

**The Counts of the Perche
c. 1066-1217**

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The counts of the Perche, c. 1066 - 1217
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Summary

The history of the counts of the Perche from c. 1066 to 1217 is considered. It is placed in the historiographical perspective of the disintegration into territorial principalities which took place in the kingdom of the Franks around the year 1000 and the subsequent emergence of small units such as the Perche in border zones, where the authority of the greater princes had never been successfully asserted. An outline of the geography of the Perche is followed by a brief account of the Rotrou lineage. The internal workings of the Perche, which indicate the nature of the Rotrous' power, are considered. Family property is located and comital rights are described, together with the administration by means of which the lineage's wealth and power were exploited. The exercise of lordship over the other landed families of the Perche was an important factor in the smooth running of the county and the association between the counts and the nobility is also discussed. An analysis of the relations between the Perche and its neighbours, the great power blocs of Northern France, forms the third section. The adroit manipulation of these relationships permitted the counts to maintain their independence and to gain access to the resources of the English crown. During the twelfth century the counts were obliged to adapt as the old political rivalries polarised into the struggle between the Capetian and Plantagenet kings. When King John lost Normandy to King Philip Augustus in 1204 the counts' bargaining power was lost because the strategic significance of the county had been destroyed. The failure of the direct line in 1217, which led to the eventual dismemberment of the county when the comital title was extinguished in 1226, demonstrates the importance of the vigorous Rotrou lineage in the creation and continued independence of the Perche.

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Abbreviations

- Actes Henri II* *Recueil des Actes de Henri II, roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie, concernant les provinces françaises et les affaires de France*, ed. L. Delisle and E. Berger (Paris, 1909-27).
- Actes Philippe Auguste* *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde et al. (Paris, 1916-79).
- AD Archives Départementales
- AN Archives Nationales
- Annales* *Annales: Économies. Sociétés. Civilisations*
- ANS *Anglo-Norman Studies: proceedings of the Battle Conference*, i (1978)-
- Baldwin, *Government*. J. Baldwin, *The government of Philip Augustus: foundations of French royal power in the middle ages* (Berkeley, Calif., 1986).
- Bart, *Antiquitéz*. L. Bart des Boulais, *Recueil des Antiquitéz du Perche, comtes et seigneurs de la dicte province ensemble les fondations, bâtiments des monastères et choses notables du dict pais*, ed. H. Tournouer (Mortagne, 1890).
- Beaulieu* *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu et du Prieuré de Notre Dame de la Bourdinière*, ed. R. Merlet and M. Jusselin (Chartres, 1909).
- BEC *Bibliothèque de l'École de Chartres*
- BL British Library
- BN Bibliothèque Nationale
- Boussard, 'Bellême'. J. Boussard, 'La seigneurie de Bellême aux Xe et XIe siècles', *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), pp. 43-54.
- Bry, *Perche*. G. Bry de la Clergerie, *Histoire des pays et comté du Perche et duché d'Alençon*. Paris, 1620, éd. P. Siguret (Paris, 1970).
- BSHAO *Bulletin de la Société Historique et Archéologique de l'Orne*
- Bur, *Champagne*. M. Bur, *La formation du comté de Champagne, v. 950-v. 1150* (Nancy, 1977).
- CCM *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*
- CDF *Calendar of documents preserved in France*, ed. J.H. Round (London, 1899).
- Chédeville, *Chartres*. A. Chédeville, *Chartres et ses campagnes (XI^e - XIII^e s)* (Paris, 1973).
- ch.-l. *chef lieu (du canton)*
- Clairêts *L'Histoire et le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre Dame des Clairêts (Orne) de l'ordre de Cîteaux (1202-1790)*, ed. Vt. de Souancé. (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1894).
- CMD *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Dunois*, ed. E. Mabile (Châteaudun, 1874).

<i>cme.</i>	<i>commune</i>
<i>CMM</i>	<i>Cartulaire Manceau de Marmoutier</i> , ed. E. Laurain (Laval, 1911-45).
<i>CMPerche</i>	<i>Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche</i> , ed. P. Barret (Mortagne, 1894).
Crouch, <i>Beaumont twins.</i>	D.B. Crouch, <i>The Beaumont twins: the roots and branches of ower in the twelfth century</i> (Cambridge, 1986).
<i>CRR</i>	<i>Curia regis rolls</i>
<i>CSJ</i>	Nogent-le-Rotrou. Château Saint-Jean. Archives de l'hôpital.
<i>ct.</i>	<i>canton</i>
<i>DB</i>	<i>Domesday Book</i>
Romanet, <i>Géographie.</i>	O. de Romanet, <i>Géographie du Perche</i> . (Mortagne, 1890-1902).
Diceto	Ralph of Diceto, <i>Opera Historica</i> , ed. W. Stubbs (RS 68, London, 1876).
Duchesne	BN Collection Duchesne, cited with volume number, thus Duchesne 20.
<i>GC</i>	D. Sammarthanus, <i>Gallia Christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa</i> , ed. P. Piolin (Paris, 1870-7).
<i>Gesta</i>	<i>Gesta regis Henrici secundi</i> , ed. W. Stubbs (RS 49, London, 1867).
Guillot, <i>Comte.</i>	O. Guillot, <i>Le comte d'Anjou et son entourage au xi^e siècle</i> (Paris, 1972).
Howden	Roger of Howden, <i>Chronicle</i> , ed. W. Stubbs (RS 51, London, 1868-71).
<i>Jumièges</i>	<i>Chartes de l'abbaye de Jumièges</i> , ed. J.-J. Vernier (Rouen, 1916).
<i>Layettes</i>	<i>Layettes de Trésor de Chartes</i> , ed. A. Teulet, H.-F. Delaborde and E. Berger (Paris, 1863-1909).
<i>LBSMS</i>	Bibliothèque de l'Évêché de Sées, <i>Livre Blanc de Saint-Martin de Sées</i> .
Lemarignier, 'Dislocation'.	J.-F. Lemarignier, 'Le dislocation du 'pagus' et le problème des 'consuetudines' (x ^e -xi ^e siècle)', <i>Mélanges Louis Halphen</i> , (Paris, 1951), 401-10.
Lemarignier, <i>Recherches.</i>	J.-F. Lemarignier, <i>Recherches sur l'hommage en marche et les frontières féodales</i> (Lille, 1945).
Louise, 'Bellême'.	G. Louise, 'La seigneurie de Bellême x ^e - xii ^e siècles : dévolution des pouvoirs territoriaux et construction d'une seigneurie de frontière aux confins de la Normandie et du Maine à la charnière de l'an mil', <i>Le Pays Bas-Normand</i> , nos. 199/200 (1990), 201/202 (1991).
<i>LT</i>	<i>Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de la Trappe</i> , ed. H. de Charencey (Alençon, 1889).
<i>MGH</i> <i>SS</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica: scriptores</i>
<i>Monasticon</i>	W. Dugdale, <i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , ed. J. Stevens (London, 1817, repr. 1846).

- MSAEL* *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir*
- NDC* *Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Chartres*, ed. E. de Lepinois and L. Merlet (Chartres, 1865).
- NLR* *Saint-Denis de Nogent-Le-Rotrou 1031-1789* (Vannes, 1894).
- Obits* *Obituaires de la Province de Sens*, tome ii, ed. A. Molinier and A. Longnon (Paris, 1906).
- OV* *Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1969-80).
- Perseigne* *Cartulaire de l'abbaye Cistercienne de Perseigne*, ed. G. Fleury (Mamers, 1880).
- PL* *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64).
- Polyptique* *Polyptique de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, ed. A. Longnon (Paris, 1895).
- Powicke, Loss.* F.M. Powicke, *The loss of Normandy 1189-1204: studies in the history of the Angevin empire*, 2nd ed. (Manchester, 1961).
- PR* Pipe roll, cited by regnal and published by the Pipe Rolls Society, except for *Pipe Roll 31 Henry I*, ed. J. Hunter (London, 1833).
- PRO* *Public Record Office*
- Querimoniae* 'Querimoniae Normannorum', in *RHF*, xxiv (1) 1-73 (second pagination sequence).
- RADN* *Recueil des Actes des Ducs de Normandie 911-1066*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961).
- RCVD* Bibliothèque Municipale d'Alençon, ms. 112, *Recueil sur la Chartreuse de Val Dieu*.
- RHF* *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet *et al.* (Paris, 1869-1904).
- Rigord* Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', in *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde (Paris, 1882-5), i, 1-167.
- Rot. Chart.* *Rotuli Chartarum in turri Londinensi asservati, 1199-1216.*, ed. T.D. Hardy (Record Commission., 1837).
- Rot. Litt. Pat.* *Rotuli litterarum patentium in turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1834).
- Rot. Scacc. Norm.* *Magni Rotuli Scaccarii Normanniae sub regibus Angliae*, ed T. Stapleton (London, 1840-4).
- RRAN* *Regesta Regum anglo-normannorum*, vol. i, ed. H.W. C. Davis (Oxford, 1913), vol. ii, ed. by C. Johnson and H.A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956), vols iii and iv, ed. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968-9).
- RS* Rolls series

- SJV* *Cartulaire de Saint-Jean en Vallée de Chartres*, ed. R. Merlet (Chartres, 1906).
- SPC* *Cartulaire de Saint-Père de Chartres*, ed. B. Guérard (Paris, 1840).
- Tiron* *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Sainte-Trinité de Tiron*, ed. L. Merlet (Chartres, 1883).
- Torigni* Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, ed. L. Delisle (Rouen, 1872-3).
- VLM* *Cartulaire de Saint-Vincent du Mans*, ed. R. Charles and S. Menjot d'Elbenne (Le Mans, 1886).
- Wendover* Roger of Wendover, *Chronica*, ed. H.G. Hewlett (RS 84, London, 1886-9).

Introduction

During the six days that Henry I, King of England and Duke of Normandy, lay dying at Lyons-la-Forêt in November 1135 he was attended by the usual array of nobles, officers and ecclesiastics that made up the entourage of an Anglo-Norman king. Among these men was the king's former son-in-law, Rotrou count of Mortagne, a man of mature years, probably well into his middle age and an experienced warrior who had participated in the first crusade and had also fought, apparently with some distinction, against the Moslems in Spain. In his account of the death scene and elsewhere in his *Ecclesiastical History* the Anglo-Norman historian Orderic Vitalis describes him as count of Mortagne, but by 1135 Rotrou himself was rather anxious to be called the count of the Perche and had been styling himself in that manner in his charters for some time. This confusion of nomenclature is revealing, for it marks the final stage in the emergence of a new political unit, as a disparate collection of lands, some formerly controlled by Rotrou's ancestors and others not, was being forged into the county of Perche.

The history of Count Rotrou's family and the polity which they created spans less than 200 years, but it has much to tell us about the development of power structures in the central middle ages and it illustrates two significant strands in the modern historiography of France. In the first place it provides a case study in the localisation of power. The origins of the Rotrous' authority lie in the disturbed conditions and fragmentation of power, which has been identified as one of the defining characteristics of the period. It is a theme which has pre-occupied historians for some considerable time and has resulted in the publication of a number of important regional studies, most of which consider more substantial territories than the Perche.¹ This relative insignificance of the Perche is not without historiographical importance however, and it is the nature of the

¹ J. Dhondt, *Études sur la naissance des principautés territoriales en France (IX^e-X^e siècle)* (Bruges, 1948); Lemaignier, 'Dislocation'; K.F. Werner, 'Königtum und Fürstentum des französischen 12. Jahrhunderts' in *Probleme des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Sigmaringen, 1968), 177-225, rev. and translated version published as 'Kingdom and principality in twelfth century France,' in *The medieval nobility*, ed. T. Reuter (Amsterdam, 1979), 243-90; E. Hallam, 'The king and the princes in eleventh-century France', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, liii (1980), 143-56. Regional studies include: G. Duby, *La société aux XI^e et XII^e siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, 1953); Guillot, *Comte*; G. Devailly, *Le Berry du X^e siècle au milieu du XIII^e: étude politique, religieuse, sociale et économique* (Paris, 1973); J.-P. Poly, *La Provence et la société féodale, 879-1166* (Paris, 1976); Bur, *Champagne*; Y. Sassier, *Recherches sur le pouvoir comtal en Auxerrois de X^e au début du XIII^e siècle* (Auxerre 1980); D. Barthélemy, *La société dans le comté de Vendôme de l'an mil au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1993).

Perche as a small and less wealthy area, which allows it to contribute to a second focus for research, our understanding of the nature of frontier zones and their role in power politics.²

The Rotrou lineage makes its first appearance in the area which would become known as the county of the Perche in the eleventh century. It was a period of increasing fragmentation of power. The Capetian dynasty had succeeded the Carolingians as kings of the Franks in 987, but by the middle of the eleventh century had ceased to be effective rulers beyond the Île de France where the bulk of their family property lay. In the rest of the kingdom great magnates, such as the Count of Blois and the Duke of Aquitaine, whose families had in many cases originally been royal agents, vied for control large blocs of territory. Even their authority was at risk, however, from forces which threatened to fragment the units of power still further. The challenge came from members of lineages like that of the Rotrous, who had established themselves in their lordship at Nogent-le-Rotrou (Eure-et-Loir), and were lords of their localities. Secure in their castles, these men had seized many of the privileges of rulership and were becoming increasingly difficult to control.

