured in Germany that poetically mentions other siblings, but only Marie receives direct address from her brother.⁷¹ Concerning his brother, John, Richard writes, “N’est pas merveille, se j’ai le cuer dolent, quant mes sires tient ma terre en torment” (“It is no wonder I have a grieving heart, for my lord keeps my land in torment”),⁷² and concerning his half-sister Alix, countess of Chartres, Richard writes “Je ne di pas de celi de Chartain la mere Loöys” (I do not speak about the one in Chartres, Louis’s mother).⁷³ These remarks imply some strife among the siblings. Richard could possibly be holding a grudge that these siblings had not come to his rescue in Germany, or perhaps there was a long-standing quarrel among them, but this is not the case with Marie. Richard does not use any disparaging terms or refuse to speak of her, but rather wishes her well. Richard writes, “Contesse suer, vostre pris souverain vos saut et gart cil a cui je me claim et par cui je sui pris” (Countess, sister, may your sovereign worth be watched and defended by Him I appeal to, for whose sake I am a prisoner).⁷⁴ This shows the role of choice in determining the closeness of relations. Richard may have been friendly to Marie because this letter constituted a plea for help, or he may have been genuinely fond of her, but their relationship cannot

one years of age the child would inherit the county and pay homage to the king of France. See Evergates, “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” 83-84. Also see section on “Blanche of Navarre.”

⁷¹ “A letter from Richard, king of England,” trans. by Joan Ferrante, Columbia University, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/157.html>.

⁷² “It is no wonder I have a grieving heart, for my lord keeps my land in torment.” “A letter from Richard, king of England,” trans. by Joan Ferrante, Columbia University, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/157.html>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

be discerned from this letter alone. Richard and Marie, however, shared a confessor so their relationship may have been a close, or at least cordial, one.⁷⁵ Theodore Evergates writes:

Although she was countess of Champagne for over thirty years, half of them as ruler, we know little about Marie's life and personality beyond her official acts. She seems to have been close to her half-brothers Geoffroy Plantagenet, for whom she dedicated an altar in Paris, and Richard the Lionheart, with whom she shared Adam of Perseigne as confessor, as well as with her half-sister Margaret, who spent Christmas 1184 with Marie and queen mother Adele. Perhaps Marie saw her sister, countess Alix of Blois, and her mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, after her parents were divorced in 1152, but there is no firm evidence of any meeting. For her husband Henry she ordered a sumptuous tomb placed in the center of the church of Saint-Etienne of Troyes next to the comital palace, but she herself chose to be buried at Meaux.⁷⁶

During the course of her life, Marie of France was able to maintain relationships within her family, both close relationships and relationships that were for the good of the county. Although we do not know if Marie participated in government or the arranging of the marriages of her children when her husband was alive, as a widow we know that she was able to see her children's marriages through and even created new marriage alliances.

Blanche of Navarre, Countess of Champagne (r. 1199-1222)

As the daughter-in-law of Marie of France and the wife of the future count of Champagne, Blanche of Navarre had much to live up to. She was the daughter of King Sancho of Navarre and her sister, Berengaria, was eventually married to Marie of France's half-brother, Richard the Lionheart.⁷⁷ Blanche married Thibaut after he had become count of Champagne which was shortly

⁷⁵ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 79.

⁷⁶ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 79.

⁷⁷ Theodore Evergates, ed. and trans., *Feudal Society in Medieval France: Documents from the County of Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 58-59. The marriage between Richard the Lionheart and Berengaria was troubled.

after the death of her mother-in-law.⁷⁸ After their wedding in 1199, Thibaut assigned Blanche a dower.⁷⁹

In the name of the holy and indivisible Trinity, I, Thibaut, count palatine of Troyes, by this document make known to all, present and future, that I have given in dower to my wife, Countess Blanche, daughter of the king [Sancho VI] of Navarre, seven of my castles with all their appurtenances and dependencies, namely Epernay, Vertus, Sézanne, Chantemerle, Pont-sur-Seine, Nogent-sur-Seine, and Méry-sur-Seine, and all that I have in their castellanies in direct domain, in fiefs, and in the guardianship of churches, in full possession.⁸⁰

From this we can see that Thibaut bolstered Blanche's status by providing her with lands and incomes from Champagne itself, rather than the status she already had by being the daughter of the king of Navarre. All of these comital castles and towns were just northeast of Troyes, the center of the count's power in Champagne. According to Evergates, these castles and castellanies constituted "at least one third of his [Thibaut III's] annual income."⁸¹ Unfortunately, Blanche is not mentioned in Gislebert's history and her husband, Thibaut III, is only mentioned at his birth. There are, however, extensive documentary sources detailing parts of Blanche's life and activity.

Shortly after their marriage, Thibaut III died which left Blanche in a politically awkward situation. She had two children, Marie and Thibaut IV, who would presumably inherit the county of Champagne but there was a problem with the inheritance. When Thibaut III's older brother, Henry II, had died, he had left behind two children, Alix and Phillipa. Thibaut III had only inherited

⁷⁸ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 81.

⁷⁹ A dower was given to the wife by her husband and usually contained part of his property. A dowry, on the otherhand, is property, money, or other goods given to the husband by the father of the bride. In the event of the death of the husband, the dowry would return to the wife. Unlike the dowry, a woman could receive financial gains from the dower while her husband was living. See Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100," *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1973): 137. JSTOR (1566483). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1566483>.

⁸⁰ Evergates, *Documents*, 59.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

the county because Henry II had transferred the land to him before Henry married the queen of Jerusalem. Later, however, Henry's daughter, Phillipa, married Erard of Brienne, and together they attempted to claim the inheritance of the county of Champagne. But in 1201 Blanche of Navarre moved to protect her children's inheritance. According to Evergates, "within days of Thibaut's death she found Philip at nearby Sens, did homage — the first homage ever rendered by a countess — for her right of wardship and her dower lands, and promised not to remarry without his permission."⁸² Prince Louis of France even wrote a letter to Jean of Brienne, confirming that he and King Phillip would not hear a challenge against Thibaut IV's claim until Thibaut was twenty-one, as was the custom in Champagne and he further confirmed that Henry II did indeed transfer the inheritance of the county over to his brother Thibaut III.⁸³

Through this feat Blanche gained the support of many high-status aristocratic dukes and archbishops, as well as the king of France himself, who was the half-brother of her mother-in-law.⁸⁴ Family connections could prove beneficial for saving the county, such as Blanche's connection to the royal house of France, but at the same time such connections could endanger one's claim to the county, such as a cousin attempting to reclaim the comital lordship. Fortunately,

⁸² Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 81.

⁸³ Theodore Evergates, ed., *The Cartulary of Countess Blanche of Champagne*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 42: "Huius igitur ratione consuetudinis, karissimus dominus et genitor noster et nos statuimus et concessimus karissime amice nostre comitisse Trecensi et Theob(aldo) filio ejus presentibus et audientibus vobis ipsis, quod si filie comitis Henrici vel aliquis pro ipsis velent predictum Theob(aldum) vel matrem ejus, in causa m trahere, de terra quam pater ejus tenuit, nos non audiremus inde verbum, donec idem Theob(aldus) haberet viginti et unum annos, nec ipsum vel matrem ejus antea in causam trahi permitteremus, precipue cum de testimonio multorum nobelium virorum quibus fidem bene adhibere debemus, bene constet quod karissimus, quondam consanguineus noster comes Henricus cum vellet Jherosolimam proficisci, totam terram suam dimisit et dedit fratri suo Theob(aldo), quondam comiti Trecensi, si ipsum comitem Henricum de transmarinis partibus contingeret non redire."

⁸⁴ Marie of France was born from Louis VII's first marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine and Philip Augustus was born from Louis the VII's third marriage to Adela of Champagne, who was also Marie of France's sister-in-law.

many powerful men all supported Blanche and Thibaut IV and refused to hear Erard's claim to Champagne in letters written between 1210 and 1217.⁸⁵

Of those who publicly supported Blanche, Otto III of Burgundy, Aubry, the archbishop of Reims, Guillaume, the bishop-elect of Châlons, Philippe, bishop of Beauvais, Étienne, bishop of Noyon, and Jordan, bishop of Lisieux refer to Philippa, Blanche's cousin, as "Erardus of Brienne and Philippa, which his wife is called."⁸⁶ Erard of Brienne, however, used similar language concerning Blanche of Navarre when he and Philippa finally accepted 1500 l. as a truce with Thibaut IV and Blanche in April of 1220. Erard wrote "Blanche, who is called the countess of Champagne."⁸⁷ The slight towards Philippa, "who is called his wife," may stem from the fact that some considered Erard and Philippa's marriage invalid because of concerns of consanguinity.⁸⁸ If the marriage was invalid, then their claims to the county of Champagne were, like their marriage, invalid. In the end, their marriage was deemed invalid by the church, in a ruling made by Pope Innocent III in 1213, and this ruling and the overwhelming support for Blanche was enough for King Philip to accept Thibaut's homage.⁸⁹ Erard rebelled in 1212 with other barons who were loyal to him, but this was put down and Blanche held the county for her son until he came of age in 1222.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Evergates, *Cartulary*, 41-55.

⁸⁶ My own translation. Evergates, *Cartulary*, 46-55: "Erardus de Brena et Philipa que dicitur uxor ejus."

⁸⁷ My own translation. Evergates, *Cartulary*, 123: "Blancha dicta comitissa Campanie."

⁸⁸ Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 39; Evergates, *Cartulary*, 42.

⁸⁹ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 83-84.

⁹⁰ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," 84.

Inheritance of a county through the female line in the thirteenth century was common, but not without disputes, in the northeast and central east counties of France.⁹¹ In Flanders, Charles the Good (r. 1119-1127) inherited the comital lordship through his mother, Adela, and Thierry of Alsace (r. 1128-1168) later claimed the county through his mother's, Gertrude's, bloodline. For the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Champagne, most inheritances occurred through the male line, but women could hold regencies and make claims to the comital lordship, like Philippa. Female inheritances occurred when the oldest male son either died, or the family only had daughters. While this could happen with a county, women were not able to inherit castles, until Blanche of Navarre created a statute that allowed daughters to inherit in the absence of sons in 1212. Blanche structured her statute so that all of the daughters could benefit from the inheritance. While the eldest daughter would inherit the castle itself, the younger daughters would receive equal incomes from the rest of the inheritance.⁹² Evergates notes that the principles attached to this statute was later applied to male inheritances in 1224.⁹³

Unlike Marie of France, who was raised within the kingdom not far from where she would later be the countess, Blanche was from northeastern Spain, on the border of France, and at a disadvantage.⁹⁴ She was a foreign princess brought into Champagne to be the bride of Thibaut III, who died quickly after he came of age and inherited the county, so she was left to rule in the place of her two young children, Marie and Thibaut IV, and deal with a cousin who disputed her children's inheritance. In addition to this she was also a native speaker of Navarrese, a Basque

⁹¹ Flanders, Champagne, Hainaut, and Blois to name but a few.

⁹² Evergates, *Documents*, 51-52.

⁹³ Evergates, *Documents*, 52.

⁹⁴ "Navarre," in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, 8th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

language, so language may have presented a problem.⁹⁵ Blanche of Navarre, however, was not alone in this situation because a cousin of hers from Castile found herself in a similar situation nearly twenty years later.⁹⁶ Blanche of Castile was also from Spain and she was married to the king of France, Louis VIII, who died in 1226 after twenty years of marriage.⁹⁷ Blanche of Castile was left to rule as regent in place of her son, Louis IX, until his majority.⁹⁸ Two foreign cousins found themselves in France, so naturally they kept in contact and shared news of what was happening with their families in Castile and Navarre. Blanche of Castile referred affectionately to Blanche of Navarre in her letters, writing, “Carissimae sorori suae B[lanchae] illustri Trecensi Palatinae, humilis et devota soror ejus Blancha, Dei gratia Regina Franciae” (To my dearest sister the illustrious Blanche of Troyes, from her humble and devoted sister Blanche, by the grace of God Queen of France).⁹⁹ Both Blanches were dedicated to remaining connected to their family in Spain and found connections with each other as two foreign princesses who found themselves in positions of power within France.