The Rotrous were particularly well-placed to profit from this localisation of public power. Their territories lay at the margins of the great power blocs of Normandy, Anjou and Blois/Chartres, which had come to dominate northern France in the eleventh century, and their very remoteness meant that the family could escape the control of the king and the great princes alike. When royal authority foundered, the Rotrous assumed the prerogatives of power within their locality and no other authority was able to intervene. At some point in the eleventh century the family extended their authority northwards from Nogent to Mortagne (Orne) and this expansion also remained unchecked. The relative remoteness of the Rotrou holdings in the border zone, therefore, allowed them to increase their territory with little or no interference and in addition the family were able to exploit the rivalries between their mighty neighbours, threatening the balance of power between them and thus securing concessions, such as the grants of Bellême (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) and Moulins-la-Marche (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.).

The sources from which the history of the Rotrou family must be written present a number of problems. Although Orderic Vitalis was interested in the counts of the Perche, members of the family appear infrequently in other chronicles and so it has not always been possible to provide a detailed chronological framework. Apart from a few references in contemporary letter collections, the history of the family has therefore to be reconstructed from documentary evidence, preserved among the records of local religious houses, particularly the major family

² D. Hay, 'England, Scotland and Europe: the problem of the frontier', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, xxv (1975), 77-91; R.L. Burns, 'The significance of the frontier in the middle ages', in *Medieval frontier societies*, ed. R. Bartlett and A. MacKay (Oxford, 1989), 307-330. For a specific border society, J. Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', in *War and government in the middle ages: essays in honour of J.O. Prestwich*, ed. J. Gillingham and J.C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1984), 46-63. On the Norman border, L. Musset, 'Considérations sur la genèse et le trace des frontières de la Normandie', in *Media in Francia...recueil de mélanges offert à Karl Ferdinand Werner* (Paris, 1989), 309-18.

foundations of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, Tiron and La Trappe. This inevitably gives an ecclesiastical bias to an account of a lineage famed for its military prowess, but it does have the advantage of providing considerable detail on the internal workings of the Perche and the composition of the comital entourage.

These French sources can be supplemented with valuable material from England. As clients of their neighbours, the Anglo-Norman king-dukes, the counts were able to establish an honour in the south and east of England. References to these lands are preserved both in the records of English government and among the muniments of the English religious houses patronised by the family. This material has never been systematically examined for the history of the Rotrous and it has supplied important new information about the family. In addition the fortunes of the family's English honour provide an important commentary on the family's relations with the mightiest of their neighbours and, by extension, on the external relations of the Perche.

All the sources used in this study are described in detail in appendix 1 and a handlist of comital acts forms appendix 2. Each count's acts are listed under his name in two sequences: in chronological order and, where it has proved impossible to assign a date, in alphabetical order of the recipient's name. Acts by members of the comital family follow those of the counts themselves. A brief description of the contents of each act is given and an indication of the earliest surviving text of the act, except for those acts which are preserved in the major cartularies and are accessible in printed editions, such as those of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, Tiron or Les Claiets.

The study itself begins with a short account of the geography of the Perche and the history of the area before the year 1000, which is followed by an outline of Rotrou family history. A brief summary of the career of each individual count is given, together with genealogical details, and an indication of the sources available for the study of each count. Although the county ceased to function as an independent political unit after 1226 some consideration is given to the arrangements made by the French crown after that date, in order to demonstrate the eradication of the Perche as a political unit when the comital property was distributed among collateral heirs of the Rotrou family.

After considering the setting and the family, the second part of the study sets out to establish the foundations of the counts' power by looking at the internal workings of the Perche in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The material resources, rights of public power and means available to the counts to wield power have each been examined in order to determine the basis of comital authority. The machinery used by the counts to exploit their position was similar to that of contemporary rulers, but its peculiarities and those associated with comital property and powers are valuable pointers towards the origins of the counts' authority as military leaders in a remote and forested area. Family wealth and public power both contributed to the smooth running of the

Perche, but equally important was the relationship between the counts and the other lords of the Perche. The final chapter of the second part looks at the nature of that relationship, taking as its focus the composition of the comital entourage, which is traced throughout the history of the dynasty. The mechanisms by which the counts exercised their lordship are outlined and four lineages, which have been reconstructed to illustrate the impact of comital rule on the landed proprietors of the area, form an appendix to the chapter.

While the Rotrou counts were successful rulers within their territory, it was in the adroit manipulation of that territory's strategic position that their wider political importance lay. The final part of the study considers that political importance by examining the external relations of the county. The history of the Perche may be conveniently divided into three phases: the emergence of the county (the years before 1144); a period of stability (1144-1202); and the final years of the dynasty (1202-26), and a chapter is devoted to the political role of the Perche in each of these periods.

In the eleventh century the Rotrou counts exploited their position between their more powerful neighbours, the major power groupings of Normandy, Anjou and Blois/Chartres, in order first to assert and then to preserve their independence. After the long and successful rule of Count Rotrou II (c. 1100-44) that independence could no longer be disputed and the Perche entered a period of stability in which its counts could exercise influence according to their own political ability. Circumstances would change when the old antagonisms between Normandy, Anjou and Blois/Chartres were succeeded by the great rivalry between the Plantagenet and Capetian kings, and the counts of Perche would need to adapt their policies as a result, but the Rotrou counts could continue to operate according to the ground rules laid down by their ancestors. Just as the earlier counts had exploited their position to secure concessions from their neighbours, so the new power struggle was turned to the advantage of their descendants.

The loss of Normandy to the English crown in 1204, however, changed the political framework within which the county of the Perche existed and it was to prove crucial to the fortunes of the Rotrou family. The political influence which had been wielded by the counts of the Perche as border lords was no longer available when the border disappeared. With the benefit of hindsight the final years of the dynasty (1202-1226) look like a period of decline. The political activities of the family were largely suspended during a minority lasting some years and then, just as he took up his adult responsibilities, the last count of the direct line was killed in 1217. Although his uncle succeeded him, the extinction of the dynasty was only postponed until the last count's death without heirs in 1226. By that date the county had no further strategic value and no continuing comital line to assert its independence. It is in those two factors, the position of the county and the energy of its ruling dynasty, that the origins and success of the Perche as a political unit had lain.

Part I - The Setting and the Family

Chapter 1

The Perche:

the *pays* and its setting

In common with many of the historic regions of France the Perche has no modern day administrative equivalent and the land which was once described as the county of the Perche now falls into the modern *départements* of Orne, Eure-et-Loir and Sarthe, lying some 150 kilometres west of Paris. Nonetheless there remains within the area a sense of identity, which defies the modern boundaries and is more than the creation of a late twentieth century tourist board. It is an area with a sense of regional identity above and beyond that of being countryside surrounding a city, as for example the Vendômois surrounds Vendôme or the Rouennais surrounds Rouen. The Perche clearly possesses a self-awareness, which renders it a worthy example of a *pays - territoire habité par une collectivité et constituant une réalité géographique dénommée*.¹

Although the area had never been a *pagus*, that is an administrative unit within the Carolingian empire, this sense of internal cohesion had found expression by the sixteenth century in the publication of a *coutume du Perche*, that is a compilation of customary law which was accepted and adhered to within a clearly demarcated area calling itself the Perche and it is indeed the boundaries of the area where that body of customary law was accepted that define the Perche for the purposes of this study.² It was not the *coutume*, however, which was responsible for the creation of the Perche.³ For that it is necessary to look at the intervening period, for it was the years between the disintegration of the Carolingian empire and the later middle ages which saw the formation of the county of the Perche.

At that time, during the so-called central middle ages, royal authority was weak and public powers were wielded by a variety of rulers, who attempted to secure for themselves exclusive access to the rights and privileges of lordship. For the best part of two hundred years before 1226 the area which came to be known as the county of the Perche was ruled by the Rotrou family and it is with such lineages, who seized and held public power in the regions, that the origins of many of the principalities and *pays* of medieval France lie. A number of families established themselves in the locality of the Perche and there was considerable rivalry between them, but it is the area of influence secured by the Rotrou counts of Perche which has survived to

¹ P. Flatres, 'Historical geography of western France', in *Themes in the historical geography of France*, ed. H.D. Clout (London, 1977), 304-5. For the dictionary definition of a *pays*, *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*, ed. A. Rey and J. Rey-Debois (Paris, 1985), 1383.

² 'Le pagus était alors une circonscription administrative régie par un comte et représentant, soit l'une des cités de la Gaule romaine, soit seulement une fraction de ces antiques territoires', *Polyptique*, i, 12-13. The first indication of administrative unity in the locality occurs only in 853 with the sending of *missi* to the Corbonnais on the same terms as to major centres such as Le Mans, Angers, Tours and Sées, *RHF*, vii, 616: *Dodo Episcopus; Hrotbertus et Osbertus missi in Cinomannico, Angevensi atque Turonico, Corboniso et Sagiso*.

³ For a definition of *coutume* and a brief history, A. Colin and H. Capitant, *Traité de droit civil*, ed. L. Julliot de la Morandière, i (Paris, 1957), 112-7. For a general description of the *coutume* of the Perche, J. Yver, *Égalité entre héritiers et exclusion des enfants dotés: essai de géographie coutumière* (Paris, 1966), 131-3. Details of communes where the *coutume* was accepted are given in Bry, *Perche*, 10-15 of the notes section.

modern times in a form recognisable as their creation. Other configurations of power in the region came and went, but the lands collected by the Rotrou family coalesced into a durable entity of the Perche.

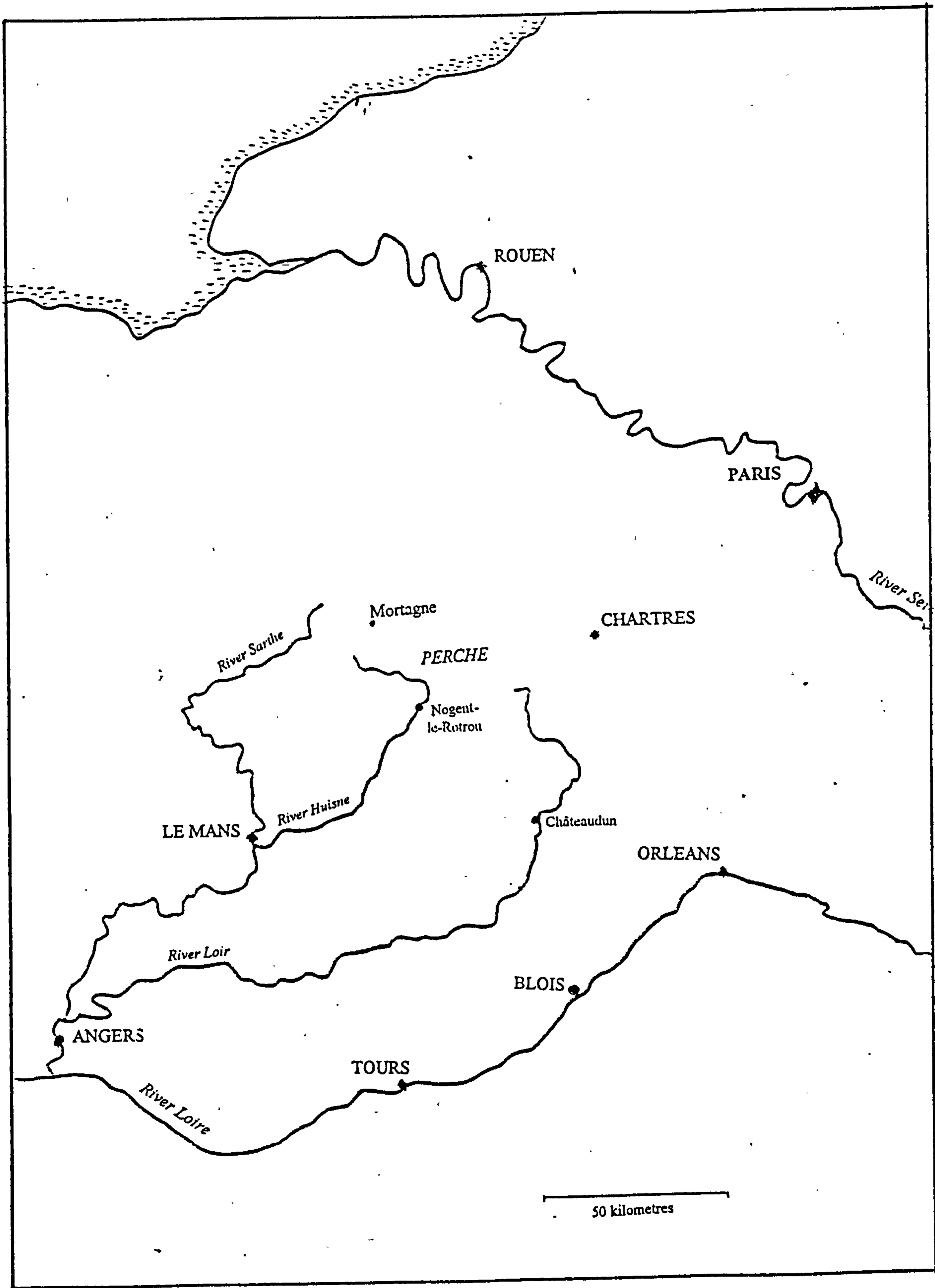
The area encompassed by the boundaries of the *coutume de Perche* is an irregular lozenge shape, covering some 250,000 hectares and extending at its greatest width about 60 kilometres in a North/South direction and approximately 70 kilometres in an East/West direction. It is essentially hilly country, often over 200 metres above sea level, traversed by narrow, wet valleys and colourfully described by André Chédeville as '*le royaume de l'arbre et de l'herbe toujours verte, le pays des terres froides et lourdes, peu accueillantes aux céréales*'.⁴ The northeastern reaches of the county represent the watershed between the Seine and the Loire basins, with the River Eure, which joins the Seine at Pont de l'Arche running along part of its north-eastern boundary and the River Sarthe, which flows to the Loire near Angers forming the northwestern boundary. (Map 1:1 *The Seine/Loire region*)

At the northernmost point of the Perche its hills reach their greatest height before levelling off to the flatter countryside of the Norman marches beyond Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche), and it is in the dense woodlands of this area that the River Avre, traditionally the southern boundary of the duchy of Normandy, takes its source.⁵ Just south of Barville (Orne, ct. Pervençères) in the *haute-vallée* of the Sarthe the boundary of the *coutume* turns abruptly south towards Mamers (Sarthe), passing midway between the forests of Bellême and Perseigne. After running immediately east of Mamers it turns southeast to run along the eastern edge of the forest of Bonnetable and on to skirt the north of La Ferté-Bernard (Sarthe, ch. 1. du ct). The southern frontier of the *coutume* is the least marked as it takes a wavering course through the uplands which represent the watershed between the Huisne and Loir rivers. Here the Perche shades into the Perche-Gouet, also known as the *Bas-Perche* or *Petit-Perche*, an area with many affinities to the Perche, but which had never come under the control of the Rotrou family in the middle ages. Further east the boundary has been defined as a commercial frontier between the *pays d'élevage* or livestock rearing country of the Perche and the corn-growing regions of the Beauce and is marked by a series of markets.⁶ Near Montigny-le-Chartrif (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) the border turns north, now taking as its defining characteristic the forests. It runs west of the Bois de Landry and the forest of Champrond, but encompasses the forest of Montecôt before turning abruptly east to avoid La Loupe (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.). From La Loupe it runs along the valley of the River Eure, west of the forest of Senonches before taking one final lurch eastwards to skirt the forest of La Ferté-Vidame and so coming to its northernmost point.