⁹⁵ “Navarre,” in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, 8th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), <http://libproxy.library.wmich.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/navarre?institutionId=1566>. Evergates, “Aristocratic Women in Champagne,” 81.

⁹⁶ Blanche of Castile is the daughter of Blanche of Navarre uncle’s son, Sancho of Castile and Alfonso VIII, respectively.

⁹⁷ Lindy Grant, *Blanche of Castile: Queen of France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 35 and 78.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, see chapter 4

⁹⁹ My own translation. “A letter from Blanche of Castile, queen of France (1212),” Columbia University, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/705.html>. “Soror” can also refer to the daughter of one’s father’s brother. See Lewis and Short reference at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?!=soror&la=la#lexicon>; Salutations between female relations could vary such as in Berengaria of Castile’s letter to her sister Blanche of Castile: “Dilectae et diligendae sorori suae B[lanchae] Ludovici Regis Francorum primogeniti uxori, B[erengaria] Dei gratia Regina Legionis et Galleciae.” “A letter from Berengaria/Berengula, queen of Castile, Leon, sister to Blanche queen of France (1212),” Columbia University, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/709.html>.

Marie of Champagne, Countess of Flanders (r. 1194-1205)

Gislebert of Mons did not give much information about the marriage of Marie of France or comment on Marie or Henry's feelings towards each other in the marriage. Gislebert did, however, comment on the relationship between Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX of Flanders. Unfortunately, Gislebert's comments are brief since the narrative ends before the end of Marie and Baldwin's rule. Thus, the main focus of this section will be on Marie's marriage to Baldwin.

Marie's mother, Marie of France, had to fight for this marriage to occur and call on relatives in order to force Baldwin VIII to stop delaying the match. The marriage contract stated that if the son in question were to die before the marriage, then the next eldest son would take his place in marriage and the same would happen if the daughter in question were to die before the marriage.¹⁰⁰ Fortunately, unlike her brother Henry II's multiple failed engagements, Marie's marriage was able to happen.¹⁰¹ Finally, Marie and Baldwin were married in 1186 when Baldwin was thirteen-years-old and Marie was twelve.¹⁰² Karen S. Nicholas comments that this experience must have been "traumatic" for young, religious girls to have to leave the safety of their family and embark into the unknown.¹⁰³ Although this experience may have been traumatic for Marie and Baldwin, Gislebert includes a comment concerning Baldwin's devotion to and love of Marie, worth relating in full:

Indeed, Marie began to devote herself to divine services in prayers, vigils, fasts, and alms at a youthful age. Her husband Baldwin, a young soldier, by living chastely and rejecting all other

¹⁰⁰ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 520; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 60.

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth broke off their engagement so that she could marry the king of France. This caused strife between the families.

¹⁰² Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550-551; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 105.

¹⁰³ Karen S. Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 128.

women, he began to love her alone with a fervent love, which is found seldom in any man, so that he greatly devoted himself to his wife alone and would be held by her alone.¹⁰⁴

Que quidem Marie obsequiis divinis in orationibus, vigiliis, ieiuniis et elemosinis satis iuvenis cepit intendere; quam vir eius Balduinus, iuvenis eciam miles, caste vivendo, spretis omnibus aliis mulieribus, ipsam solam cepit amare amore ferventi, quod in aliquo homine raro invenitur ut soli tantum intendat mulieri et ea solas contentus sit.¹⁰⁵

First, we can identify the parallelism between Marie and Baldwin through the use of the verb *intendo, intendere*. Marie devotes herself to her love of religion, whereas Baldwin devotes himself to his love of Marie. Another aspect of this passage to note is that this behavior is considered unusual. Gislebert refers to Baldwin's behavior as *in aliquo homine raro*—"seldom in any man." *Raro* emphasizes this point, meaning "uncommon of its kind, scarce, rare, extraordinary, remarkable."¹⁰⁶ At a young age Marie began to devote herself to religion, implying that it would have been possible, if not expected, for Baldwin to seek relationships outside of his marriage. Nicholas notes that this marriage was an "unusually close relationship" which lasted eighteen years.¹⁰⁷

Gislebert did not use this sort of detailed language when discussing Marie of France's marriage, nor with other marriages of other aristocratic women. Blanche of Navarre was about nineteen years old when she married Thibaut and Marie of France was also about nineteen years old when she married Henry I. Much like the nature of her marriage, the age at which Marie of Champagne was married was also unusual. In Theodore Evergates's study of Champagne, he

¹⁰⁴ "Fervent" from the verb *ferveo*, which can mean "hot, blaze, rage, or boil;" My own translation; Gislebert used *amare* and *amore* for "love."

¹⁰⁵ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550-551; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 105.

¹⁰⁶ "Lewis and Short" Perseus Tufts Latin Word Tool, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=raro&la=la#lexicon>.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 128; Until Marie's death in 1204. Baldwin died soon after in 1205.

discovered that fourteen of the twenty-two aristocratic women he studied were married between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and only six were married between the ages of twelve and fourteen at their first marriage.¹⁰⁸ Marie of France calling on family members to pressure Baldwin speaks to the urgency of this marriage, as does the young age at which Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX of Flanders. Prior to this marriage, Champagne had had few connections to Flanders and allying themselves with such a powerful county could have led to an early marriage.

Courtly love, as expressed through the works of Andreas Capellanus, also played a role in the description of Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX's relationship.¹⁰⁹ Régine Pernoud discusses courtly love in a chapter title "Love, the invention of the twelfth century."¹¹⁰ "Love" clearly was not invented in the twelfth century since Ovid's *Ars amatoria* inspired Andreas's work, which was written 1100 years later.¹¹¹ The genre of courtly love, however, blossomed in the twelfth century and Marie of France was closely associated with the genre. The association between Marie of France, Andreas Capellanus, and Chrétien de Troyes appears to have influenced Gislebert of Mons's interpretation of the relationship between Marie of France's daughter and the son of Gislebert's patron. Gislebert also had a keen eye to Baldwin V (VIII of Flanders), Baldwin IX's father. Baldwin IX, as the son of the count of Hainaut and Flanders and the heir to the counties, held a powerful position. Since Baldwin was such an important figure in relationship to Gislebert, Gislebert may have wanted to construct him as an out of the ordinary person. Family life among

¹⁰⁸ Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 210.

¹⁰⁹ Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 28-107.

¹¹⁰ Régine Pernoud, *Women in the Days of the Cathedrals*, trans. Anne Côté-Harriss (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 97.

¹¹¹ Pernoud, *Women in the Days of the Cathedrals*, 97.

nobility and the relationship between husband and wife created stability in the structure of the county itself. The new count and countess, then, were portrayed as extraordinary and as having a strong relationship. The love between Baldwin IX and Marie of Champagne reflected the stability in familial relationship that resulted in stability in governance.

Unlike her mother, Marie of France, and her sister-in-law, Blanche of Navarre, Marie never ruled the county as a widow. Her death and the death of her husband were beyond the timeframe of Gislebert's history. The history ends as Baldwin inherits the county in 1194 and Marie leaves on a pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles.¹¹² Similarly to her mother and sister-in-law, Marie's husband was also part of a crusade and left Marie as regent of the county of Flanders while he was away for two years.¹¹³ Marie eventually went to the Holy Land to be with her husband, but died of plague soon after her arrival, and her husband died the following year in a Bulgarian prison, leaving two young daughters, Margaret and Jeanne, in charge of Flanders.¹¹⁴

Trends: Family in the County of Champagne

Now that I have introduced three examples of family connections of countesses, I will move on to discuss the trends that can be seen among the three cases as well as explore the role of women in dynastic histories. One aspect of these cases that must be noted is that the events occurred during the time of the crusades. Since the counts and other noblemen leaving to go on crusade, women were left behind, and their responsibilities increased.¹¹⁵ They served as regents

¹¹² Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 601; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 182.

¹¹³ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 128.

¹¹⁴ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 129.

¹¹⁵ For women's power during wartime see Régine Pernoud, *La femme au temps des Croisades* (Paris: Stock/Laurence Pernoud, 1990); Susan B. Edington and Sarah Lambert, ed., *Gendering the Crusades* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Jennifer Ward, *Women in Medieval Europe 1200-1500* (New York: Longman, 2002).

for the county and secured the marriages and the inheritances of their children. The political need for familial support, especially if a widow was ruling the county, and the need for bolstering a count's standing as well as their legitimacy was vital. The crusades, which claimed the lives of many aristocratic men, including Henry I, Thibaut III, and Baldwin IX, provided a unique circumstance for countesses in Champagne. Widowhood for countesses as a trend, then, must be viewed in light of the political climate of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

A prevailing theme in these case studies is that women maintained significant power in terms of governing the county through their family. McNamara and Wemple argued that women's economic independence diminished in the twelfth century.¹¹⁶ However, in Champagne in the early thirteenth century, economic independence through inheritance rose through the actions of Blanche of Navarre. Since there was some difficulty in male heirs either being produced or surviving to their age of majority, females were allowed to be heirs to castles and property. In addition to women inheriting property, something else of note is that widowed countesses had more autonomy than when they were married, excepting their regencies when the counts were on crusades. Thus, women were gaining more economic independence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries through inheritances and regencies. Henry I may not have included Marie of France in his governance of Champagne, as she is absent from Gislebert of Mons's chronicle, until the birth of her son, because he already had his government in place prior to their marriage.¹¹⁷ It was not until the deaths of their husbands in the fourth crusade that figures like Blanche of Navarre and Marie of France were mentioned as participants in governance of the county. Along with

¹¹⁶ Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100," *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1973): 137-138. JSTOR (1566483). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1566483>.

¹¹⁷ Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 24.

developing more autonomy through inheritance or widowhood in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, women also became more involved with the marriages and inheritance of their children.

Unfortunately for Marie of Champagne, she did not live long enough to become involved in the marriages and inheritance of her two daughters. That matter had to be left to a relative. Marie of France and Blanche of Navarre, however, after the deaths of their husbands had to navigate the political and social atmosphere of Champagne in order to secure the future of their children. Blanche of Navarre's main challenge was securing her son's inheritance against her cousin, Philippa, and her husband, Erard of Brienne, although she did have a hand in the engagement of her son, Thibaut IV, to Gertrude of Dagsburg, who was a widow of one of her adversaries.¹¹⁸ Blanche went to great lengths to quell the ambitions of Erard of Brienne and secure the future of her son. She utilized the power of her family and her good standing with the king, Philip Augustus. While the political status of her family bolstered her place in society, Blanche also maintained a prominent place through her own actions and initiative. Likewise, Marie of France called upon her family to force Baldwin VIII of Flanders to uphold his contract with Marie and Henry I for the marriage of Baldwin IX and Marie of Champagne. Marie of France also had to negotiate several engagements for her son, Henry II, although all of these engagements were broken off until he married Isabella, queen of Jerusalem. Countesses, then, had high involvement in the lives of their children, especially in securing their inheritance and their marriages.

The marriages of the countesses themselves are slightly more complex to analyze because Gislebert of Mons comments about the marriage of Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX of Flanders fall outside of his usual account of marriages. Gislebert does not make mention of love

¹¹⁸ Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 42. Gertrude of Dagsburg was sixteen and Thibaut IV was nineteen at the time of their marriage. Gertrude had previously been married to Thibaut I of Lorraine, who, according to Evergates, died under mysterious circumstances.

or the devotion of one spouse except in the case of Marie and Baldwin. Generally, when Gislebert of Mons discusses a marriage, he focuses on the contractual issues of the marriage or characteristics of an individual, such as the bride being kind or pious or the groom being illustrious. The formulaic approach to marriage also consisted of the parents of the children agreeing to alter the arrangement if one of the betrothed died. This contract also existed with Marie and Baldwin's marriage.¹¹⁹ Generally, the contract itself was between the selected bride and bridegroom, but if one of them were to die prior to the marriage, then their next oldest sibling would take their place in the marriage:

If, moreover, either of the sons would die before a marriageable age, the next surviving eldest son would enter in marriage to (her). Moreover, if one of the names daughters meanwhile would die, the next eldest daughter would enter into marriage to (him).