⁴ Chédeville, *Chartres*, 57.

⁵ Lemarignier, *Recherches*, 55-60.

⁶ R. Musset, 'Le Perche - nom du pays', *Annales de Géographie*, xxviii (1919), 346.



Map 1 : 1 *The Seine/Loire Region*

The physical feature which gives the area within these frontiers cohesion is its most significant, though by no means mighty, watercourse, the River Huisne, which forms in effect the crooked spine of the region. It rises near the western boundary in an area formerly covered by the forest of Blavou and runs erratically west to east before turning abruptly south near Saint-Germain de Grois (Orne, ct. Rémalard) and then running in a southwesterly direction for some 25 kilometres through Nogent-le-Rotrou and out of the county near La Ferté-Bernard. A few streams which run off the northern hills of the Perche flow into the Avre and the Sarthe, the most notable of which is the River Hoëne, but it is remarkable that most of the watercourses which drain the region run into the Huisne. The river divides the area virtually in half; on the left bank to its north and east the country is often wooded, while on its right bank to the south and west lies open rolling countryside, with clear agricultural potential.

The division between the wooded areas and agricultural land are a reflection of the soils of the Perche, which indicate its position between two major geological formations.⁷ The forested uplands are continuations of the flinty clay plateau of the Beauce, but lack the overlay of lime which gives that region its fertility. The lowlands, lying within the loop of the River Huisne, are marls whose impermeable nature lend themselves to grassland. This countryside is the classic bocage, cleared from the forest, but with many trees surviving in hedgerows, small woods and copses. As a result the agriculture of the Perche is characterised in the twentieth century by livestock production and orchards in contrast to the cereal production which was already well-established in Carolingian times in the Beauce.⁸ In modern times the Perche has become famous for its horses, but in the middle ages woodland produce probably constituted its major products.⁹

(Map 1:2 *The Geology and Watercourses of the Perche*)

Settlement within the region is largely dispersed, consisting of villages, hamlets and single dwellings.¹⁰ There are three urban centres, Nogent-le-Rotrou, Bellême and Mortagne-au-Perche. Nogent-le-Rotrou, which is sometimes described as the capital of the Perche, is situated in the valley of the River Huisne. The suffix le-Rotrou is taken from a personal name used by the comital family and seems to have been added in the later twelfth century.¹¹ Bellême is situated some 22km NW of Nogent in the shadow of its extensive forest and was first mentioned in the tenth century.¹² It may be significant, however, that a nearby settlement (1 km.) is called Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême (Orne, ct. Bellême) suggesting a possible refoundation on the more easily defensible spur where Bellême now stands. Directly to the north of Bellême, Mortagne lies

⁷ R. Musset, 'Le relief du Perche', *Annales de Géographie*, xxix (1920), 99-126.

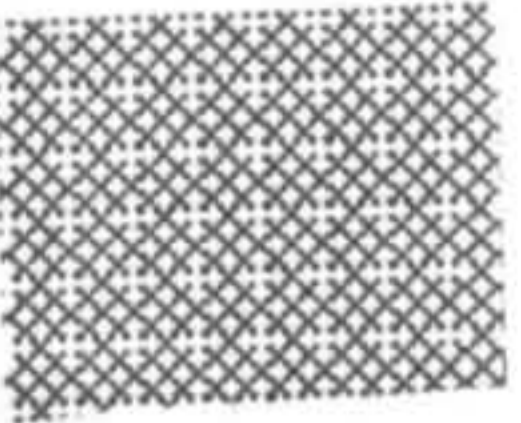
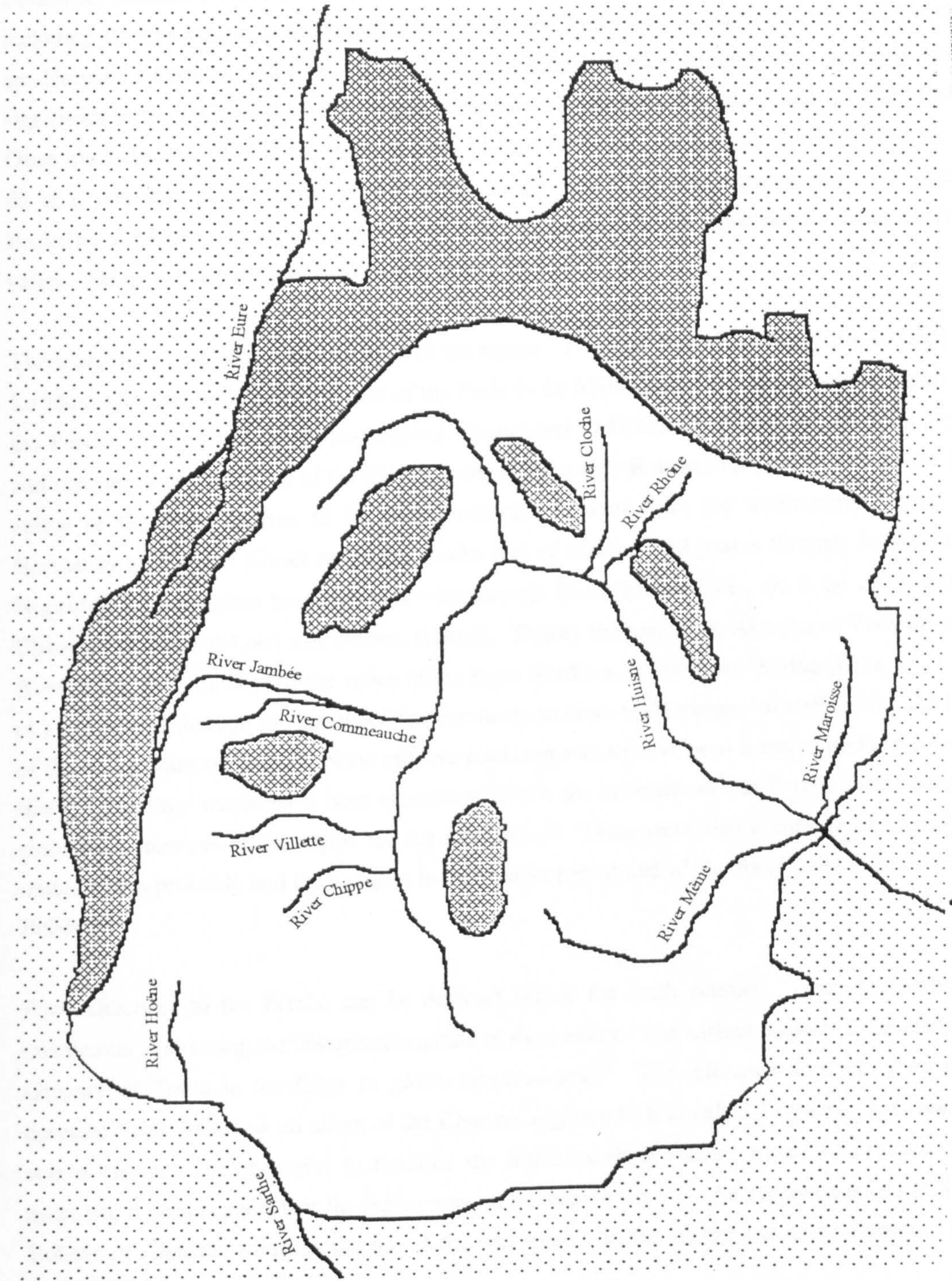
⁸ K. Randsborg, *The first millenium AD in Europe and the Mediterranean: an archaeological essay* (Cambridge, 1991), 179.

⁹ On woodland economy, C. Wickham, 'European forests in the early middle ages: landscape and land clearance', in *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 37, Spoleto, 1990), 523-8; O. Rackham, *The history of the countryside* (London, 1986), 65-7.

¹⁰ Chédeville, *Chartres*, 56-8 comments that such a pattern suggests individual family's exploitation of the forest rather than the communal activity indicated by the nucleated villages of the Beauce.

¹¹ A charter of Bishop Reginald of Chartres dated 1189 refers to *Nogento Rotrodi*, *NLR*, no. XCVII.

¹² *CMPerche*, no.1.



Extent of flinty clay plateau and outcrops

The Geology and Watercourses of the Perche

Map 1:2

in the hilly area above the River Chippe, a tributary of the Huisne, again on a site that appears chosen for defensive reasons. A number of settlements along the course of the River Huisne, including Corbon (Orne, ct. Mortagne), Boissy-Maugis, Bellou-sur-Huisne, Villeray and Condé-sur-Huisne (all Orne, ct. Rémalard), which are now little more than villages, were probably more significant in the middle ages. The largest of these settlements are Rémalard and Le Theil (both Orne, ch. 1. du ct.). Within the forested areas of the Perche only Longny-au-Perche (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.), due east of Mortagne in the valley of the River Jambée, attained any size, while Bazoches-sur-Hoëne (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) controlled the passage to the River Sarthe along its river valley. (Map 1:3 *Roads and Settlements in the Perche*)

There are three east/west road crossings of the region. The road from Chartres (Eure-et-Loir) to Le Mans (Sarthe), which formed part of the Paris to Le Mans route crosses the southern part of the Perche entering the county just beyond Champrond-en-Gâtine (Eure-et-Loir, ct. La Loupe) and running down the valley of the River Cloche to Nogent-le-Rotrou, from where it followed the valley of the River Huisne to La Ferté-Bernard. A road from the southernmost point of Normandy at Alençon (Orne) enters the Perche east of Mamers and passes through Bellême and Nogent-le-Rotrou before heading south west through Brou (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) towards Châteaudun (Eure-et-Loir) and Orléans (Loiret). Thirdly the road from Alençon to Verneuil-sur-Avre (Eure, ch. 1. du ct.) left the valley of the River Sarthe at Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) and passed through the forests of the Perche quite close to Mortagne virtually along the line of the Seine/Loire watershed. None of these roads appears to have been a major route in Roman times,¹³ but they would have been significant within the economy of the Perche in all periods since the waterways of the region are not navigable.¹⁴ There were also a number of secondary routes which probably had their origins in the Roman period and whose focal point appears to be Bellême.¹⁵

Few references to the Perche can be detected before the tenth century. They are virtually unanimous in stressing the inhospitable nature of the country. The earliest appears to be made by Gregory of Tours in his *Liber in gloria confessorum*.¹⁶ The reference does no more than describe Saint Avitus as an abbot of the Chartres region which is called *Pertensis*, but, since it was a common literary topos to describe the fathers seeking distant places to practice their ascetism, it does suggest that the region was off the beaten track.¹⁷ An anonymous life of Saint Bohave of Chartres confirms the out of the way quality to the region known as *Pertica*. In a

¹³ J.F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul* (London, 1983), 239.