Si quis autem utrimque filiorum ante annos nubiles decederet, alter filius superstes primus in matrimonio illi succederet. Si qua autem de filiabus nominates interim decederet, alia superstes filia in matrimonio illi succederet.¹²⁰

Such statements give us some insight into the expectations about noble marriages. Although Marie of France and Blanche of Navarre may have grown fond of their husbands over time, we have very little evidence concerning their personal lives and merely have contractual statements about their marriages. Gislebert's comments imply that relations outside of marriage for men was not unusual but was actually considered the norm. Baldwin's chaste living and rejecting of other women out of love for his young wife that was unusual.

In dynastic histories legitimacy is often the main concern. It was also Blanche of Navarre's concern in proving that her son was the legitimate heir to the county of Champagne. Gislebert of Mons meticulously constructed narrative genealogies for both men and women, demonstrating that

¹¹⁹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 104-105.

¹²⁰ My own translation; Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 520; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 60.

a woman's lineage had equal importance to that of a man, but some people were left out of his genealogies. If it was usual for young men to have relationships outside of marriage, one would assume that illegitimate offspring would be common. Gislebert of Mons, however, makes no reference to illegitimate children, only to children that were produced from legitimate marriages. MacDougall argued that illegitimate children did not have a stigma attached to them, but rather they were judged according to the lineage of their parents.¹²¹ In the Chronicle of Hainaut, we have silence on the matter. This could be due to the fact that Gislebert was a cleric who later became court chaplain to Baldwin V of Hainaut and so did not desire to write about illicit relationships, or perhaps he merely wanted to focus on legitimate heirs. Regardless, this is an omission that ought to be noted.¹²²

Conclusion

Family networks were complex and could result in supportive relationships or competitive ones. Whether these relationships were positive or negative, they still were strong enough to impact the lives of counts and countesses. Siblings often stayed in touch with one another and kept each other informed and even cousins who found themselves in a foreign land would write to each other. While some relationships were beneficial, such as Marie calling on her half-brother and other more distant relations to force Baldwin's hand, others could almost fracture a dynasty, as intra-family competition for thrones could split kin. But regardless if they were supportive or competitive relationships, networks among family and social connections were vital in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and not "deteriorating" as some scholarship suggests.¹²³

¹²¹ Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800-1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 273.

¹²² Laura Napran, "Introduction," xxvii-xviii.

In these complex networks women had an important place. They had the ability to call upon their relations for aid and women were able to secure inheritances and marriages for their children and govern the county while their husbands were away on the crusade. Gislebert of Mons valued the lineage of women along with the lineage of men in dynastic histories. These examples shed light on the dynamic of aristocratic families as well as the roles of women within the family network. Women such as these countesses exercised agency by changing laws to give women more inheritance rights. This forward-looking action obtained more power and security for future generations of women. The presence of women in the history of family networks in the county of Champagne cannot be ignored their impact in these networks demonstrate that they had an important role in the family.

¹²³ Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100," *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1973): 137-138. JSTOR (1566483).
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1566483>.

CHAPTER III

FAMILY IN THE COUNTY OF FLANDERS

The county of Flanders formed quite early compare to Champagne, although dynastic histories came later. After some attacks by Scandinavians in the late ninth century, Flanders began developing into a politically cohesive county governed by counts. The first count of Flanders, or at least the first count that is known, was Baldwin I, who ruled just prior to 879.¹²⁴ Baldwin I was married to Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, so royal blood was integrated into the family of Flanders from the beginning. Although the earlier counts had control of both the western and eastern areas of Flanders, especially around the cities of Ghent and Bruges, the majority of the counts' power centered around Ghent.¹²⁵ Flanders experienced great social and economic change, including the commercial revolution, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Areas in Flanders that had been submerged under water were drained, enabling increased agricultural production.¹²⁶ By the early thirteenth century, Flanders was comprised of densely populated cities that “specialized in exporting fine woolen cloth. But Flanders also became severely dependent on imports, from France for food and from England for wool.”¹²⁷ This problem worsened because there was tension between England and France, and the comital house of Flanders had connections to both dynasties.

¹²⁴ David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, Medieval World (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), 16.

¹²⁵ Nicholas, 16–17.

¹²⁶ Nicholas, 97.

¹²⁷ Nicholas, 97.

Dynastic narrative histories did not arise until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, around the same time as Champagne. The fashion for aristocratic writing rose in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and since these counties were home to some of the leading counts and countesses, they were early adopters.¹²⁸ Some of these histories include *Flandria generosa*, *The Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, and *Chronicon Hanoniense*, to name but a few. Other works also included elements of dynastic history in the narrative, although dynastic history was not the main purpose for the text. Orderic Vitalis and Herman of Tournai are two examples of historians who mention the comital house of Flanders, but the history of the family of counts was not the primary focus of their works. I will be examining *Chronicon Hanoniense* by Gislebert of Mons, mentioned in chapter one, *The Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, short excerpts from Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, short sections from Herman of Tournai's *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, and some charters and letters as they relate to the case studies. Since Gislebert of Mons's work was discussed in chapter one, I will briefly explain the other sources in this chapter. I chose these sources because they give not only information concerning counts, but also countesses. They were also written by clerics who were contemporary with the history that they were writing.

The Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres was written in the late twelfth century by Lambert of Ardres, about whom we know very little.¹²⁹ This account was apparently written so that Lambert could enter back into the good graces of Baldwin II of Guines, who Lambert had offended in 1194.¹³⁰ While there are many different marriage alliances mentioned in the history,

¹²⁸ There had been some early comital lists at monasteries, but no narratives before the 10th century.

¹²⁹ Leah Shopkow, trans., *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 2.

¹³⁰ Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 2-3.

Lambert of Ardres gives the most detail concerning the relationship of Christine of Ardres and Baldwin II of Guines, who bridged the divide of the Ardres-Guines rivalry, and Manasses and Emma of Tancarville, since they were popular in France, England, and Normandy.

Herman of Tournai, who wrote *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, was himself Flemish, so in this source we receive a history from the perspective of a native.¹³¹ Although his account was a history of his monastery, Herman explores the political and social history of Flanders from an ecclesiastical perspective. Herman of Tournai often discusses the marriages of aristocrats, and even discusses the women involved in the unions. One such example is Herman's tale of Clemence of Burgundy and how she suffered divine punishment because she used contraception since she feared that if she had more children, they would fight among themselves for rulership of Flanders.¹³² This source is ideal for making comparisons with Lambert of Ardres's work and for establishing how aristocratic family life was described by ecclesiastics in and around Flanders.

Orderic Vitalis wrote multiple volumes of his ecclesiastical history, but I will be looking into brief passages in volume six. Orderic's history focuses mainly on England and France, but Flanders had deep rooted connections to both nations, so several counts and countesses are mentioned, including Baldwin VII and Clemence of Burgundy. Orderic wrote this text between 1136 and 1141, so these events of which he wrote were near to his own time.¹³³

¹³¹ Lynn. H. Nelson, introduction to *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, trans. Lynn H. Nelson (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), xiii.

¹³² Lynn. H. Nelson, preface to *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, trans. Lynn H. Nelson (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 35-36.

¹³³ Daniel Roach et al., eds., *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), xiv.

The format of this chapter will follow a similar pattern to the previous chapter. First, I will introduce case studies concerning four women, who were chosen for the same reasons as the three women in the case studies for Champagne. Within each case study I will provide information about the familial connections of the women and how these connections affected their lives. Next, I will compare and analyze trends among the four case studies. Finally, I will draw conclusions from these. I will begin with two women who were countesses of Flanders and proceed from there to discuss two women who were countesses of Guines and Ardres.

Clemence of Burgundy, Countess of Flanders [r. 1093-1119]

Clemence, although she came from Burgundy, quickly rose as a powerful and influential countess in Flanders. Her dower alone consisted of about one-third of Flanders.¹³⁴ Clemence was married to Robert II from 1093 until his death in 1111.¹³⁵ She was only the “countess” during Robert II’s rule, but she also ruled with her son, Baldwin VII, and Clemence remained active politically through the reign of Thierry of Alsace (r. 1128-1168). She appeared at center stage in Flanders’ political history during her husband’s and son’s rule, but she still had much support and influence during the reigns of Charles the Good, William Clito, and Thierry of Alsace (see Appendix B). Her power and influence came naturally to her as her brothers also had great power and influence. Two of her brothers were archbishops and one was even Pope Calixtus II (r. 1119-1124).¹³⁶ They were only three of about ten children of William Tête-Hardi and Stephanie, the

¹³⁴ Karen Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 117.

¹³⁵ Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 117.

¹³⁶ Ordericus Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, vol. 6, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 274–75.

count and countess of Burgundy.¹³⁷ Her sisters married dukes and counts, and her brothers, other than those who entered the church, also married into powerful families.¹³⁸

Clemence's family had strong ties to the church, and Clemence herself had similar inclinations. Her family had ties to Cluny, and she aided the Cluniac order in expanding in the county of Flanders:

Similarly, Clemence, who married Robert II, count of Flanders, took with her the family affection for Cluny. Shortly after her marriage, she gave Abbot Hugh of Cluny the Flemish monastery of St.-Bertin with the consent of the abbot of St.-Bertin, but against the initial objections of both Abbot Hugh and the monks of St.-Bertin.¹³⁹

In addition to this, Clemence is often associated in donations made by her husband, Robert II, to different churches.¹⁴⁰

In documentary evidence it is clear that Clemence was very active politically and often was affiliated with her husband in official documents. One of these documents even mentions that, like Marie of France and Blanche of Navarre, Clemence served as a regent while her husband was away on crusade. In a copy of a letter in which Robert II confirms to Abbot Hugh of Cluny the direction of Saint-Bertin, Robert II also mentions that he had left Clemence in control of the affairs of the county while he was away on crusade.¹⁴¹ In Robert's charters, Clemence is associated with fourteen out of thirty-three documents, although not in letters to Bruges and Ghent, or in

¹³⁷ Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 273.

¹³⁸ Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 273.

¹³⁹ Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, 146.

¹⁴⁰ Clemence is associated in fourteen out of thirty of Robert's donations. "Quapropter beatitudini vestre esse volumus, quod nobis, post dominica bella Jherusalem digressis, uxor mea nominee Clementia quam terre mee et omnibus quecumque juris mei errant, vice mea dum dicerem prefeceram, inter cetera diligenter intima vit, sese per abbatem Sancti Bertini a bonitate vesta inpetrasse cum litteris, tum viva voce." Fernand Vercauteren, ed., *Actes des Comtes de Flandre*, 100, 34. Vercauteren mentions that this document does not survive as an original, but rather is known from copies.

“documents that settled disputes or proclaimed the count’s peace.”¹⁴² When Robert II died in 1111, their son, Baldwin rose to power. In the forty-two documents contained in the *Actes des Comtes de Flandre* that Baldwin issued, Clemence is associated in ten. She was associated with all of his charters in the first year of his reign but then Baldwin, according to Karen Nicholas, “attempted to assert his independence.”¹⁴³ Baldwin’s independence did not last long, however, because he was killed in 1119 and his cousin, Charles the Good, rose to power. Clemence vehemently opposed Charles the Good and rather preferred William of Ypres, an illegitimate nephew, to rule Flanders.¹⁴⁴ Nicholas suggests that Clemence supported William over Charles because Charles was an outsider from Denmark, and she felt that she had little influence over him.¹⁴⁵ Clemence raised an army against Charles the Good, but to no avail. Eventually Charles the Good and Clemence made peace, and Clemence even appeared in some of his charters. Charles even mentioned that it was partially through Clemence that he was able to become count.¹⁴⁶ He writes: “consulatus dignitatem divine dispositionis preordinante Clementia suscepissem” (I had taken up countship through divine disposition and prearrangement with Clemence). Even after deep familial rivalry, here we can see that reconciliation and a shift to supportive connections were possible.

Not all members of the clergy approved of Clemence, although she had strong ties with the church. Herman of Tournai, abbot of Saint Martin of Tournai, who was very fond of Charles the

¹⁴² Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 118.

¹⁴³ Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 118.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 119

¹⁴⁵ Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 119.

¹⁴⁶ “Cum post obitum Baldewini comitis ad culmen regiminis tocius Flandrie, propinquis cognatione, pervenissem et consulatus dignitatem divine dispositionis preordinante Clementia suscepissem, ad justiciam exercendam et pacem reformandam animum diligenter applicui et fovendo divinis presidentes officiis divine cultum religionis quibus poteram modis ampliare proposui.” *Actes des Comtes de Flandre*, 268, 117.

Good, voiced his displeasure with Clemence. Herman does include Clemence in some of his chapters although she is not one of the main figures of his history. In one chapter, Herman alleges that Clemence used some form of contraception after the birth of three children so that she would not have more children that would quarrel over the rulership of the county.¹⁴⁷ As a consequence of her actions, according to Herman, all of her children perished before her and the rulership of the county passed to another branch of their family.¹⁴⁸ Since Clemence had opposed Charles the Good, this criticism may have been politically motivated. Herman was a contemporary of Clemence and Charles the Good, so he would have firsthand knowledge about the political turmoil that occurred in the early twelfth century and may have even known the count and countess themselves.

Similar to many of the cases presented here, family dynamics were often complicated and could be competitive. While Clemence was related to both William of Ypres and Charles the Good, she chose one over the other and even raised an army to support her candidate, which ultimately failed. Although she opposed Charles, she still maintained her influence over the county. Clemence also influenced her son early in his reign but was shut out later in his rule. As part of a powerful Burgundian family, Clemence's familial and social connections ranged from locally in Flanders to the heart of the church.

¹⁴⁷ Herman of Tournai, *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*, ed. and trans. Lynn H. Nelson (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 35–36. “When she had borne three of Count Robert’s children in less than three years, Clemence was afraid that if she bore any more, they would fight among themselves for Flanders. She employed a female art so that she could no longer become pregnant. This was punished by divine vengeance in that all of her children died a long time before she. Later, in her widowhood, seeing other women’s sons as counts and suffering many evils from them, she bewailed too late that she and her offspring should be disinherited.”

¹⁴⁸ Herman of Tournai, 36.

Marguerite of Flanders, Countess of Flanders [r. 1191-1194]

Marguerite was the daughter of Thierry of Alsace, who became count of Flanders after the murder of Charles the Good and the death of William Clito, who held the county for a year prior to his death in battle against Thierry. Her older brother, Philip of Alsace, then governed the county after their father died, and then Philip himself was killed at the siege of Acre in 1191.¹⁴⁹ It was then that Marguerite and her husband, Count Baldwin V of Hainaut, rose to power in the county of Flanders. Baldwin and Marguerite were married in 1169 and Gislebert of Mons points out that Marguerite was not the eldest but rather “terciam vero filiam” (truly a third daughter).¹⁵⁰ Among her other qualities he calls her “knowledgeable,” and with an “honest character.”¹⁵¹ But he neglects to mention that she had been married previously to Raoul the Younger, count of Vermandois.¹⁵² As a third daughter and second wife, Marguerite’s connection to Flanders gave her a prominent position in aristocratic society. Although it could not have been predicted that Philip would die of disease at Acre and Marguerite would inherit the county, Marguerite was still sister and daughter to the counts of Flanders. This marriage was meant to be an alliance between Flanders and Hainaut. Money was exchanged for Marguerite’s marriage and also an alliance was formed with one count aiding the other, except against their lieges.¹⁵³ Gislebert gives his resounding approval at this match:

¹⁴⁹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, ed. William Arndt, *Scriptores XXI* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1963), 573; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 140; Also see Genealogies on pages 515-516.

¹⁵⁰ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 516; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 53.

¹⁵¹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 516, “Scientia omnique morum honestate ditata;” Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 53.

¹⁵² Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” 126.

¹⁵³ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 518-519; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 58.

O such a glorious uniting in marriage of such an illustrious man, a powerful and very much wise prince, and such a most noble, honest, and prudent matron!

O quam gloriosus matrimonii conventus tanti viri illustris ac potentis principis et valde sapientis, et tante matrone nobilissime ac honestissime ac prudentissime!¹⁵⁴

This contract does not have the same type of structure as those in Champagne, since there is not a mention of the next eldest child taking the place of the bride or groom if they were to die before the marriage occurred. It is still a contract exchanging money and forming alliances through this union, but it did not involve the other siblings. It does not, like Marie of Champagne's marriage, give a hint as to the closeness of the couple.

It was not uncommon for men to inherit counties through the female bloodline. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Charles the Good inherited the county of Flanders through his mother (see Appendix B). Likewise, Marguerite's own brother, Matthew, inherited Boulogne through his wife.¹⁵⁵ Marguerite and Baldwin V were not, however, unprepared to inherit Flanders since Philip had given them the regency when he went on crusade in 1177, as his brothers, Mathew and Peter, had died.¹⁵⁶ It was not until Philip's death, however, that they would truly inherit the county and be able to pass it on to their heirs, as Philip had died without any children. Unlike the countesses discussed previously, Marguerite never ruled the county as a widow. Most of her charters were issued in conjunction with her husband or her son, Baldwin IX, although some she issued on her own.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ My own translation. Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 519; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 58.

¹⁵⁵ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 515; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 52.

¹⁵⁶ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 526; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 70.

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 127.

Although Marguerite and Baldwin had six children that survived into adulthood, only two are mentioned at their birth: Baldwin IX and Elizabeth. At Elizabeth's birth in April of 1170, Gislebert of Mons states that Baldwin produced a daughter from his wife, and that that daughter would later marry Philip, the king of France.¹⁵⁸ However, at the mention of Baldwin IX's birth in 1171, Gislebert writes that Marguerite gave birth to a son and she is the subject of the verb in the sentence.¹⁵⁹ Although Marguerite is the subject of the sentence (she is the one producing the children), Gislebert does not mention her when discussing the marriages of her children. Her son, Baldwin IX, was engaged and married to Marie of Champagne, but Baldwin V, Marguerite's husband, attempted to continually delay this match. Her daughter Elizabeth was engaged to Marie of Champagne's brother, Henry II, but this engagement was broken off so that she could marry instead Philip II Augustus, king of France.¹⁶⁰ The issue surrounding Elizabeth's marriage caused tensions between Flanders, Champagne, and the royal family. Marguerite's other two sons made important familial connections as well. Philip married the daughter of King Philip II, Marie. Baldwin IX, who succeeded as the emperor of Constantinople married the daughter of the marquis of Montferrat, Agnes.¹⁶¹ Marguerite's two other daughters, Yolende and Sybil, married Peter II of

¹⁵⁸ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 519, "Balduinus de uxore sua Marghareta filiam genuit gloriosissime recordationis Elizabeth, que potentissimo Francorum regi Philippo nupsit, et Francorum regina Serenissima religiosissimaque et omnium dilectissima effecta est, quam mater eius Marghareta apud Insulam in Flandria peperit mense Aprili anno Domini 1170." Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 59.

¹⁵⁹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 519. "Sequente anno Domini 1171, mense Iulio, Marghareta, Balduini uxor, filium peperit Valencenis, Baluinum scilicet, qui post patrem et matrem comitatum Flandrie et comitatum Hanoniensem tenuit. Marghareta autem pro partu in Valencenis iacente, ipsa villa Valencenensis proprio igne concremata fuit in maiori et meliori parte, itaque domorum combustarum fuerunt circiter quatuor milia." Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 59-60.

¹⁶⁰ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 529; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 74. Also see Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 537, which describes how the uncles of Philip Augustus worked towards Philip divorcing Elizabeth because she was hated by the French; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 85.

¹⁶¹ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 127.

Courtenay and Guichard IV of Beaujeu, respectively.¹⁶² Marguerite passed away in 1194 and was buried in Bruges.¹⁶³ Gislebert stated that Baldwin IX did not inherit Flanders from his father, but rather from his mother after her passing.

Marghareta. . . Cui in principatu Flandrie successit filius eius primus Balduinus.

Margaret. . . To whom her first son Baldwin inherited the principality of Flanders.¹⁶⁴

Marguerite's husband Baldwin died soon after her death in 1194. After a long illness, he finally perished in 1195.¹⁶⁵ Most of their children, including Baldwin IX, Henry, Philip, and Sybil, came to his funeral.

Marguerite's place in the family is less clear than the countesses in Champagne. It is unclear if she participated in arranging the marriages of her children or if her marriage was a happy one, or if she had much contact with other women in her family. Gislebert does not enlighten the reader as to these details. Gislebert does, however, have much to say concerning the bloodline of women. Lineage mattered more than wealth, or, in this case, gender. Marguerite formed an alliance between Flanders and Hainaut through her family even though she was the third daughter and not the eldest, and she was even able to inherit the county when her brothers perished. It was from her, not Baldwin V, that Baldwin IX would inherit the county of Flanders.

¹⁶² Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 127.

¹⁶³ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 589; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 164.

¹⁶⁴ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 589; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 164. The subject of this sentence, "Marghareta," is stated in the first sentence of the paragraph.

¹⁶⁵ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 600; Gilbert of Mons, *The Chronicle of Hainaut*, 181.

Guines and Ardres

Lambert's detailed and insightful text has interested many scholars such as Georges Duby, who used Guines and Ardres as a case study in *Medieval Marriage*, and Leah Shopkow, who translated Lambert's work and also includes it in her studies of dynastic history. Although Lambert was a chaplain, he does not shy away from discussing relationships of counts that were held outside of marriage or the offspring produced from such liaisons.¹⁶⁶ It is from Lambert that we receive much of the information about family and marital life in the areas of Guines and Ardres, but the reader must be wary that the information we have was written by a chaplain as an apology to a count that he had offended, so biases may lurk behind Lambert's history. It also should be noted that while Guines and Ardres are adjacent county of Flanders, they fall just outside the count of Flanders's control and so they have their own counts and lords who were able to either make alliances with Flanders or oppose it. These political statements, rivalries, and alliances were often communicated through marriages.¹⁶⁷ Lambert is detailed about many aspects of family life in Guines and Ardres, but he spends the most time discusses two women in particular: Emma of Tancarville and Christine of Ardres. Emma of Tancarville was a Norman widow who was quite popular among the people and Christine of Ardres's marriage helped bridge the rivalry between Guines and Ardres. I will discuss Emma of Tancarville first.

Emma of Tancarville, Countess of Guines [r. 1091-1137]

Emma was married to Manasses, count of Guines, sometime after 1091. Lambert of Ardres unfortunately does not give a precise date, but Manasses became count in 1091 (see Appendix

¹⁶⁶ Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 13.

E).¹⁶⁸ Manasses had complex relations with women. Prior to their marriage, Lambert mentions that Count Manasses had an affair with a girl from Guines and from her he had a daughter named Adelaide. Subsequently, he married this daughter off to Eustace, son of the lord of Balinghem.¹⁶⁹ Lambert proceeds to detail the lineage of the lords of Balinghem but makes no indication of disapproval of this match or that the count had an illegitimate daughter. In addition to this, Adelaide is still able to marry into the aristocracy. This could be an indication of acceptance of illegitimate children in the area of Guines. After this incident, Manasses married Emma of Tancarville, who was the widow of Odo of Folkestone.¹⁷⁰ Her father was a chamberlain named Robert, and since Manasses traveled so much to England to visit King William, he had the opportunity to meet and marry Emma. Unlike Gislebert of Mons, Lambert of Ardres does not mention if there was a contractual understanding prior to the marriage, but merely states that they were married.

Emma was not from Guines, although she still held considerable influence among the people there and over her husband. Lambert notes one instance in which a soldier married a woman from outside of Guines and thus they owed a “club churl” tax. The lords of Hames charged club-bearers one penny each year, four at weddings, and four at funerals. These club bearers had a servile status to the lords of Hames. The conflict here is proving that the bride and groom are both

¹⁶⁸Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, ed. Leah Shopkow, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 79–80.; Lamberti Ardensis, *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, ed. Johann Heller, *Scriptores XXIV* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1964), 578-579.

¹⁶⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 80; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 579.