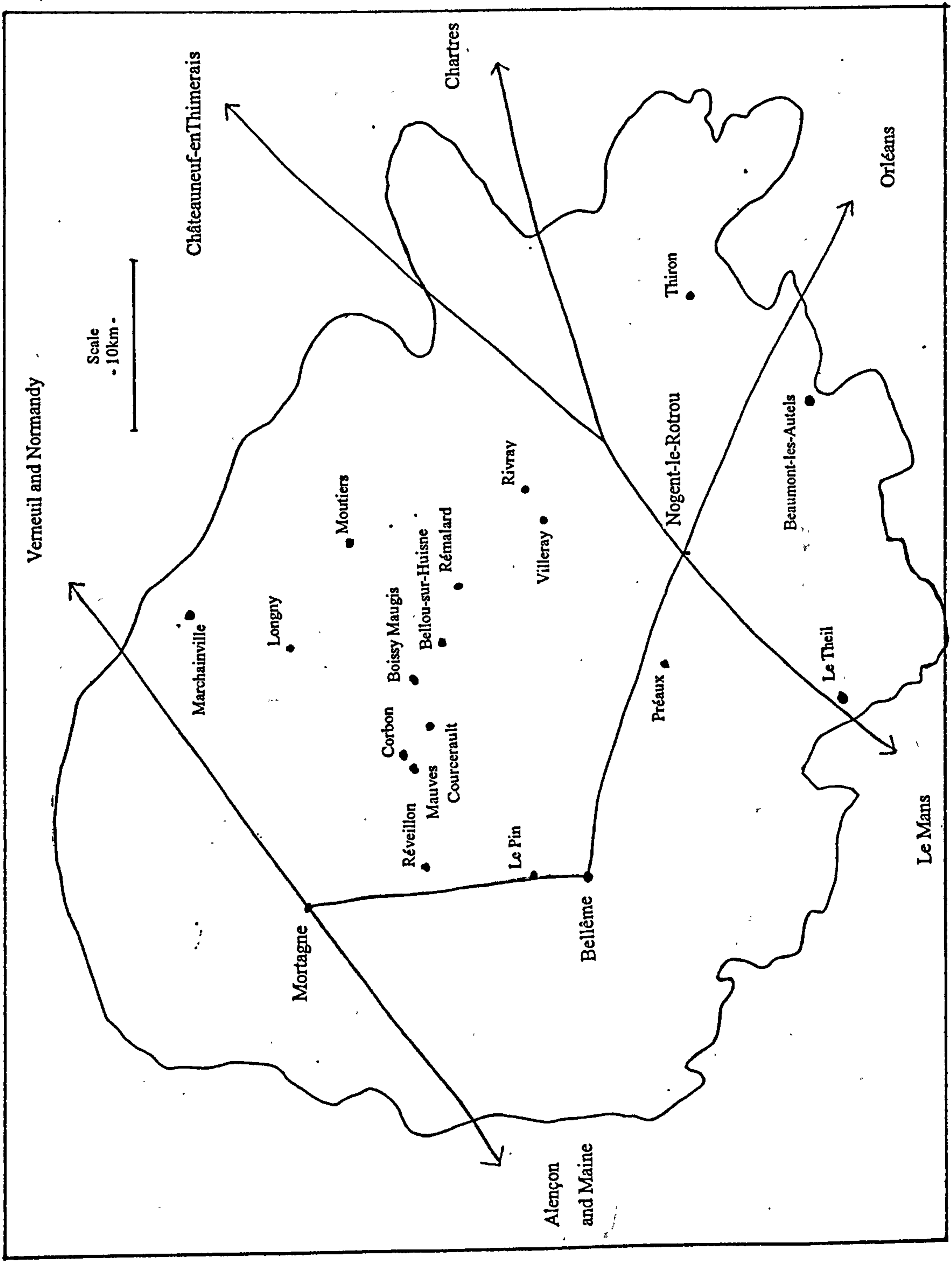
¹⁴ Chédeville, *Chartres*, 439.

¹⁵ P. Siguret, 'Recherches sur la formation du comté du Perche', *BSHAO*, lxxix (1961), 20-27. A number of rather older roads have also been detected by J. Pelatan, 'Les chemins finéraux: leur rôle dans le maintien des structures rurales: l'exemple des confins bocage-openfield dans l'ouest du bassin parisien', *Revue Géographique de l'Est*, xxiii (1983), 359-67.

¹⁶ Gregory of Tours, 'Liber in gloria confessorum', cp. 97, *MGH Scriptores rerum merovingicarum*, i (Hannover, 1885), 810.

¹⁷ A. Poncelet, 'Les Saints de Micy', *Analecta Bollandiana*, xxiv (1905), 11; R. Grégoire, 'La foresta come esperienza religiosa', *L'ambiente vegetale*, 677-86. The background is discussed in the opening chapters of J. Heuclin, *Aux origines monastiques de la Gaule du Nord: ermites et reclus de V^e au XI^es.* (Lille, 1988).

Map 1 : 3
Roads and Settlements
in the Perche



narrative of events around the year 600, the author describes how Lothar II king of the Franks campaigning against a rival was forced in flight back into the Percheron wood.¹⁸ This is the first indication of the wooded nature of the area and such terrain would clearly be attractive both as a hiding place for King Lothar and a retreat for the sixth century holy men such as Avitus, Laumer and Calais, whose cults were seized on by the ninth century hagiographers.¹⁹ Although these saints' lives provide little information about the sixth century, their description of the remote fastnesses in the Perche, *vastas loci Perthici solitudines*, indicates the hagiographers' own perception of the area.²⁰ It was the desire for such solitude which first attracted the holy men and led to the foundation of religious communities, such as that at Corbion which, by the ninth century, was established on a site associated with Saint Laumer, near present-day Moutiers-au-Perche (Orne, ct. Rémalard).

The precise extent of these woodlands is impossible to recover, but it may be significant that when Nithard speaks of Charles the Bald deploying his army in the woods commonly known as the Perche, he refers simply to the land beyond the Seine.²¹ The scantiness of archaeological material relating to the whole area west of the Seine reinforces the impression of dense woodland, but this is not to say that the area was uninhabited.²² The extensive woodland which covered much of northern France formed part of the royal fisc and was exploited by its occupants in a mixed economy which included arable farming as well as the management of woodland products.²³ In common with other areas of fisc, tracts of the Perche were granted to religious foundations by the Carolingian kings. There is no conclusive evidence about the date when the Parisian abbey of Saint-Germain des Prés secured its property in the Perche, though it was clearly not among its most ancient possessions.²⁴ Nonetheless it covered a considerable area and the account of it given in the polyptych of Irminon provides a valuable insight into conditions within the Perche in the ninth century.²⁵

The property falls into two groups, that in and around Corbon on the River Huisne (section XII within the polyptych) and a rather more widespread set of holdings which were administered from

¹⁸ *RHF*, iii, 489b.

¹⁹ Poncelet, 'Saints de Micy'; W. Goffart, *The Le Mans forgeries: a chapter from the history of church property in the ninth century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 223-4; T. Head, *Hagiography and the cult of saints: the diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (Cambridge, 1990), *passim*.

²⁰ *RHF*, iii, 439.

²¹ *RHF*, vii, 26: *in saltum qui Pertica vulgo dicitur*.

²² Siguret, 'Recherches', 27. A Roman villa was discovered at Villiers-sous-Mortagne in the nineteenth century, Siguret, 'Recherches', 29, and there are a number of *Cour* + placenames which have been taken as indications of early settlement, J. Adigard de Gautries, 'Étude onomastique ornaise', *BSHAO*, lxxvii (1960), 3-17. The ninth century hagiographers mention the sixth century holy men setting up in *veteris structurae ruina* (*RHF*, iii, 439), which may imply that in the ninth century Roman remains were still apparent in the landscape, but again this is a common *topos* and appears in a number of saints' lives, cf. Goffart, *Le Mans forgeries*, 62-4.

²³ R. Bechmann, *Trees and man: the forest in the middle ages* (New York, 1990), 45-75, 111-39.

²⁴ *Polyptique*, i, 188-222.

²⁵ It is discussed by R. Latouche, *The birth of the Western economy* (New York, 1966), 194-6; J. Devroey, 'Un monastère dans l'économie d'échanges: les services de transport à l'abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés au ix^e siècle', *Annales*, xxxix (1984), 570-89; J.J. François, 'Les domaines de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain au IX^e siècle', *MSAEL*, xxvii (1974/7), 41-77.

Boissy-Maugis (section XIII). The property which lay in the *centena Corbonensi* consisted of forty-seven smallish units, only eleven of which were described as exceeding ten ploughlands. Most appear to have been made up of an area of arable, some meadow and an allotment of woodland, some seem to be operating at less than their full potential.²⁶ While few of the estates seem to be unduly large or lucrative, they are nonetheless thriving, and it seems not unreasonable to see in these holdings land which has been cleared from the forest, and in one instance the polyptych describes this process.²⁷ (Map 1:4 *Lands of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in the Perche*)

The Boissy-Maugis property, however, is much more diverse in forms of tenure, size and location. Much of it is located outside the boundary of the later *coutume* of Perche, lying to southwest of Dreux (Eure-et-Loir), but Boissy-Maugis itself was the major focus of Saint-Germain's patrimony.²⁸ There were extensive woodland resources and deforestation was in progress.²⁹ A common form of tenure was the *mansum ingenuilem*, which appears not to have occurred in the Corbon *fisc*, and rents are often paid in iron.³⁰ A horse appears among the various livestock renders, which indicates perhaps the suitability of the area for horse breeding even in the ninth century.³¹ The implication therefore seems to be of an agrarian economy in the valley of the River Huisne, which had been apportioned into agricultural holdings. Within the wooded areas, while some clearance was under way, the variety of tenures and renders indicates that a more flexible approach had been adopted to ensure revenue, possibly because the soils of the area did not lend themselves to widespread deforestation.

The settled rural existence of the polyptych and the monastic life which had been established at Corbion were apparently destroyed during the mid ninth century as a result of harrying by Viking warbands. At first sight this would appear surprising since the waterways of the Perche would not permit navigation even by Viking shipping and the forested nature of the countryside ought to have afforded some protection. The chronicle of Saint-Wandrille certainly gives the impression that the depredations of the northmen were halted by the forests of the Perche, but the city of Chartres had been besieged by northmen in 911 and Viking activity in the Perche is implied in the *Translatio Sancti Launomari Blesois*, which describes the removal of Saint Laumer's relics from

²⁶ *Polyptique*, ii, 167: ...in villa quae dicitur Rotnis...Arant illum ad medietatem; *Polyptique*, ii, 168: in villa quae dicitur Villar. Arat illum ad medietatem.

²⁷ *Polyptique*, ii, 172: Terram quam conquisivit servus sancti Germani, nomine Maurhaus in pago Oxomense in centena Corbonense, in loco qui dicitur Vallis Maurharri.

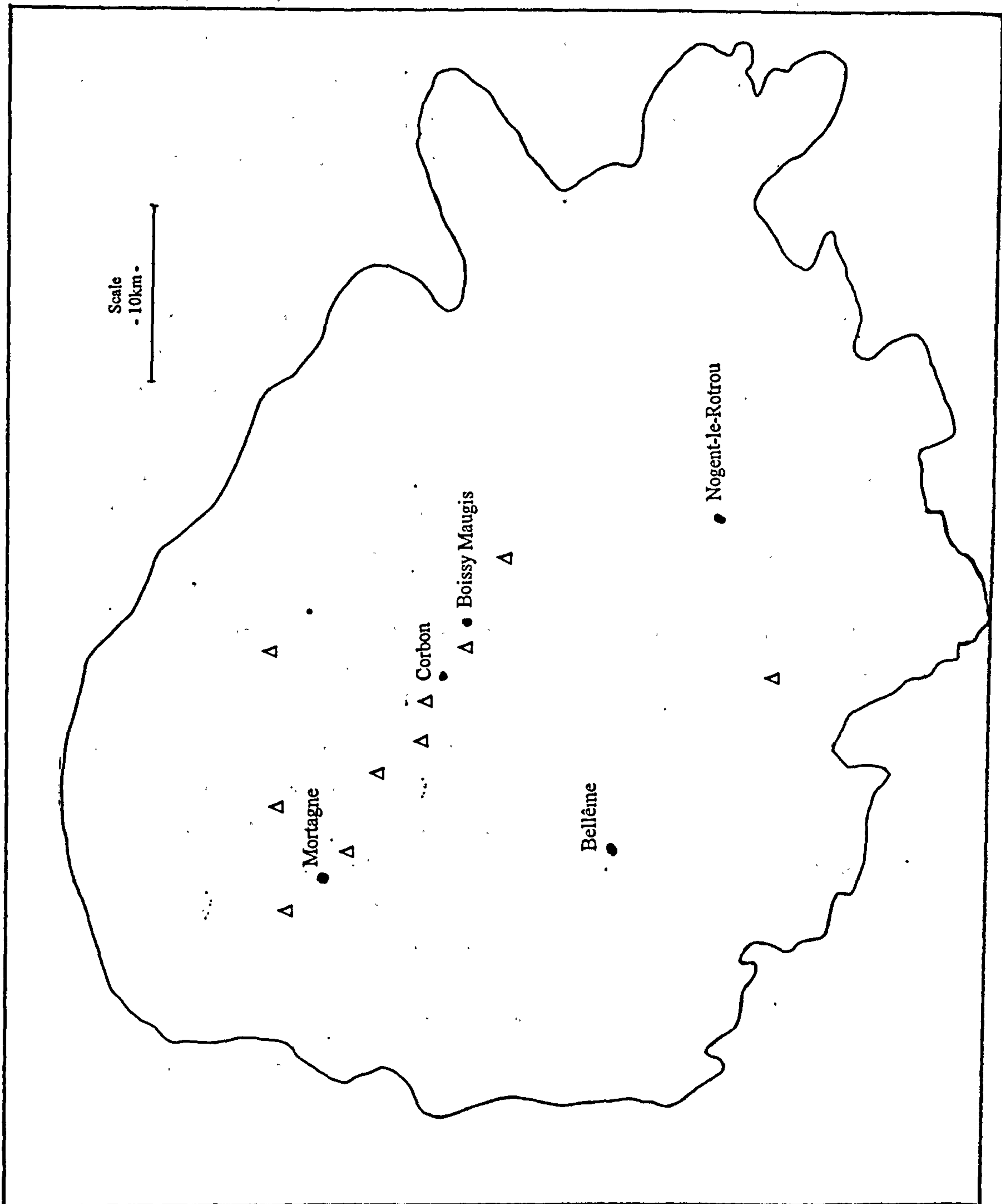
²⁸ The original editor of the Polyptych, Benjamin Guérard, identified *Buxido* with Boissy-en-Drouais precisely because much of the property lay in that region, but Auguste Longnon makes a convincing case for Boissy-Maugis in his edition, *Polyptique*, ii, 175, note 2. The question is still debated, Siguret, 'Recherches' (1961), 34, n.47.

²⁹ *Polyptique*, ii, 175-6 (XIIIA): De silvis, juxta estimationem, leuvas V totum in giro, in quibus possunt insaginari porci CC. Habet in Pertico de silva, juxta estimationem, totum in circuitu leuvas X, in quibus possunt insaginari porci DCCC. *Polyptique*, ii, 176 (XIIIB): Faciunt clausuras ad ortum, ad curtem, ad messes.

³⁰ *Polyptique*, ii, 192 (XIII 66). There appears to have been an active Roman ironworking industry around Tourouvre (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) and at Saint-Ouen-de-la-Cour (Orne, ct. Bellême), Siguret, 'Recherches', 29.

³¹ *Polyptique*, ii, 176 (XIIIB).

Map 1 : 4
*Lands of the Abbey of
Saint-Germain des-Prés
in the Perche*



Holdings of Saint-Germain-des-Prés
shown thus: Δ

their resting place at Corbion, after eighteen years of continuous harassment from the northmen.³²

Effective resistance to these raids proved difficult to organise and a number of expedients were adopted from the payment of protection money to the employment of other Viking bands as mercenaries, and it is in the latter that the origins of the Perche's mighty northern neighbour, Normandy, have to be sought.³³ Within a generation of their settlement, the northmen of Rouen had established an extremely successful and expansionist community with designs not only on other Viking settlements, but possibly on neighbouring Frankish lands.³⁴ It was the thesis of Jacques Boussard that the Robertine marquises of Neustria, faced with this threat from the Rouen enclave, sought to establish a buffer zone within the march which they controlled and that lands, which Anglo-Norman historians recognise from the works of Orderic Vitalis as those of the Bellême family, are the eleventh century survival of that buffer zone.³⁵

Boussard locates that zone between Domfront and Bellême on the southern Norman frontier, but says nothing about its obvious eastern extension into the area which would become the Perche. At some point after the ninth century, however, the lands which Saint Germain-des-Prés held around Corbon and Boissy-Maugis slipped out of their control and the period of confusion which accompanied the Scandinavian raids seems the most likely time. Saint-Germain's property would have come into the hands of Hugh the Great in his role as lay abbot and it would be perfectly possible for it to have been secularised, forming part of the territory of the Bellême family or of another family settled within the locality to act as a check on further Norman expansion.

The recovery of the Perche from the disruption caused by the Viking raids can be examined by reference not to chronicles, but to the records of monastic houses whose establishment had been made possible by that recovery. The account of the foundation of a church at Bellême, for example, in giving the locations of two villages and the churches with which the new foundation was endowed, provides valuable evidence concerning the Bellêmois in the tenth century and reveals the existence of agricultural communities within the loop of the Huisne.³⁶ This is confirmed by a gift to another religious house made between 1023 and 1026. Dame-Marie (Orne, ct. Bellême), a village some 5 kilometres south of Bellême, was granted to the Norman monastery at Jumièges by Albert, abbot of Saint Micy near Orléans, into whose hands it had

³² Chronicle of Saint-Wandrille, *RHF*, vii, 43: *Berno nortmannus cum valida classe ingressus est. Deinde junctis viribus usque Particum saltum plurimam stragem et depopulationem fecerunt.* Translatio Sancti Launomari, in *RHF*, vii, 365. The *translatio* is a difficult text which has not received a great deal of scholarly attention. Since it probably comes from the monastery of Saint-Laumer at Blois, the eventual resting place of the relics, it is possible that it was composed much later when the reasons for the removal of the relics were not fully understood and were therefore surmised as the effect of Viking raids. On relics, L. Musset, 'Exode des reliques du diocèse de Séez au temps des invasions normandes', *BSHAO*, lxxxviii (1970), 3-22.

³³ D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), 2-24.

³⁴ The chronicle of Tours describes Richard of Normandy's war against Theobald of Chartres in 962 in which the Dunois was ravaged, *RHF*, ix, 53.

³⁵ J. Boussard, 'Les destinées de la Neustria du IX^e au XI^e siècle', *CCM*, xi (1968), 25-6.

³⁶ *CMPerche*, no. 1.

come from his mother's dowry.³⁷ By the time another local landowner, Hugh of Rocé, founded a priory of Marmoutier at Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême in the 1050s, the Bellêmois was teeming with activity, as the endowments of Hugh and his followers suggest. The church of Saint-Martin was already a going concern and grants included agricultural land, a *plessitium* or inroad into the forest, vineyards, meadows and a mill.³⁸

The lively community in the region around Bellême was not the only centre of population within the Perche in the eleventh century however. The records of a new religious house dedicated to Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou, which had been established in 1031, reveal a recovery from the instability of the ninth and early tenth centuries throughout most of the area of the Perche.³⁹ At Nogent itself there was a stronghold protecting a church and community living in the *vicus*. The very name of Nogent implies that it had been consciously founded as a new market (*Novum mercatum*), but it is impossible to determine exactly when it was a new foundation. Certainly it would have been well-placed as a trading centre. The confluence of the Huisne and Corbionne rivers some 10 kilometres northeast of Nogent at Condé-sur-Huisne provided convenient access into the forested regions of the Perche and the lower valley of the Huisne formed a corridor southwest towards Le Mans, the seat of a bishopric, where urban life had continued unbroken from Roman times.

Upstream of Nogent along the River Huisne were a number of settlements, which were sufficiently thriving to support the activities of a series of local lords. On a promontory above the river at Villeray, a local family had erected a castle, from which they exercised lordship over the village of Condeau (Orne, ct. Rémalard) in the valley bottom and westwards into the hilly country of the Bellêmois. By the 1070s another castle had been constructed at Rémalard, while at Boissy Maugis, the focal point of the lands of the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés some two hundred years previously, the local lord was sufficiently prosperous to establish a priory, which he placed under the authority of Marmoutier. At Mauves (Orne, ct. Mortagne) evidence of a well-established community can be found in the church and agricultural holding (*medietaria*), which were given to the new foundation at Nogent-le-Rotrou. In the hills above the River Huisne the town of Mortagne itself must have been a sizeable settlement by the 1080s for a bailiff is recorded, a stronghold had been built and there was at least one *bourg* or trading area.⁴⁰ Its church of Saint John the Baptist formed part of the endowment of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, together with the church of Saint-Germain at Loisé (Orne, ct./cme. Mortagne), which may well have been the mother church of Mortagne.⁴¹ The town was associated with the comital title of the Rotrou family from the 1050s and was clearly important by that date.⁴²

³⁷ *RADN*, no.51.

³⁸ *CMPerche*, no. 5, pp. 14-15.

³⁹ *NLR*, no. V.

⁴⁰ *VLM*, no. 589 for the bailiff, *NLR*, no. XXXIV.

⁴¹ *NLR*, nos. XXI, XXII.

⁴² For the comital title, *VLM*, no.609 given at Mortagne. The archdeacon of Mortagne, Odo, attested a benefaction to Marmoutier made before 1060, *CMPerche*, no. 7, p. 19.

It was upon this axis along the valley of the River Huisne between Nogent-le-Rotrou and Mortagne that the Rotrou family were to lay the foundations of the county of Perche. They were to experience hostility to the west of that axis in the Bellêmeis, that is the area within the loop of the River Huisne, which was to remain until the early years of the twelfth century under the dominance of the rival Bellême family. The history of the two families' rivalry, as narrated by the Norman historian Orderic Vitalis, forms one of the best-known examples of private warfare during the so-called feudal period when "lineage engaged in brutal but rational competition".⁴³ To the east and northeast of the Huisne valley, however, in the wooded uplands there was no one obvious rival. There are few references to this area in the eleventh century and its history is therefore difficult to discern, but a family based in La Ferté-Arnoul (later La Ferté-Vidame, Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) exercised some authority in that locality from the late eleventh century, and the interests possessed by the lords of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct) seem to have extended westwards into the area which later acknowledged the *coutume* of the Perche. Nonetheless the lordship of the forests to the east of the River Huisne was still unresolved and presented an opportunity for expansion.

By the turn of the twelfth century much economic progress had been made and sufficient resources were available to support a lordly lifestyle, involving military elitism and the foundation and endowment of religious houses inside and outside the area. A band of territory from Mortagne to Nogent-le-Rotrou formed the basis of the Rotrou lordship, which could be complemented by the addition of the agriculturally developed Bellêmeis and of the areas to the east of the Huisne, where forest clearance had made less impact and where the quality of the soil was ultimately to ensure the retention of much of the woodland landscape. Under the Rotrou family a new political entity would emerge which, despite the absence of any earlier administrative, diocesan or even geological unity, would develop sufficient local cohesion to outlast its existence as an independent principality and continue to modern times with a distinct sense of identity. That evolution occurred because the Rotrous took the opportunities presented by chronic instability to establish themselves in the tenth and eleventh centuries and had then secured a clear preeminence within the area which would become the Perche.

⁴³ D. Barthélemy, 'Kinship', in *History of Private Life, ii, Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. G. Duby, trans. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 93.

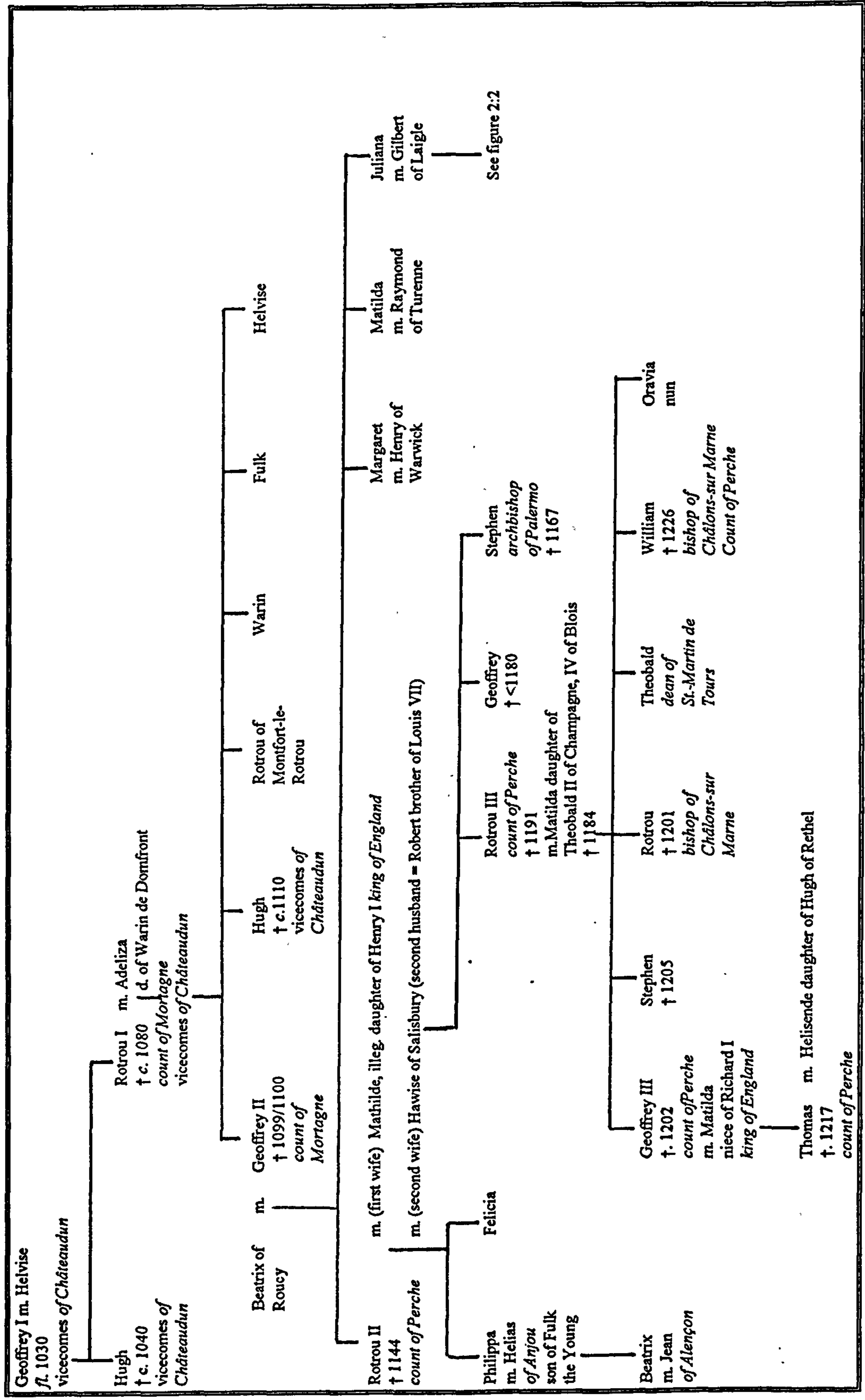


Figure 2 : 1 The House of Rotrou c. 1050-1226

Chapter 2

The House of Rotrou

The origins of the family from which the twelfth and early thirteenth century counts of the Perche were descended are as indistinct as those of most of the rest of the nobility of western Europe, and a definitive history can only begin in the early years of the eleventh century.