¹⁷⁰ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 80; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 579: “Comes autem Manasses non immerito toto orbe terrarium longe lateque in magnificentia et gloria nominatissimus extitit et notissimus. Notus utaque in Francia, notus in Normannia, notissimus autem in Anglia. Unde cum frequentatione regis Anglorum Willelmi in Anglia sepius conversationem haberet, duxit Emmam, filiam Roberti camerarii de Tancarvilla in Normannia, viduam Odonis de Folkestane in Anglia.”

of free status and thus do not have to pay the customary due.¹⁷¹ This was a customary due that was most likely a traditional or oral due rather than written law. The woman, not knowing what this was, was ashamed and afraid and had to prove that she was born of free people.¹⁷² Instead of going to Count Manasses about this matter, she went to Countess Emma. Lambert writes:

The noble heroine [Countess Emma], therefore, not so much motivated by compassion for this woman's dishonor (or rather the dishonor of this matron of worthy memory), as she was by the shame of the whole land, spoke with the count; she embraced her husband, showing to him and lamenting the miseries and shame of Guines. Thus softened, the count therefore acceded justly and piously to the prayer of his pleading wife and of the other women, and he had the lords of Hames brought to him as quickly as possible. And with their agreement, he completely abolished and eliminated the club-churl tax and the shame and dishonor of the land.¹⁷³

This instance demonstrates Emma's integral position within the county of Guines and her importance as a countess. Her influence allowed her to be able to change customary dues that would benefit the current residents within Guines as well as any foreigners who came into the county. One of the key elements that Lambert establishes as an integral part of the relationship between Manasses and Emma is trust. The instance of the club-churl tax demonstrates that Manasses valued Emma's input in the affairs of the county and a later instance shows that he also trusted her in religious affairs. Manasses set out to build a monastic church as his father had done and he proposed this idea to his wife and some counselors.¹⁷⁴ Manasses, however, was not able to

¹⁷¹ *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 579. The customary due is called "Colvekerlis."

¹⁷² Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 81.

¹⁷³ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 82. *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 580: "Compatiens igitur virago nobilis non tantum mulieris, immo digne recolende memorie matrone infamie, quantam tocius obprobrio terre, loquitur cum comite, amplectitur virum, indicans ei et deflens Ghisnensis terre miserias et obprobrium. Comes igitur admodum factus deprecabilis, iuste et pie petentis et deprecantis uxoris et mulieris condescendit postulationibus, et Hamenses dominos qua ntocius accersiri fecit. Et in voluntate eorum colvekerliam et terre dedecus et obprobrium omnino perimens et extiguen s."

¹⁷⁴ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 82.

complete this task due to unnamed matter, so Emma instead completed the monastic church.¹⁷⁵ Manasses had completed the planning for the church, but was called away before he could oversee the construction of it.¹⁷⁶ Although trust in the running of the county was a major theme in Lambert of Ardres depiction of Emma and Manasses, like Gislebert's description of Marie of France and Henry I and the documents about Blanche of Navarre and Thibaut III, we do not know much more about the nature of their relationship. Whereas Gislebert plainly states that Baldwin IX loved Marie of Champagne, no such description is given between Manasses and Emma. The only mention of affection between the couple is when one of them dies, which appears conventional.

Emma and Manasses had one daughter named Sybil (she was also nicknamed "Rose"), who was married to Henry of Bourbourg.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately when Sybil bore her own daughter, Beatrice, she died shortly after giving birth.¹⁷⁸ Count Manasses and Emma were then on the brink of a succession crisis since their daughter died and their granddaughter was an infant. Guines had strong ties to England, and Emma herself had lived in England, so a betrothed was chosen for Beatrice who was from England. Lambert writes, "He [Manasses] therefore married his granddaughter Beatrice to the noble Albert the Boar in England ... upon the advice of his wife Emma, because she had a greater acquaintance when she lived in England than anywhere else."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 82-83; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 580, "sed causis intervenientibus, quod ipse pie proposuit et ad complementum usque perducere non sustinuit, pia eius uxor Emma summa postmodum cum devotione supplevit."

¹⁷⁶ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 82-83; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 580.

¹⁷⁷ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 86.

¹⁷⁸ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 86.

¹⁷⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 87; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 582-583: "Unde et sibi metuens, et in posterum quantacumque potuit providencie cautela sibi, immo toti terre Ghisnensi precavens, ne, de corpore suo nullo relicto semine, Ghisnensis terra ab alicuius sororis sue—eo quod fratres sui, ut iam dictum est, omnes sine corporis sui herede morui fuerint et sepulti—quasi ab alieno semine

Here is another instance in which Emma is an integral part of the family. She is able to use her past connections to England in order to find a suitable alliance to keep the line going and gives advice to Manasses that he acts on.¹⁸⁰

Manasses died before Emma, so the county of Guines passed to Beatrice (r. 1137-1142) and Albert the Boar, who did homage to Count Thierry of Alsace, count of Flanders.¹⁸¹ It is only after the death of Manasses and just before the death of Emma that Lambert gives any notion of affection between the two. He writes, “Meanwhile, the venerable widow, Countess Emma, through a pious understanding of heart, fully rekindled and revived outside herself the fire of divine love that she had earlier lit inside herself for her husband, namely Count Manasses of Guines.”¹⁸² Fire is often associated with love in literature. Countess Ida was “inflamed and alight. . . with women’s frivolous love” for Reynold.¹⁸³ The difference here is between divine love and inflamed love. Most noble women and men retired to monasteries in their later years, often when their spouse was deceased, hence rekindling their love for the divine. Unlike Countess Ida, Emma’s love was not frivolous, but rather pious, which added greater respect to Emma’s character. It was this love that

heredem quandoque mendicare debuisset, uxoris sue Emme consilio, eo quod notiori familiaritate quandoque conversationem habuit in Anglia quam in alia terra.”

¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, Beatrice later became estranged from Albert the Boar and their marriage was annulled. She succeeded her grandfather and inherited the count of Guines. She married Baldwin of Ardres but due to illness she died rather quickly and without children. The county then passed to Arnold I, who was Manasses’s sister’s son.

¹⁸¹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 91-92.

¹⁸² Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 92; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 586, “Interea vidua venerabilis Ghisnensis comitissa Emma divini amoris fomitem, quem erga virum suum, comitem videlicet Ghisenensem Manassem, interius pridem accenderat, pia cordis intelligentia reformat plenius foris et resuscitat et votum, quod pius eius maritus, lecti et devotionis eius consors, pridem Deo voverat, mature Deo reddere disposuit.”

¹⁸³ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 126; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 605. “Illa vero feminee levitates quantocius accensa et inflammata amore.”

Emma redirected toward the church after the death of her husband. She built a convent that she retired to and died at after 1137.¹⁸⁴

Christine of Ardres, Countess of Guines [r. 1169-1177]

Christine was the only daughter of Arnold IV of Merck and Adeline of Ardres (see Appendix D). The lordship of Ardres had already been inherited through the female line by way of her mother and since Christine did not have any siblings, the lordship of Ardres would pass to Christine.¹⁸⁵ As the sole heir to the lordship, Christine's father was in negotiations for her marriage with multiple suitors. First, Christine was engaged to Stephen, the son of Elenard of Seninghem, but this potential marriage was abandoned for political reasons.¹⁸⁶ In an attempt to sue for peace, Arnold I, count of Guines, and his wife Matilda, offered the hand of their first son, Baldwin II. This was not the final word in the marriage, however, for Adeline and Arnold IV asked Christine for her consent to this proposal.¹⁸⁷ According to Lambert, Christine was overjoyed by this arrangement:

Thus the girl [Christine] heard what she was not displeased to hear and lo, as she was now present, she now expressed her assent with happiness of her face. She leaned attentively with prickled ears toward the voice of her father and mother, about to answer more freely than to any other word before, as they asked for her consent.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Lambert of Ardres does not give a specific date concerning the death of Emma but it occurred sometime after Manasses, who died in 1137.

¹⁸⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 105.

¹⁸⁶ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 105.

¹⁸⁷ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 106; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 593, "Gratificati ergo Ardensis dominus et eius uxor et admodum facti letabundi, filiam suam ad consensum eius postulandum convocaverunt."

¹⁸⁸ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 106; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 593-4, "Audivit itaque filia quod audire non displicuit, et ecce iam presens astitit, et hilaritate vultus iam assensum exprimens, et ad sciscitantis de consensus vocem patris et matris erectis auribus inclinata nullique libencius unquam responsura sono."

While Lambert mentions Christine's assent to her marriage to Baldwin II, he does not mention Baldwin's reaction to the arrangement. Instead, Lambert of Ardres uses Baldwin's marriage as an example of how a count must sometimes "lower" or "humble" himself in marriage for the sake of peace.¹⁸⁹ Christine and Baldwin's marriage was one of unequal status, according to Lambert, because Arnold IV, the lord of Ardres, was "his [Baldwin's] man."¹⁹⁰ Unlike Champagne, in which all the marriages were partners of equal social standing, here we have an instance in which one higher status partner marries someone of lower status. These instances are not uncommon and, generally, men of higher status married women of lower status rather than vice versa.¹⁹¹ A lower status woman marrying a higher status man was "a main avenue for social mobility," according to Ruth Karras.¹⁹² Christine was able to increase her own status through marriage and her family could use it as a vehicle for peace.

Christine and Baldwin had ten children during their marriage; they may have had more who did not survive adolescence since Lambert often does not mention children who did not survive.¹⁹³ In the order of their birth, Christine had Mabel who married John of Cysoing; Arnold of Guines, who married Beatrice of Bourbourg and became count;¹⁹⁴ William, a knight who died at Colvida; Manasses, who received Rorichove from his father; Baldwin, who became "a cleric, a

¹⁸⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 106; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 594. The terms used are "minoratus" and "humiliatus."

¹⁹⁰ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 106; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 594. The phrase for "his own man" is "ad hominis sui."

¹⁹¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 68-69.

¹⁹² Karras, *Unmarriages*, 68.

¹⁹³ Leah Shopkow, ed., *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardre*, 200, note 76.

¹⁹⁴ Arnold II of Guines and V of Ardres is to whom the work is dedicated by Lambert of Ardres in the prologue.

canon of Th rouanne and the procurator and parson of Nielles-lez-Ardre”; Giles, who was a cleric and then a knight who married Christine of Montgardin; Siger, who married Adelaide of Zeltun; Adeline, who married Baldwin of Engoudsent (of Merck); Margaret, who married Radbod of Ruinus; and Matilda, who married William of Thiembronne.¹⁹⁵ Through the great number of children produced, Baldwin and Christine were able to further the connections of Guines and Ardres through marriage. Unfortunately, Lambert of Ardres does not speak of Christine’s involvement in arranging the marriages of the children. So it is unclear what role, if any, she had.

Much like in the case of Emma of Tancarville, the reader does not get a glimpse of affection between husband and wife until much later on in life and, in this instance, on her deathbed. After the birth of Matilda, Christine fell gravely ill. Lambert notes that this was only a year after the death of her parents, Arnold IV and Adeline.¹⁹⁶ From this it can be assumed that Christine was rather young at the time of her death. Lambert even gives the exact date of the death of Christine as July 2, 1177.¹⁹⁷ According to Lambert all the people of Guines and Ardres mourned the death of the countess, but none so more than her husband, Baldwin. Lambert describes how at the death of his wife Baldwin fell ill as well:

Then Count Baldwin, accepting no consolation for the death of his much beloved wife, fell without moderation on his sickbed for many days. He was said to have been so stricken in mind because of his great sadness and illness, that he did not know himself for many days, but could not distinguish or discern good from evil or right from wrong.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 108-109, 113.

¹⁹⁶ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 117-118.

¹⁹⁷ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 118.

¹⁹⁸ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 119; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 601: “Comes autem Balduinus de sibi amantissime uxoris morte nullam admittens consolationem in lectum egritudinis immoderate per multos dies incidit et pre nimio dolore et infirmitate sic mente consternatus fuisse dicitur, ut nec se ipsum nec alium per multos dies agnosceret, sed nec bonum a malo nec honestum ab inhonesto distingueret aut discerneret.”

The sorrow of the count renewed the sorrow of the people for the countess, but after Baldwin recovered from his illness, he began to aid orphans and widows. From this importance of the countess in relationship with her husband can be discerned, or at least Lambert's interpretation of it. Christine seems to be portrayed as the moral compass of Count Baldwin II. During their marriage, she urged him to build the chapel of St. Catherine at La Montoire, and after her death, Baldwin is portrayed as unsound.¹⁹⁹ The marriage of Christine of Ardres brought peace to both Ardres and Guines. As an individual Christine brought a strong religious foundation to her marriage with Baldwin, and through the marriages of their many children, they were able to further their social and political connections.