Geoffrey I (fl. 1031)

The first member of the Perche family who can be identified with any clarity is the *vicecomes* Geoffrey (fl. 1031). He was a man of some influence in Chartres and Châteaudun and controlled considerable landed resources in the hills around Nogent-le-Rotrou, where in 1031 he founded a monastery dedicated to Saint-Denis. An act of foundation attributed to Geoffrey and preserved in the cartulary of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou describes Geoffrey as the *vicecomes* of Châteaudun and gives the additional information that his mother was named Melisendis and his sons were called Hugh and Rotrou.¹ Apart his appearance in the witness lists of three charters dating from the first half of the eleventh century, these details represent all that is known for certain about the apparent founder of the house of Rotrou.² It is likely, however, that this Geoffrey can be identified with another *vicecomes* Geoffrey who appears in a number of contemporary acts with his wife, Helviza and son, Hugh, and that the complaints of Bishop Fulbert of Chartres (1007-29) concerning of the activities of a *vicecomes* Geoffrey, who had built castles on episcopal land at Gallardon (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Maintenon) and Illiers-Combray (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.), probably refer to the same man.³

Geoffrey's antecedents are almost impossible to determine, but have been the subject of much speculation by French historians.⁴ He has been linked with an important, if somewhat nebulous, tenth century dynasty of *vicecomites* of Châteaudun.⁵ The precise genealogy of this family has never been determined, since their existence is indicated only by infrequent attestations and chronicle references, but a connection with Geoffrey is provided by an act from the cartulary of

¹ *NLR*, no. V.

² Charter of King Robert, *RHF*, x, 619 (1027/33); charter of Odo, count of Blois, *Chartes de Saint-Julien de Tours 1002-1227*, ed. L.J. Denis (Le Mans, 1912), no. 12 (16 April 1034); the foundation charter of Pontlevoy, *Recueil des actes de Philippe I^{er}, roi de France*, ed. M. Prou (Paris, 1908), no. LXXIV (1035, but preserved in copy confirmed in 1075).

³ *CMD*, no. 1 is witnessed by Hugh. *SPC*, 400-1, a confirmation by *vicecomes* Geoffrey, is witnessed by his wife, *Helvidis*, and son, Hugh. *VLM*, no. 587 may also refer to *vicecomes* Geoffrey rather than to Geoffrey of Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, to whom it is attributed by the editors of the cartulary, since the act was later confirmed by Geoffrey's son, Rotrou I. Fulbert of Chartres, *Letters and poems*, ed. F. Behrends (Oxford, 1976), nos. 59, 98, 99, 100.

⁴ Romanet, *Géographie*, 37-41; J. Boussard, 'L'origine des familles seigneuriales dans la région de la Loire moyenne', *CCM*, v (1962), 303-22, esp. 311-4; 'Les évêques en Neustrie avant la réforme grégorienne (950-1050 environ)', *Journal des Savants*, 1970, 161-96, esp. 174-6.

⁵ The only study specifically devoted to them I have been able to trace is C. Cuissard, 'Chronologie des vicomtes de Châteaudun 960-1395', *Bulletin de la Société Dunoise*, viii (1894/6), 25-120.

Saint-Père of Chartres which records the gifts of Hildegarde, *vicecomitissa* of Châteaudun.⁶ The act which must date from before 1023 is made with the approval of her son, Hugh archbishop of Tours and is witnessed by the archbishop and his nephew Geoffrey. This nephew Geoffrey has been identified with *vicecomes* Geoffrey, but the precise nature of the relationship has not been established.⁷

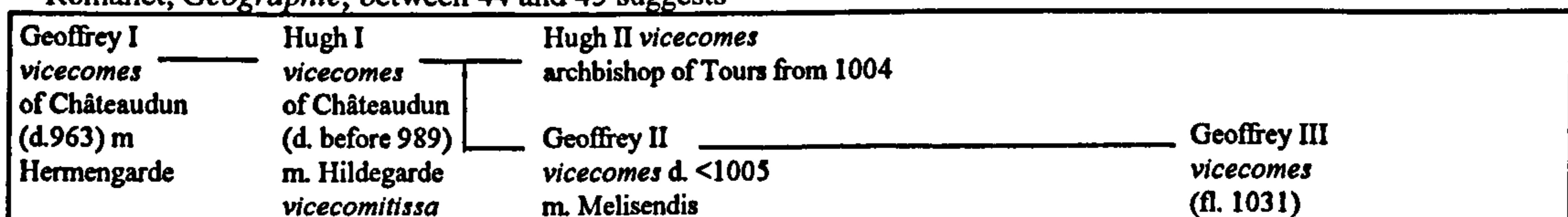
These genealogies are for the most part irrelevant for the purposes of this study except for that fact that some of these conjectures have come close to acceptance as fact in modern writings on the Perche. Thus, while the first historian of the Perche, Gilles Bry de la Clergerie described *vicecomes* Geoffrey as Geoffrey I, he is described as Geoffrey III by many later historians who take his relationship with these earlier speculative Geffreys as proven. There is much to be said for returning to Bry's numeration and it will be followed throughout the thesis, since any identification before Geoffrey is based on inference and speculation. There are no further contemporary references to Geoffrey, though a little of subsequent events can be detected from the acts of his sons. A confirmation of one of Geoffrey's acts by his son, Hugh, indicates that Hugh succeeded his father and a further act of endowment for Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, given by Geoffrey's other son, Rotrou, provides the information that Geoffrey was assassinated in Chartres as he was coming out of the cathedral.⁸ Nothing more is known of the *vicecomes* Hugh and it is his brother Rotrou, who subsequently appears as head of the family.

Rotrou I (c. 1050 - c. 1080)

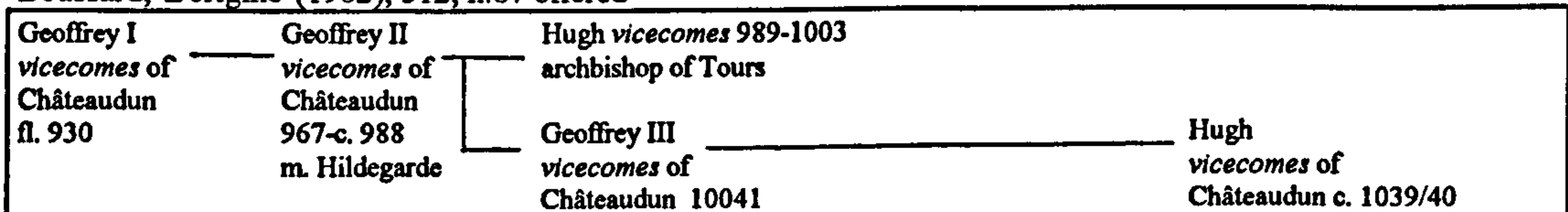
With Geoffrey I's son Rotrou I we are on slightly firmer ground since rather more material has survived from which his career can be reconstructed. Five acts attributable to him have survived

⁶ SPC, 117-8.

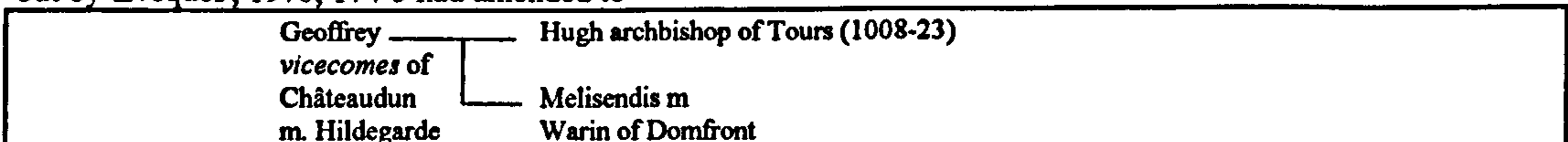
⁷ Romanet, *Géographie*, between 44 and 45 suggests



Boussard, 'L'origine' (1962), 312, n.87 offered



but by 'Evêques', 1970, 174-5 had amended to



C. Settapani, 'Les comtes d'Anjou et leurs alliances aux X^e et XI^e siècles' Proceedings of the Oxford Prosopography Conference (forthcoming) offers:



⁸ CMD, no. 1, NLR, no. VI.

and he attested two charters of the Capetian king, Henri I. In addition there are several references to him in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis, including a brief pen portrait which provides the fact that Rotrou was chronically deaf.⁹

On the death of his father Rotrou's (probably) elder brother, Hugh, succeeded in Châteaudun, while Rotrou took the family property at Nogent. By the late 1050s, however, Rotrou had adopted the title of count, which Orderic Vitalis attaches to the town of Mortagne, some 38 kilometres north of Nogent.¹⁰ In the late 1070s Rotrou made a substantial increase to the endowment of his father's foundation at Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou on the occasion of the dedication of the new church he had built there.¹¹ In this act he refers to himself as not simply count of Mortagne but also *vicecomes* of Châteaudun, so it would appear that at some point he had reconstituted the territory of his father, Geoffrey. The only other evidence on this matter places Rotrou's resumption of the family property in 1057/8, but gives no details as to whether he succeeded his brother directly or after an interval.¹²

The name of Rotrou's wife Adeliza is given in a benefaction which Rotrou made to the abbey of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans.¹³ Rotrou was the father of some seven children, not all of them by Adeliza, and was survived by at least four of them.¹⁴ The date of his death is unknown, though an obituary from Saint-Père of Chartres places it on 1 March.¹⁵ He was succeeded as count of Mortagne by his son Geoffrey and as *vicecomes* of Châteaudun by another son, Hugh.¹⁶ A younger son Rotrou married the daughter of Hugh of Genes and established a line of Rotrous which survived at Montfort-le-Rotrou (also known as Montfort-le-Gesnois, Sarthe, ch. 1. du ct.) until the thirteenth century.¹⁷

⁹ *NLR*, nos. VI, XIX; *VLM*, no. 587, 589, 609. *SPC*, 156 purports to be an act of Rotrou but is spurious. Attestations of royal charters, *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^{er}, roi de France (1031-1060)*, ed. F. Soehnée (Paris, 1907), nos. 112, 114. *OV*, ii, 360.

¹⁰ *OV*, ii, 360.

¹¹ *NLR*, no. VI. Another version of this document is preserved in the archives of Cluny, *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny*, ed. A. Bernard and A. Bruel (Paris, 1876-1903), no. 3517.

¹² *CMD*, no. CLVI.

¹³ *VLM*, no. 609. In this act Rotrou refers to his father *vicecomes* Geoffrey and also to his otherwise unknown grandfather, Count Fulk. This has led de Romanet to construct a genealogy in which Helviza, the wife of *vicecomes* Geoffrey, is the daughter of a Count Fulk of Mortagne, *Géographie*, 41. There is no evidence of such a personality. Rotrou's wife is not named by Orderic in his account of the family, vi, 396.

¹⁴ Rotrou the eldest son appears only in *VLM*, no. 609. Geoffrey and Hugh succeeded their father. A younger Rotrou married a Manceau heiress, the daughter of Hugh of Genes, *VLM*, no. 264. Warin Brito appears in *VLM*, nos. 587 and 589, but not in *NLR*, no. VI, so may have died by the late 1080s. Helviza appears in *NLR*, no. VI as does Fulk, and Robert Mandaguerra appears as the brother of Hugh Capellus in *CMPerche*, no. 16.

¹⁵ *Obits*, ii, 184.

¹⁶ No documentation on this partition of the family's interests has survived and the division has to be inferred from charter evidence. It must have taken place by 1080 when an act of Hugh Capellus *vicecomes* of Châteaudun in favour of Marmoutier was confirmed by his brother Geoffrey, and it is again outlined in Hugh's approval of the grant of Saint-Léonard of Bellême to Marmoutier, *CMD*, no. CXL, *CMPerche*, no. 16.

¹⁷ AD Eure-et-Loir H4611, AD Sarthe H84, H85, H375, H1113 for the Montfort-le-Rotrou branch.

Geoffrey II (c. 1080 - c. 1099)

Geoffrey II, son and successor of Rotrou I as count of Mortagne, is known to us mostly from the records of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and from references in Orderic's *Ecclesiastical History*. When he succeeded his father Geoffrey must have been nearly into middle age, for he had fought at Hastings nearly twenty-five years before, and he was already married to Beatrix, the daughter of Hilduin of Montdidier and Roucy.¹⁸ One of his earliest acts was his invitation to the monks of Cluny to reform the family foundation of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, whose monastic standards Geoffrey regarded as unsatisfactory.¹⁹ The ancient abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres, which had claimed jurisdiction over Nogent-le-Rotrou during the lifetime of Count Rotrou I, challenged Geoffrey's grant.²⁰ Accounts of the ensuing dispute vary, with that of Saint-Père assigning a none too pleasant role to the Countess Beatrix who is accused of driving out the monks and retaining in her own residence (*aula*) the bequests which Count Rotrou had intended for the monks of Nogent.²¹

Orderic's references to Geoffrey mostly concern his repeated warfare with Robert of Bellême, his second cousin and the most powerful figure on the southern Norman frontier.²² Orderic's is perhaps a partisan account, but it does give a thumbnail sketch of the count of Mortagne:

a distinguished count, handsome and brave, God-fearing and devoted to the church, a staunch defender of the clergy and God's poor; in time of peace he was gentle and lovable and conspicuous for his good manners; in time of war, harsh and successful, formidable to the rulers who were his neighbours, and an enemy to all. He stood out among the highest in the land because of the high birth of his parents...and kept valiant barons and warlike castellans in firm subjection to his government.²³

Apart from attending a hearing of the court of Bishop Ivo of Chartres, presumably in Chartres and his attestation at Dreux of an act made by King Philip I in 1086, Geoffrey is not to be found outside his own territory.²⁴ In the early 1090s Geoffrey's daughter, Juliana, was married to Gilbert of Laigle, a member of a prominent family from the Norman marches, and another daughter, Margaret, was also to marry a Norman, Henry younger son of Roger of Beaumont. A third daughter, Matilda, was married to the Limousin lord, Raymond of Turenne.²⁵ In 1096 Geoffrey's son Rotrou joined the expedition to the Holy Land. During his absence Geoffrey died,

¹⁸ OV, ii, 266, iv, 160. Orderic wrongly describes Beatrix as the daughter of the count of Rochefort, OV, vi, 394, but her correct parentage is given by Alberic of Trois Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 794.

¹⁹ *NLR*, nos. VII, XX, p. 68: *locum ipsum quotidie in deterius ire*.

²⁰ *NLR*, no. XX bis. The dispute is discussed in H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian reform* (Oxford, 1970), 105-6.

²¹ *SPC*, 157: *ab uxore Gausfridi, nomine Beatrice, jussi sunt egredi*.

²² OV, vi, 396-8.

²³ OV, iv, 160.

²⁴ *SPC*, 314; *Actes de Philippe I^{er}*, no. CXVIII.

²⁵ OV, iv, 160, 200-202. For Matilda, Geoffrey de Vigeois, *RHF*, xii, 424. Raymond of Turenne had been prominent in the first crusade, so it is possible that this match was made as a result of Rotrou II's crusading connections, rather than by Geoffrey II, Peter of Tueboeuf, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, and *Continuatio*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, iii (Paris, 1866), 50, 206.

leaving his territory in the care of his wife Beatrix and taking the Cluniac habit just before his death.²⁶ Orderic gives the month of his death as October, but does not give a year, so it is unclear how long the Countess Beatrix was left to administer the family property. She seems to have been a woman of some character and continued to play an active role in the running of her son's territory during her widowhood.²⁷

Rotrou II (c. 1099 - 1144)

Geoffrey's son and successor, Count Rotrou II, is much the best known of the counts of the Perche largely because he was a contemporary of Orderic Vitalis, but he also appears in other sources such as Geoffrey Grossus' *Life of Bernard* as well as in contemporary letter collections, including those of the bishops Ivo of Chartres and Hildebrand of Le Mans.²⁸ He participated in the first crusade,²⁹ fought with his cousin, Alphonso the Battler in Spain³⁰ and was an ally of King Henry I of England, whose daughter by an otherwise unknown Edith he married in the early years of the twelfth century.³¹ Orderic says that Henry greatly increased Rotrou's family wealth in England as a result of this marriage, but there is no trace of the family in Domesday book and it would therefore appear that the two English manors, Aldbourne and Wanborough in Wiltshire, which can be shown to have been in Rotrou's hands, came to him as his wife, Matilda's dowry.³²

Rotrou continued his father's policy of hostility towards Robert of Bellême, though he was no more successful than Geoffrey and he finally secured Bellême in 1113 as a grant from his father-in-law, Henry I.³³ Thereafter Rotrou began to style himself count of Perche and lord of Bellême,³⁴ and his prestige was further enhanced by his association with the religious house founded within his territory at Thiron (Eure-et-Loir, ch. l. du ct.) by Bernard, the former abbot of Saint-Cyprien of Poitiers.³⁵ He continued his close association with the family of his sister, Juliana and in 1118/9 supported the claims made to King Henry I by her son, Richer of Laigle that he should succeed to the Laigle family lands in England.³⁶ In 1120 his wife Matilda was drowned in the loss of the White Ship, but Rotrou made no haste to remarry.³⁷ He designated his elder daughter Philippa as his heir and gave her in marriage to Helias, younger son of Fulk the

²⁶ OV, vi, 394.

²⁷ Beatrix's attestations with her husband, *NLR*, nos. VII, XI, XIX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXXIV, LII, LV. For her attestations with her son, *NLR*, nos. LI, LVIII, LXXXVIII, *Tiron*, no. VI, LXIV, CVI.

²⁸ Geoffrey Grossus, *Vita Beati Bernardi Tironiensis*, *PL*, vol. 172, col. 1406. Ivo of Chartres, *Epistolae* clxviii-clxx, clxxiii, cclxxxiii, *PL*, vol. 162, cols. 170-4, 176-7, 283-4. Hildebert, *RHF*, xv, 317-318.

²⁹ Rotrou was probably born before 1080 as he was old enough to go on the crusade in 1096, OV, v, 34.

³⁰ OV, vi, 394-6. L. Nelson, 'Rotrou of Perche and the Aragonese reconquest', *Traditio*, xxvi (1970), 117-19.

³¹ OV, vi, 40. *PR 31 Henry I, 155: de firma terre Edith' matris comitisse de Pertico.*

³² For Rotrou's tenure of Aldbourne and Wanborough, BL Cotton Vespasian F xv, Cartulary of Lewes priory, fos. 167v., 169.

³³ OV, vi, 34.

³⁴ *CMPerche*, no. 26. The titles used by the counts will be discussed in chapter 3.

³⁵ OV, iv, 328-30. Following the modern IGN maps of France and the Michelin series, the spelling Thiron is used for the place name, but the abbey is usually spelt Tiron, *Tiron*, intro. Ivo, *Epistola* cclxxxiii.

³⁶ OV, vi, 196, 248-50.

³⁷ OV, vi, 304, 40.

Young, count of Anjou. On the understanding that Philippa and Helias should succeed him, Rotrou then left for a prolonged period in Spain.³⁸

Rotrou had already spent some time in Spain, having responded to an appeal for assistance against the Moslems from his cousin, Alphonso of Aragon. This adventure probably took place around 1108 and the apparent ingratitude of the Aragonese king and the antagonism of the Spanish with which Orderic describes its ending are probably to be explained by the uncertainty at Alphonso's court after the marriage of Alphonso and Queen Urraca of Castille.³⁹ Alphonso probably made a second appeal to Rotrou after the successful campaign of 1118/9 in the Ebro valley, as a result of which the king would have needed reliable men to consolidate his hold on his conquests.⁴⁰ Some Spanish sources suggest that Rotrou was present during these campaigns and captured Tudela, but Rotrou cannot be traced in Spanish charters until 1123. At that date he was Alphonso's governor of Tudela and in 1125 he took part in the campaigns in Benicadell, after which some of his followers returned home.⁴¹

Rotrou himself may have intended to remain in Spain indefinitely. References to his lieutenants suggest occasional absences from his duties there,⁴² and visits to northern France and even England can be traced in the 1120s, but his governorship of Tudela continued to be acknowledged in Spanish charters.⁴³ Although he must have been in northern France in 1129, when he witnessed an act in favour of Fontevrault at the ducal court in Rouen and probably gave a couple

³⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronique*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnholt, 1986), 632-3: *Nomen vero secundi ejusdem domini Fulconis filii materni avi nomen referentis Helias, cui Rotroldus comes Perchensis filiam suam unicam uxorem dedit, spondens quod de caetero uxorem non duceret sed omnem haereditatem suam cum omni integritate in eum moriens transferret. Pactorum tamen immemor et promissorum prodigus uxorem duxit sororem comitis Patricii nobilis in Anglia viri ex qua plures suscepit liberos unde praedictus Helias ab ejus haereditate contra spem factus est alienus.* Helias and Philippa's approval of an important extension which Rotrou made to Tiron's endowment indicates their position as joint heirs, *Tiron*, no. XXXIII.

³⁹ OV, vi, 396. J.F. O'Callaghan, *A history of medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975), 216-7. The birth of Rotrou's second daughter Felicia can tentatively be dated to this period, since her name must be a compliment to Rotrou's aunt, Queen Felicia of Aragon, the mother of Alphonso, who died in 1123, S. de Vajay, 'Ramire II le Moine roi d'Aragon et Agnès de Poitou dans l'histoire et dans la légende', *Mélanges offertes à René Crozet*, ed. P. Gallais et Y.-J. Riou (Poitiers, 1966), 730.

⁴⁰ According to the Muslim chronicler al-Maqqari, Alphonso I of Aragon made a major appeal to the lords of France in 1117 and a papal council at Toulouse in 1118 led to the formation of a massive army of southern French troops. In December 1118 Zaragoza was captured and in February 1119 the city of Tudela fell. Al-Maqqari cited in J.M. Lacarra, 'La conquista de Zaragoza por Alfonso I', *Al-Andalus*, xii (1947), 79.

⁴¹ Lynn Nelson, 'Rotrou', 122-3, 126-7 suggests that the chronicles have been doctored in the light of the later dispute between Navarre and Aragon. For Rotrou in Spain in April 1123, *Documentos para el Estudio de la Reconquista y Repoblación del Valle del Ebro*, ed. J.M. Lacarra (Zaragoza, 1982-5), no. 91. OV, vi, 400-2.

⁴² *Colección Diplomática Medieval de la Rioja: documentos*, ed. Ildfonso Rodríguez de Lama (Logroño, 1976-9), tomo II, no. 85, dated 28 February 1126: *Sub eo comite Rotron in Tutela, sub quo Robert Bordet in castello; Duran Pesson iusticia.* *Doc. Ebro*, no. 161, dated 22 September 1128: *comite Pertico dominante et Tutela Gofre Bertran in illo castello de Tutela, Duran Peixon iusticia.* Rotrou's lieutenant, Robert Bordet, subsequently made his own career in Spain, L.J. McCrank, 'Norman crusaders in the Catalan reconquest: Robert Burdet and the principality of Tarragona', *Journal of Medieval History*, vii (1981), 70-1.

⁴³ Orderic says that Rotrou returned from Spain in 1125 and he witnessed charters in the mid 1120s, OV, vi, 404; *CMD*, no. CLXXVII; *Earldom of Gloucester charters*, ed. R Patterson (Oxford, 1973), no. 109. Documents issued by the Aragonese king were often dated with reference to office holders, *Doc. Ebro*, nos. 136, 140, 142-47, 151 (all 1127), 155, 157, 159 (all 1128).

of tidying acts to Tiron,⁴⁴ Rotrou's continuing commitment to Spain is implied by his cousin's grant of the town and castle of Corella in December 1128.⁴⁵

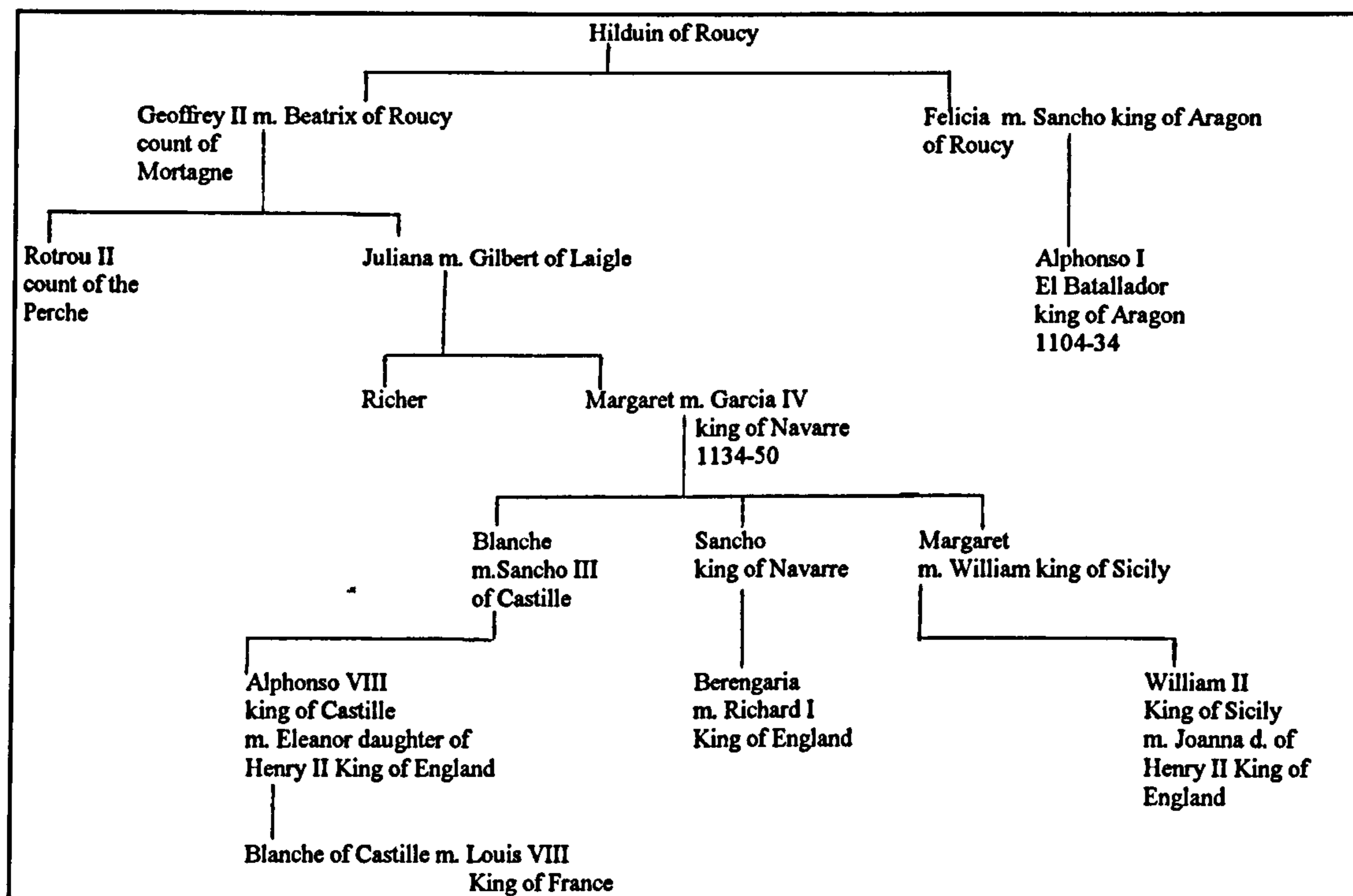


Figure 2:2: *The Spanish and Sicilian connections of the House of Rotrou*

Tudela remained under Rotrou's governorship until around 1133, when an act shows it in the hands of Garcia Ramirez, the husband of Rotrou's niece, Margaret of Laigle.⁴⁶ It is not clear whether Margaret⁴⁷ was at this point already married to Garcia, a descendant of Sancho the Great, king of Navarre⁴⁸ or whether the marriage was arranged around 1132/3.⁴⁹ Their grandson

⁴⁴ *Tiron*, nos. CXX, CVIII. *CDF*, no. 1054 is witnessed by Rotrou, and this witness list compares closely with those of acts made at Rouen in 1129, *RRAN*, ii, nos. 1580-1.