Trends: Family in the County of Flanders

The four examples show that women's lineages carried much weight when entering a marriage alliance: Clemence and Marguerite were the daughters of powerful counts, Emma was the daughter of a Norman chamberlain, and Christine was the daughter of a lord. Family mattered in marriage, and any inequalities in the statuses of the lineage between a couple were noted. So, Marguerite was described as the "third daughter" of Count Thierry and Christine's father was "the man" of Baldwin II. These marriages, however, proved advantageous to both parties since Christine's marriage brought peace between the lords of Ardres and the counts of Guines and Marguerite's marriage created an alliance between Flanders and Hainaut. Gislebert and Lambert of Ardres, as chroniclers, recognized and acknowledged the heritage of the women in their histories. In addition to this, Gislebert even wrote that Marguerite's son inherited Flanders from her and did not mention his father regarding inheritance.

¹⁹⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 110.

Women in these cases were given political power. Again, as in the previous chapter, we must bear in mind that this was the period of crusades, so often countesses would rule as regents while their husbands were absent. Clemence of Burgundy, for example, served as regent while Robert II was away on crusade and even ruled with her unmarried son. Women not only held political power while their husbands were away, but they also had influence in the realm of politics while their husbands were present. Emma of Tancarville was able to change a tax law and finish the building of a monastic church while her husband was in power. Clemence was also politically active while her son and husband were in power, and even opposed a subsequent count. This displays a sense of trust that counts placed in their wives in regard to the county. Counts trusted countesses to finish projects, to remain on good terms with the church, and to handle the politics of the region.

It is less clear in the chronicles how much influence women had over the engagements of their children. Emma of Tancarville participated arranging her granddaughter's marriage, but in the other cases such details are left out. The marriages of the children of these four women were, however, intentionally and meticulously chosen in order to extend the alliances and social connections of the family. The continuation of the familial line was crucial to the stability of the region. Clemence of Burgundy outlived all of her children, which Herman of Tournai asserted was a punishment for sin, but the discontinuation of Robert II's line and the subsequent murder of Charles the Good, led to a civil war in Flanders that ended with Thierry of Alsace's victory over William Clito, and his subsequent succession. Stability of the comital family provided stability for the county.

In these examples, two of these women were not widows, nor did they always rule the counties as widows. Only Clemence and Emma outlived their husbands. Clemence did not rule in

the stead of her son but ruled alongside him when Robert II died. Emma, however, retired from political life and turned to the church as the image of a pious widow. Marguerite died shortly before her husband of a disease, but Gislebert does not give the reader an image of Baldwin V's reaction as a widower. Lambert of Ardres, does, however, give his reader a glimpse of a grieving widower who, like in the image of the pious widow, turned to the church. Such pious sentiments were conventional in these chronicles.

In Flanders, much like Champagne, affection in marriages was not commonly or openly discussed. Marie of Champagne seems to have been quite an anomaly. The marriages in Flanders were first and foremost political alliances that were meant to harbor peace between counties or even between a count and his lord. While these marriages may have begun as simple alliances, it does not mean that they remained as such. Lambert of Ardres mentions the "divine love" that Emma felt for Manasses that she redirected towards the church after his death and that Baldwin was inconsolable after the death of Christine. The influence of Marie of France and courtly love seems not to have become attached to the county of Flanders. For Clemence and Marguerite, however, Gislebert does not mention affection in their marriage in the same manner in which he discussed Marie of Champagne, nor does Lambert of Ardres mention such a great love with Emma and Christine. It may have existed, but was unmentioned, and unfortunately that knowledge is not available to a modern reader. Spouses did, however, grieve. Grief, although it may merely be a convention, still show that the one who was lost held a place of importance. Love and grief can be indicators of the value that a person held in the family.

Legitimacy was vital to the lines of counts, but in Guines and Ardres, instead of remaining silent about illegitimate children, Lambert of Ardres makes note of a few of them and their marriages. Manasses, the count of Guines, had an illegitimate daughter named Adelaide, who was

married to a lord. This instance supports Sara MacDougall's argument that illegitimate children were not stigmatized but were rather judged according to the heritage of their parents.²⁰⁰ Since Adelaide was the daughter of the count, she was accepted into aristocratic society.

Conclusion

Family and lineage were important elements in Flemish society. The family from which one came could determine their level of influence in society. The four women in these case studies held influence in society because of their family. Clemence of Burgundy held sway over five counts of Flanders, Marguerite inherited the county of Flanders from her brother and was able to pass the inheritance down to her son, and Emma of Tancarville was able to negotiate a marriage for her granddaughter through her connections to England. Other countesses such as Christine of Ardres held less influence because of her lineage but was able to elevate her social status by marriage. Although lower in status, her marriage ensured peace between Ardres and Guines, which had a long-standing rivalry.

Much like Champagne, families were dynamic and not all familial relationships were supportive. Marguerite, Christine, and Emma did not face any major issues or disputes within their families, but Clemence of Burgundy raised an army against her own nephew because she favored a different nephew's succession. Competitive relationships, however, did not always fracture the relationships themselves. After her opposition to Charles the Good, Clemence still maintained influence in Flanders and made peace with Charles.

Marriage contracts in Flanders often had different arrangements from those in Champagne. Siblings were usually not involved in the contract and they did not have to take the place of their sibling if they died prior to the marriage. The families still exchanged in the contract, but the level

²⁰⁰ Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800-1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 273.

of familial connection seems to be less strict in Flanders than in Champagne. However, similar to Champagne, women had an important role in the family, whether arranging marriages, governing the county while their family are on crusade, or forming alliances in pursuit of peace.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

There are economic similarities between Flanders and Champagne, since they were both crossroads for trade, and the counties wielded significant influence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This power was political, as Flanders and Champagne had strong ties to the royal household and other powerful aristocratic families. Differences, however, arise in the timeframe in which the counties developed into cohesive political units, as Flanders developed as a unit in the tenth century and Champagne did not develop this until the late eleventh century. This chapter will explore the similarities in kinship ties among the aristocracy, and the countesses' position within the family unit. In the previous chapters, three case studies were presented for Champagne and four for Flanders. The cases were compared among themselves, but now I will compare Flanders and Champagne, as well as the sources of dynastic history in each.

The first section of this chapter will compare the case studies from Champagne and Flanders themselves and discuss themes that we can draw from the sources. Marriages and the marriage contract will be compared among Marie of France, Blanche of Navarre, Marie of Champagne, Clemence of Burgundy, Margaret of Flanders, Emma of Tancarville, and Christine of Ardres. Within the sources, we can also analyze how the marriage itself functioned, as the sources permit. This includes establishing whether women participated in governing the county while their husbands were living, how the marriages were portrayed by the sources, and if these marriages were merely familial alliances or if "love" was a factor in the marriage. Larger familial connections and relationships will also be compared. I will explore the influence women had over

their children as well as their involvement in arranging the marriages of their children. Some of the medieval chroniclers omit information about the women, but silence does not necessarily mean absence. While some of the women were not mentioned in the negotiations of their children's marriages, they may have still been involved, but unfortunately, it cannot be said for certain.

Lastly, this chapter will end with some conclusions about women and kinship in Flanders and Champagne. The purpose of this study is analyzing the relationships among aristocratic families in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when dynastic histories were on the rise. The women in the case studies, were countesses, some of the most elite members of society, and so were outside of the "norm" for a discussion of women in general. Although the counties developed at different paces, the dynamic among aristocratic family networks resembled one another and maintained their structural integrity.

Themes in the Narratives

Narrative and documentary sources were used in both the chapters on Champagne and Flanders, but we should note the differences among the sources from each region. For example, Gislebert's patron, Baldwin V of Hainaut and VIII of Flanders, had close connections to Champagne but the narrative itself did not originate from that region. Familial history was still important to the comital family of Champagne, but in the twelfth and thirteenth century, they did not have any narrative dynastic histories that originated from the county itself. Their history instead was recorded by clerics of other counties. Cartularies were much more common in Champagne, but they also were very common in Flanders. Although charters are not directly connected to familial history, they give a sense of social connections and of the influence that countesses had on the politics of the county.

Since these sources are diverse in nature, they offer differing perspectives of countesses. There were, however, common themes in how the families and the countesses themselves are portrayed. Firstly, women usually are not mentioned to be involved with politics, except for being associated with donations to a church, until the death of their husband. Marie of France, Blanche of Navarre, Christine of Ardres, and Clemence of Burgundy do not receive many references at all except for announcements of their marriages and the birth of their children until they had to become more involved in the governing of the county due to the death of their spouse. There are, of course, exceptions to this. Marguerite of Flanders inherited the county of Flanders while her husband was still alive, but she inherited it upon the death of her brother. Emma of Tancarville also had an input in changing a customary due while her husband was in power.

A second theme is that during this time, the crusades greatly influenced the ruling of the counties and led to a change in family dynamics. Men were often called away to join the crusades and they left their wives as regents of the county, as we have seen with Clemence of Burgundy. Some of these men did not return from the crusades and their sons were too young to inherit so women had to be regents for their young children and safeguard their inheritance against other familial ties that who also had claims. In Flanders and Champagne women inherited counties almost as often as men.

A commonality found in Champagne and Flanders is the formation of a marriage contract, or an understanding between families, prior to the marriage taking place. Often money and lands were exchanged between the families in order to secure an alliance. Both counties had marriage contracts, although the contract itself varied between Champagne and Flanders. There was a difference of cultural customs in the counties. I will explore these customs in the next section.

Alliances were not only cultivated through marriage, but also formed within the family, such as through cousins and siblings. In the examples from both Flanders and Champagne, family proved to be a powerful asset to countesses. They were reliable allies that could aid countesses either through political support, or simply sharing information. Marie of France, Blanche of Navarre, and Marguerite of Flanders all had supportive familial relationships. Marie of France called on her own half-brother, King Philip of France, and on her three brothers-in-law to help her secure the marriage of her daughter, Marie of Champagne, to Baldwin IX of Flanders.²⁰¹ Marguerite of Flanders also had strong ties with her family since her brother, Count Philip of Flanders, named her heir to the county following the death of their two brothers, Mathew and Peter.²⁰² Marguerite and Marie of France wielded incredible influence through the support and assistance of their family. Blanche of Navarre, a powerful countess in her own right, also utilized these family networks in order to obtain news concerning her family in Navarre. Through her cousin, Blanche of Castile, the future queen of France, Blanche of Navarre was kept apprised of the news of conflicts in which her family was involved.²⁰³ These types of supportive familial relationships point towards a strong, or even shared, culture of “family.” Even with relations in different counties or countries, families cultivated internal alliances and came to the aid of other members of the family in times of need.

While families in Flanders and Champagne both fastened supportive familial relationships, they also engaged in competition. Family could be powerful allies, but they could also be rivals for countesses. Although it was common for inheritances of counties to be through women and for

²⁰¹ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550.

²⁰² Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 526.

²⁰³ “A letter from Blanche of Castile, queen of France (1212),” trans. Joan Ferrante, Columbia University, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/705.html>.

women to hold regencies, it was often not without objections. Two prominent examples of competitive family relationships come from Blanche of Navarre and Clemence of Burgundy. Blanche had to call on her husband's uncle, the king of France, so that she could maintain her regency and her son's inheritance of the county due to counter claims made by her cousin, Philippa and her husband Erard of Brienne.²⁰⁴ This conflict resulted in the triumph of Blanche of Navarre, but in Flanders a conflict over succession ended in the defeat of a countess. After the death of her son, Clemence of Burgundy opposed the succession of Charles the Good.²⁰⁵ She had immense support during the beginning of her opposition, but her resistance was quickly quelled and Charles the Good succeeded her son as count of Flanders. Unlike the relationship between Blanche and Erard, which was never fully mended, Clemence and Charles were able to shift their competitive relationship into a supportive one. Familial relationships were akin to political relationships since they were constantly changing as alliances shifted.

Women also had a role in creating alliances through the marriage of their children. Countesses are not frequently mentioned as having a hand in the marriage of their children while their spouses are alive, but some played a large role in the marriage contract after the death of their spouses. The fathers often arranged the marriage contract to form an alliance, but if the fathers died before the marriage could take place, they needed to trust their wives to see the contract through.²⁰⁶ Although the countesses are not mentioned as forming the marriage contract when their husbands were alive, this does not necessarily mean that they were left out of the process. Only

²⁰⁴ Theodore Evergates, ed., *The Cartulary of Countess Blanche of Champagne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 42.

²⁰⁵ Nicholas, "Countesses as Rulers in Flanders," 119.

²⁰⁶ Instances of this include Marie of France utilizing the connections of her brothers-in-law to force Baldwin V to allow Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX's marriage to take place. Blanche of Navarre and her husbands, Thibaut III, children were infants or not yet born when Thibaut perished, so Blanche of Navarre had influence over who her children would marry.

the counts were mentioned initially, but their wives clearly continue this process in the event of their death. The decision concerning who their children would marry was likely corporative. Whether corporative or not, the countesses were still entrusted to carry out the marriage contracts of their children. Out of the countesses mentioned in the case studies, only Emma of Tancarville is said to have helped find a suitor for her granddaughter because she was more acquainted with England.²⁰⁷ For Christine of Ardres, Clemence of Burgundy, and Marguerite of Flanders, the historians do not give much information concerning their level of involvement in the arrangement of marriages for their children. Marie of Champagne, unfortunately, did not live long enough to be involved in her children's lives, let alone their marriages. Marie of France and Blanche of Navarre had to secure the marriages of their children after the deaths of their husbands. Women's involvement in the marriage of their children in Flanders and Champagne is ambiguous, and the ambiguity of women's involvement in their children's marriage extends beyond the women in the case studies, but throughout the sources themselves. While some women had influential roles in the marriages of their children others, sadly, are unknown.

Diverging Narratives

I would argue that aristocratic women's roles in the "family" networks in Champagne and Flanders were structured similarly, but that they were not identical. Champagne and Flanders had their own cultural distinctions, and these were reflected in the narrative sources. In this section, I will explore how the dynastic narratives diverge and discuss the cultural distinctions between regions. Since Guines and Ardres are part of Flanders, I will discuss them in conjunction with Flanders, but I will make notes about their own regional differences when they are distinct from those of Flanders.

²⁰⁷ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 87; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 582-583.

Love in marriage seems to have been taken into account when drawing a marriage contract. The marriage itself was built around something larger than just two people. It was built around the aristocratic family and the connections associated with that family. The “feelings” of love are not necessarily what we would define as love in the modern world. While the noun *amor* could mean “a strong, passionate longing for something,” but it also can mean “brotherly love” or even a sense of devotion.²⁰⁸ Love, then, in this context can have multiple interpretations. In the cases of Marie of France, Blanche of Navarre, Clemence of Burgundy, and Marguerite of Flanders, “love” was not something that came up in the narratives. These marriages were portrayed as strategic and political. In Guines and Ardres, Christine and Emma had similar experiences to Marie, Blanche, Clemence, and Marguerite, but Lambert of Ardres made a note that at least towards the end of their lives, there was some sort of affection between spouses. At the death of her husband, Manasses, Emma redirected her divine love for him to the church.²⁰⁹ In the case of Christine of Ardres, instead of portraying her love for Baldwin II, Lambert of Ardres wrote about his love for her, calling her “*amantissime uxoris*” (most loved wife).²¹⁰ Baldwin was depicted as a grieving widower, whereas Emma was the grieving widow. “Love” in marriage was not mentioned, but Lambert of Ardres includes love in the grief in the spouses from Guines and Ardres. Gislebert of Mons did not write about love commonly, except in one case: Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX.

The marriage of Marie of Champagne and Baldwin IX, as Gislebert of Mons points out, was rather extraordinary. The uncommon circumstance was that Baldwin did not seek relationships

²⁰⁸ Lewis and Short, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=amor&la=la#lexicon>.

²⁰⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 92; *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 586.

²¹⁰ *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium*, 601.

outside of his marriage. Instead he lived chastely and devoted himself to his wife alone.²¹¹ In *Two Models of Marriage*, Duby also comments on extramarital relations in twelfth-century France:

Under this ethic [the lay code of marriage], marriage, I repeat, regulated sexual impulses, but only in the interest of patrimony. As long as no inheritance was involved, sexual activity was permitted outside of marriage. On the other hand, it was of the utmost importance that a wife receive only one seed, that of her husband, lest intruders issued from another man's blood take their place among the claimants to the ancestral inheritance.²¹²

From Gislebert's comment and Georges Duby's analysis, perhaps this was a prevailing attitude. "Love" in marriage was not commonly written about except to depict grieving widows or widowers. Heather Arden argues that "recently bereaved woman, intensely grieving yet easily consoled" widow was a common archetype in French literature.²¹³ This archetype from literature influenced narrative dynastic histories, which also depict grieving widows or widowers.

If it was not unusual for counts to have relationships outside of marriage, it can also be assumed that there were children produced from these relationships. Lambert of Ardres mentions illegitimate children in his history, but Gislebert of Mons and Hermann of Tournai do not. In the case of Herman of Tournai, he was writing history for a community of monks and was focusing on the history of how the monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai was restored, so it may not have been appropriate to discuss illegitimate children due to his audience.

Gislebert of Mons and Lambert of Ardres were contemporaries and were both clerics under powerful counts. Their histories were written for the purpose of documenting the genealogy of counts in a narrative format. As similar as these sources are, they differ in their discussion of illegitimacy. In order to understand why two narratives from neighboring regions have different

²¹¹Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 550-551. My own translation.

²¹² Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, 7.

²¹³ Heather M. Arden, "Grief, Widowhood, and Women's Sexuality in Medieval French Literature," in *Upon my Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 305.

views about illegitimacy, we have to think about the time period in which the historians were writing. Gislebert of Mons and Lambert of Ardres both were writing at the end of the twelfth century and the early thirteenth century. As with ideas about consanguinity, the way in which historians handled illegitimacy began to change. Sara McDougall writes:

As we have seen, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries we can begin to find evidence of efforts to exclude the children of illegal marriages from succession to noble title. There are two important points that should be recognized. First, I would insist that these efforts were relatively new. Second, such efforts at disinheritance on these grounds did not necessarily work. . . . Legitimate birth did matter more than it had in the past, but lineage, birth to two parents of the right lineage, still demanded, and received, a great deal of respect in these societies.²¹⁴

Gislebert of Mons and Lambert of Ardres were living during the transitional period to the shift to exclude illegitimate children from succession. In order to remove these children from the line of succession, Gislebert of Mons excluded them from his dynastic narrative. Lambert of Ardres, however, did not. As long as illegitimate children did not make a claim to inheritances and had two parents of noble birth, they were accepted in society and in his narrative. There may have also been another reason that Lambert was more accepting of illegitimate children than Gislebert of Mons. Lambert himself was married, although he was a priest.²¹⁵ This did not constitute an issue in Guines or Ardres since “Lambert had married one of his daughters very honorably into an illegitimate branch of his lord’s family.”²¹⁶ Gislebert, on the other hand, was not married, did not have any children, and focused on the legitimate branches of the houses of Hainaut, Flanders, and Champagne. While illegitimacy was acceptable for a married cleric writing in Guines, it was not acceptable for a chaste cleric of Hainaut.

²¹⁴ Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800-1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 253.

²¹⁵ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: the making of modern marriage in medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 253.

²¹⁶ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*, 253.

The purposes for marriage in Flanders and Champagne were very similar. Marriages were meant to usher in peace through forming alliances with other powerful aristocratic families. Marriage in these counties both required a contract of some form, or at least an understanding between the families involved. While ideas of marriage and the political attachments affiliated with marriage were similar in both counties, the contract itself varied. The marriage contract involved the bride or bridegroom's siblings in Champagne, but this was often more hypothetical since many of the betrothed were able to be married or broke off the engagement for other reasons. For Champagne, the marriage contract usually was worded as follows:

If, moreover, either of the sons would die before a marriageable age, the next surviving eldest son would enter in marriage to (her). Moreover, if one of the named daughters meanwhile would die, the next eldest daughter would enter into marriage to (him).

Si quis autem utrimque filiorum ante annos nubiles decederet, alter filius superstes primus in matrimonio illi succederet. Si qua autem de filiabus nominates interim decederet, alia superstes filia in matrimonio illi succederet.²¹⁷

This does not mean that the family was less important elsewhere, since clearly the alliances affected the entire aristocratic family, but that siblings did not have the obligation to fulfil the contract if the elder sibling was unable. Lambert of Ardres does not mention this type of contract for lords of Ardres or counts of Guines, nor does Gislebert mention this type of contract for families from Flanders. Siblings, then, were not obligated to become involved in the marriage contracts. Women, however, were always expected to leave their families to join the family of their husbands.

Conclusion

A discussion about women in the Middle Ages is never a simple task. Often their lives are shrouded in mystery and we must rely only on what the sources, written by male ecclesiastics, tell us. Finding a woman's place in the family also adds to the complications that arise in studying women. We very rarely know what they were thinking or feeling, and often we can only guess at

²¹⁷ My own translation; Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, 520.

the motivation behind their actions. But through the dynastic narratives explored in this work, we can know several things about aristocratic families twelfth- and thirteenth-century Flanders and Champagne.

We can know that there were common themes in how historians portrayed families. Women were mentioned when they were married, when children were born, and in association with donations to churches. It was not until their husbands were away on crusades or even killed during the crusades that the historians would mention women as being politically active. Women were also portrayed as more involved in the marriages of their children when their husbands were away or deceased. Marriages also were contracted by the family in order to establish peace between regions and form new alliances. These marriages affected the entire family, but marriages in Flanders involved the siblings as well. The long list of commonalities among the counties suggests that there was a shared culture of “family” among the aristocrats in France.

Most familial connections attempted to form an alliance and bring peace, but some familial connections were competitive. Women often held regencies, but often they, as well as men, were vulnerable to other members of the family making counterclaims for the comital lordship. Clemence of Burgundy and Blanche of Navarre both were involved in disputes over the rulership of the county. One lost the dispute and the other triumphed. Family could be powerful allies, but they could also be powerful competition. Women also maintained much of their power and influence through family in supportive relationships. They were able to call on their own family and the family of their husbands in order to assert their will. Since women and men could call on their family for aid, this suggests that kinship networks were still strong in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Women held important roles in the elite aristocratic family units. Their own

lineage mattered as much as that of their husbands, since children could inherit through their mother.

The works of Georges Duby still remain relevant to the discussion of aristocratic women, although some of his models and points have been reassessed. While many things remain unknown about families in the twelfth and thirteenth century, we must always reevaluate and reassess the information that we do have.

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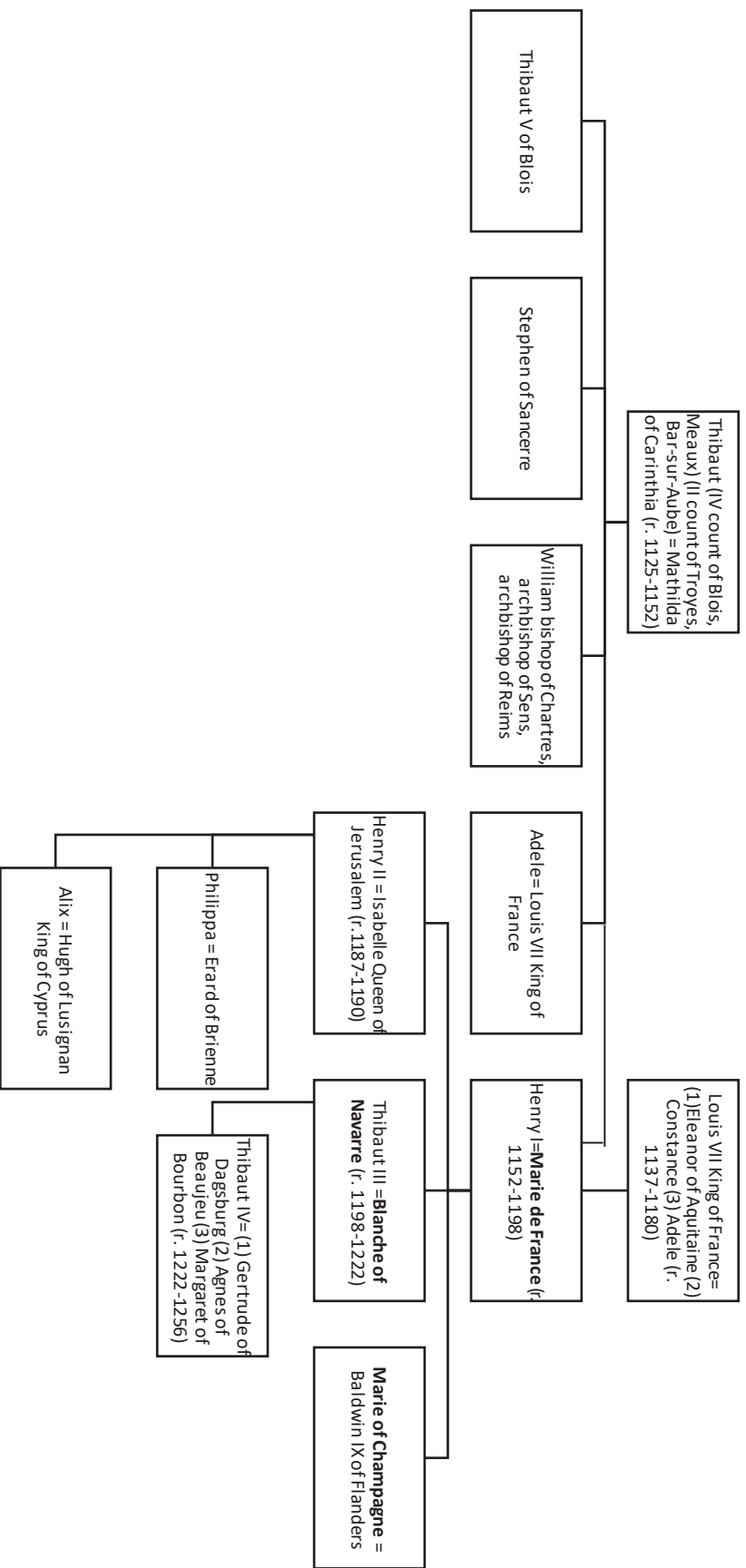
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APPENDIX A

The Comital House of Champagne in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

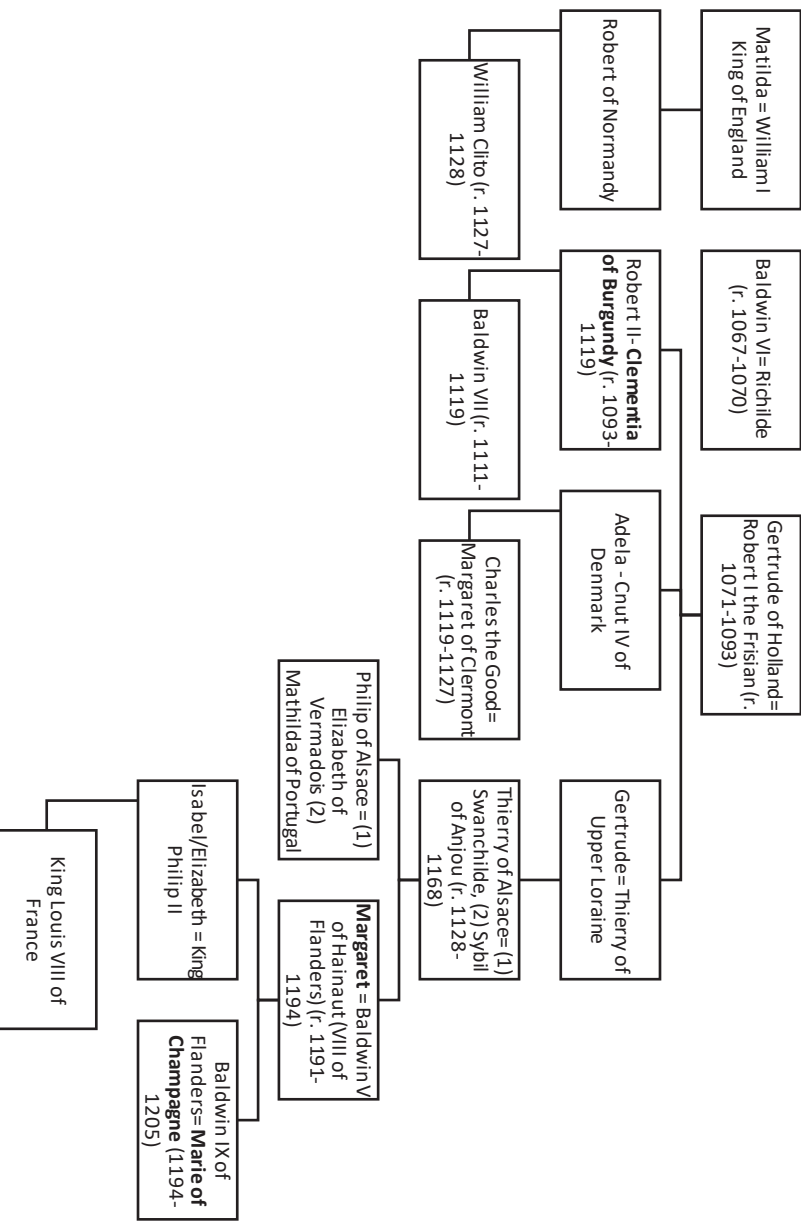


The Comital House of Champagne in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

(Adapted from Theodore Evergates “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” in *Aristocratic Women*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999))

APPENDIX B

The Comital House of Flanders in the Eleventh through Thirteenth Centuries

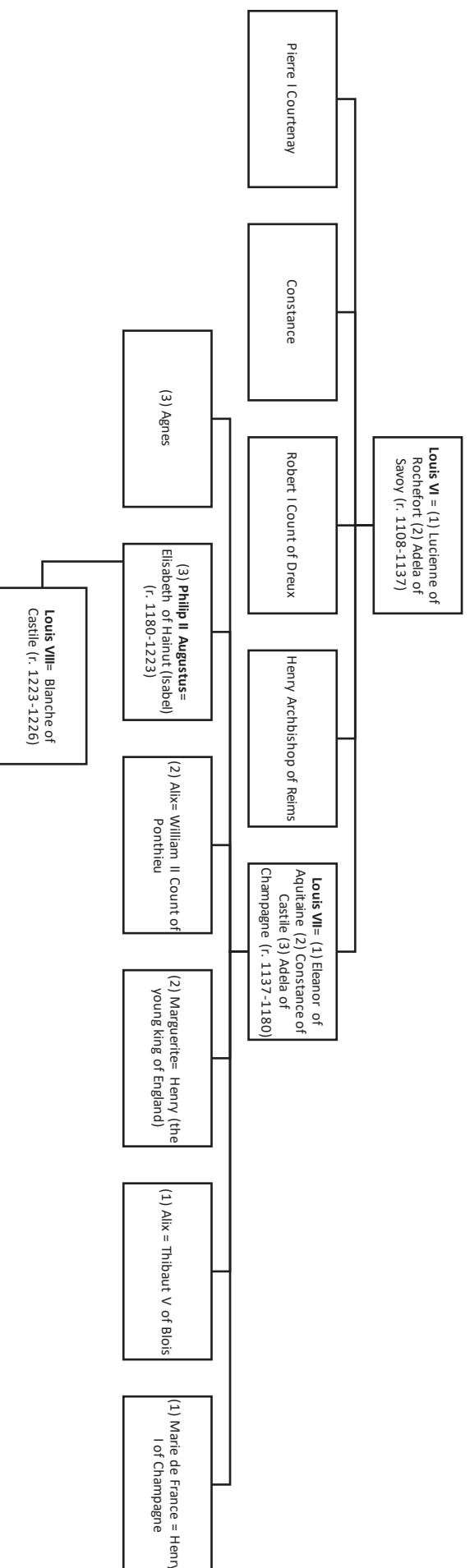


The Comital House of Flanders in the Eleventh through Thirteenth Centuries

(Adapted from Karen S. Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).)

APPENDIX C

The Royal House of France in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

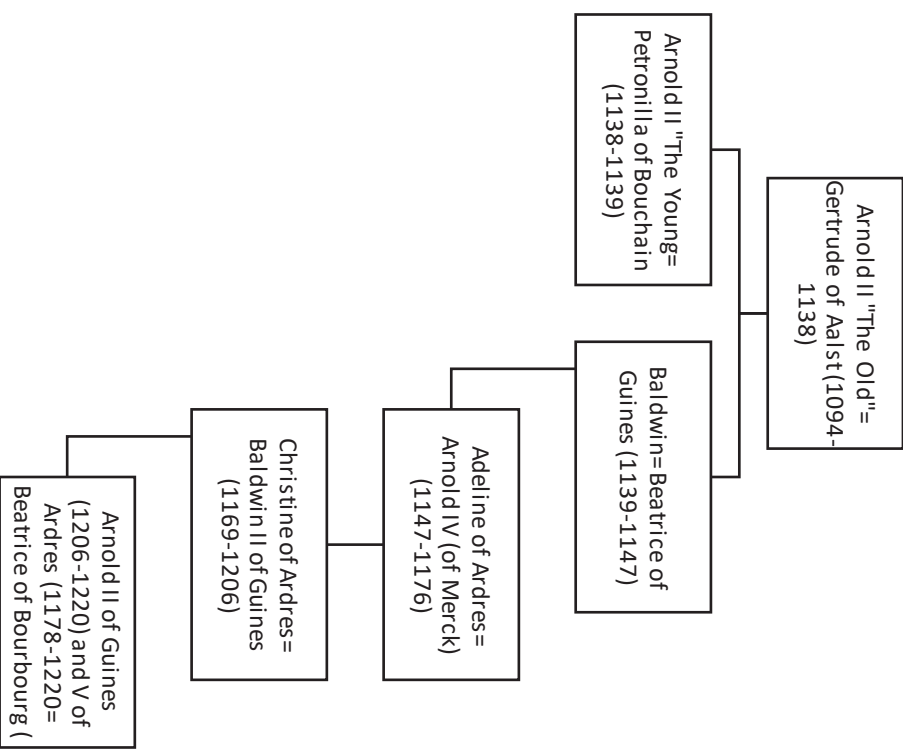


The Royal House of France in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

(Adapted from *Chronicle of Hainaut* by Gilbert of Mons, trans. Laura Napran (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005))

APPENDIX D

The Lords of Ardres in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

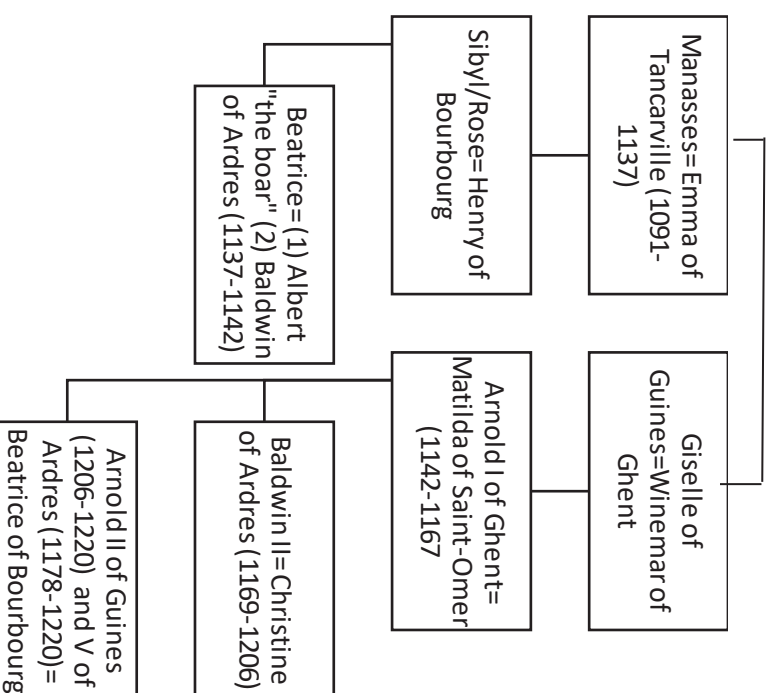


The Lords of Ardres in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

(Adapted from Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, ed. Leah Shopkow, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).)

APPENDIX E

The Counts of Guines in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries



The Counts of Guines in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

(Adapted from Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, ed. Leah Shopkow, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).)