⁴⁵ *Doc. Ebro*, no. 164 (December 1128 at Almazán): *propter seruitia que mihi fecistis et cotidie facitis*.

⁴⁶ For Rotrou at Tudela, *Col. Rioja*, nos. 95 (March 1129), 98 (26 October 1130); *Doc. Ebro*, nos. 178, 182, 185-88 (all 1129), 192 (1130), 208, 210 (1131); *Col. Rioja*, no. 101 (March 1132); *Doc. Ebro*, no. 217 (1132). For Garcia at Tudela, *Col. Rioja*, no. 103.

⁴⁷ She is given no name by Alberic, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 794: *secunda soror Beatrix nomine Rotroldo comiti de Pertico peperit comitem Rotroldum et Margaretam de Novoburgo in Normannia; cujus filia Juliana de Aquilla fuit mater reginae Navarreorum*. A letter to Rotrou count of Perche, in which his niece seeks to persuade him to return to the fight against the *infideles et contemptores Dei* has been attributed to Margaret, despite the fact that the niece identifies herself only by the initial B, *RHF*, xv, 512. It is just possible that the wife of Garcia Ramirez of Navarre was originally called Beatrix after her maternal grandmother, but more likely the letter came from her daughter, Blanche.

⁴⁸ Garcia was the grandson of Sancho Garces, an illegitimate son of Garcia III of Navarre, but after the death of Alphonso I of Aragon in 1134 he became king of Navarre, E. Lourie, 'The will of Alfonso I, "El Batallador", king of Aragon and Navarre: a reassessment', *Speculum*, 1 (1975), 642-43. He was also the grandson of the Cid and his genealogy is outlined in S. de Vajay, *Mélanges René Crozet*, 734, n. 54.

⁴⁹ *Col. Rioja*, no. 73 places Margaret in Spain with her uncle in the 1120s, since it is tentatively dated to 1124, but the form of the attestations is suspicious: *signo regine Margarite. signo comitis de Pertica* and doubts have been expressed about the authenticity of the document, which survives only in a later copy, on the grounds that it is a reworking of texts and that its witness list is unacceptable, R. Loscertales, 'Los fueros de Sobrarbe', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, vii (1947), 34-66. Sancho the son of Garcia and Margaret was not particularly young when he succeeded his father in 1150, so Margaret could have been married in the 1120s.

was later to claim rights in Tudela on the grounds that it was Margaret's property,⁵⁰ but it may be that Count Rotrou settled the city on his already married niece when he surrendered its control to her husband.⁵¹

The reasons for Rotrou's withdrawal from Spain are not apparent, though it may have been family circumstances, such as the death of his eldest daughter and heir Philippa. Despite his agreement concerning the succession of Philippa and her husband, Rotrou contracted a second marriage to Hawise, daughter of Walter of Salisbury, the sheriff of Wiltshire where Rotrou's English property lay. The date of this marriage is unknown, though the fact that Rotrou's eldest son by this second wife did not come of age until the late 1140s at the earliest, suggests that he cannot have been born much before 1135. Rotrou may not therefore have married Hawise until he returned from Spain, perhaps on account of her youth.⁵² The marriage is a surprising one and can hardly be described as an alliance. Rotrou's first wife had been the (admittedly illegitimate) daughter of a king, but his second bride was hardly an heiress.⁵³

In the closing years of his life Rotrou was a major political figure. In 1137 he secured the ducal castles of Moulins-la-Marche for himself and Bonsmoulins for his nephew Richer as the price of their support for Stephen of Blois' succession.⁵⁴ It seems not unreasonable to date the birth of Rotrou and Hawise's third son, Stephen, to the aftermath of this incident, since he was given not a name from either parent's family stock, but that of his father's new ally and patron. It is possible too that Rotrou's interest in the Savignac abbey of La Trappe which lies in the heavily wooded country between Mortagne and Laigle (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) dates from this period of rapprochement with Stephen, whose interest in the order is well-known.⁵⁵ Rotrou also accompanied the young Louis VII on his journey to Bordeaux to claim Eleanor of Aquitaine as

⁵⁰ Garcia and Margaret's daughter married the king of Castille and their son, Alphonso VIII of Castille in the course of a submission of his grievances against the king of Navarre made in 1177 describes how he sought *medietatem Tutelae ex causa maternae successionis quam comes Dalperg donavit reginae Margaritae sobrinae suae quae uxor fuit regis Garsiae*, *Gesta*, i, 148.

⁵¹ Margaret is certainly accorded some importance in her husband's charters as king of Navarre, *Col. Rioja*, no. 112 (October 1136): *Ego quoque Margarita Dei gratia regina simul cum domino meo rege hanc cartam et hoc donatium laudo et confirmo*. A similar form of words can be found in *Colección Diplomática de Irache*, vol. I, ed. J.M. Lacarra (Zaragoza, 1965), nos. 131, 134.

⁵² Hawise's name appears in Rotrou's act in favour of the priory of Bellême, AD Orne H2153 published as *CMPerche*, no. 21. The act was drafted by the monks, leaving a space for the name of the countess, and it then awaited confirmation by the count and attestation by his entourage on his next visit. Hawise's name was inserted later and the date 1126 added, but it is not clear whether this date refers to the confirmation or an earlier verbal acknowledgement of the deed.

⁵³ *CP*, vol. XI, 374-6 *sub* Salisbury; D.B. Crouch, *William Marshal: court, career and chivalry in the Angevin empire 1147-1219* (London, 1990), 12-16.

⁵⁴ *OV*, vi, 484; Lemarignier, *Recherches*, 62-3.

⁵⁵ A foundation narrative from the house, dating from 1385, preserves a tradition that Rotrou founded a church there in 1122 in expiation of a vow concerning a shipwreck, *LT*, 578-9. It describes how Rotrou, on the point of departure for Jerusalem in December 1144, established, with the consent of his wife Hawise and sons Rotrou and Stephen, a house on the site of the church he had founded over twenty years earlier. He was later to present the house with relics acquired on a second trip to Jerusalem. The account is clearly riddled with inaccuracies, such as sending Rotrou to Jerusalem when he was six months dead, but it does preserve echoes of genuine events. There is a memory of Rotrou's connection with the Holy Land and the names of family members are correct. The precision of the date given, 5 December 1144, suggests that this may have been a significant point, possibly an important donation or confirmation in the presence of Hawise, the young Rotrou and Stephen or the house's official act of foundation made in memory of Rotrou.

his bride.⁵⁶ His prestige was further indicated when he convened a conference at Mortagne after Stephen's capture at the battle of Lincoln in 1141 at which the succession to Normandy was decided in favour of Geoffrey of Anjou.

Rotrou was killed in 1144 while fighting in Geoffrey's forces at the siege of Rouen. The city capitulated on 19 January, but the citadel under the control of William of Warenne's troops, continued to hold out until 23 April.⁵⁷ Rotrou must have died some days after the surrender, perhaps as a result of wounds sustained in the action, for his obituary was celebrated on 6 May at Chartres and on 8 May at Meulan.⁵⁸ He had been a great patron of the church, encouraging the foundation of the abbeys of Tiron and La Trappe and making benefactions to Cluny, the Templars and Marcigny.⁵⁹

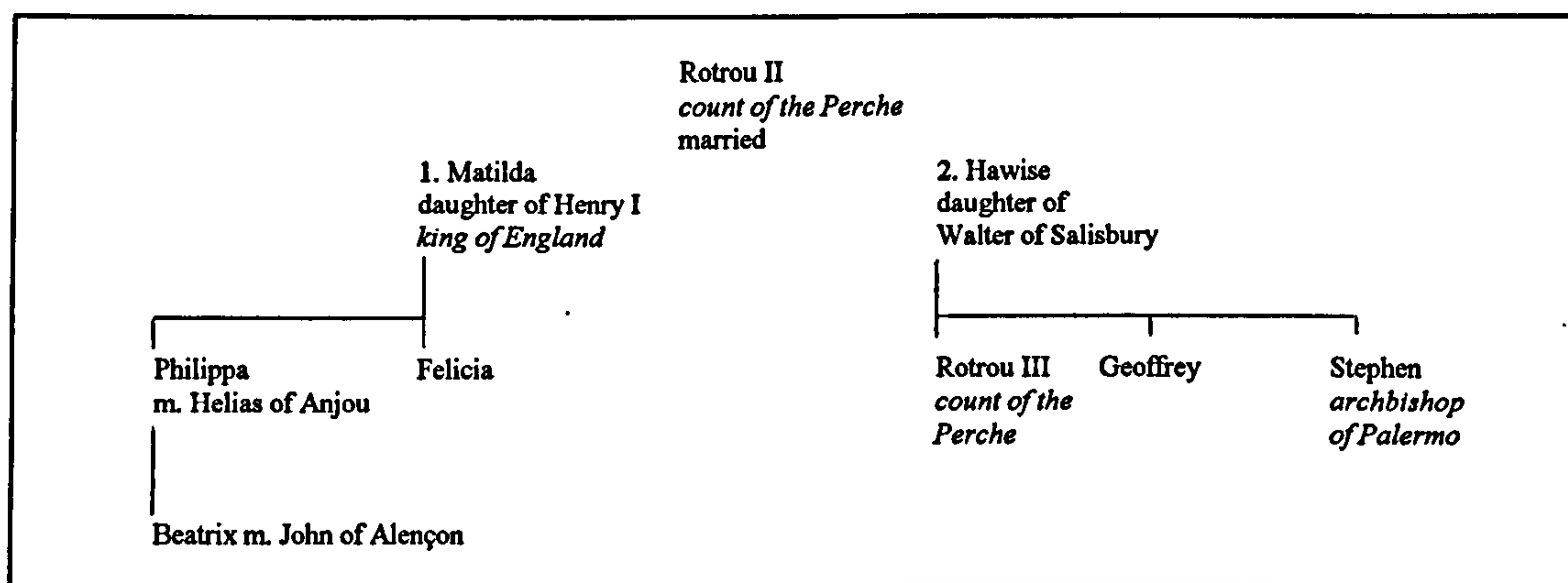


Figure 2:3: *The marriages of Rotrou II count of the Perche*

By his first wife Rotrou was the father of two daughters, Philippa and Felicia, and he left three sons, Rotrou, Geoffrey and Stephen and possibly a daughter, Beatrix by his second wife Hawise.⁶⁰ He also fathered at least three illegitimate sons.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Chronicle of Morigny, *RHF*, xii, 84.

⁵⁷ Torigni, i, 234; Chronicon Rotomagensis, *RHF*, xii, 785.

⁵⁸ *Obits*, ii, 188, 239. Rotrou's nephew Roger, earl of Warwick was to remember his uncle in a benefaction to Pipewell abbey, BL ms. Cotton Cal. A, xiii, f. 85v. I am indebted to Prof. D.B. Crouch for this reference.

⁵⁹ BL Cotton Vespasian ms. F xv, f. 167v.; *Cartulaire générale de l'ordre du Temple, 1119?-1150*, ed. M. d'Albon (Paris, 1913) no. DVI; *Book of Fees* (London, 1921-31), 738.

⁶⁰ *Tiron*, no. CXLIX was made in the presence of Rotrou's sister, Juliana and her nieces, Philippa and Felicia. Nothing further is known of Felicia, but after the failure of the direct line of the Rotrou family in 1226 the lords of La Ferté-Bernard were included in the settlement of the Perche, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 12. Since all the other collateral heirs included in this settlement can be accounted for by reference to the Rotrou family tree, a blood tie would seem to be the explanation. The necrology of Clairets contains an entry for other wise unknow Felicitas of La Ferté-Bernard, *Obits*, ii, 282. It therefore seems reasonable to speculate that Rotrou's otherwise unaccounted for daughter married the lord of La Ferté-Bernard and that her name then entered the name stock of the house to be reused by a descendant. Marriages of daughters to men of lower social status were often omitted from family genealogies, Barthélemy, 'Kinship', 120. For Rotrou's sons, Torigni, i, 234. Torigni mentions only Rotrou and Geoffrey and the records of La Trappe mention only Rotrou and Stephen, so it is impossible to determine the exact order of their birth, though Rotrou, Geoffrey, Stephen seems most likely on personal name grounds. AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 2v. for a daughter Beatrix.

⁶¹ Geoffrey, son of the count, *Tiron*, no. CXLIX. For Rotrou the clerk, AD Loiret, D668, *Cartulaire de Saint-Sulpice-sur-Risle*, f. 9v. He can probably be identified with Rotrou, dean of Evreux, RCVD, fos. 1, 2v., 10. The archdeacon Everard who acted on his brother, Count Rotrou III's, behalf in 1169, must also be Rotrou II's son, BL Cotton Vespasian ms. F xv, f. 159v. *Eb'r archidiaconus qui tunc temporis locum Rotrodi comitis Pertici fratris eius*

Rotrou III 6/8 May 1144 - July 1191

Despite the survival of over forty of his acts and nearly fifty years in power Count Rotrou III is in many ways the least known of all the counts of the Perche. He succeeded as a child and his inheritance was administered for some years by his mother's second husband, Robert Capet, the younger brother of Louis VII, who is even described in a charter of 1145 as count of the Perche.⁶² Details of Rotrou's career between 1150 and 1180 are sparse. The date of his marriage to Matilda, the daughter of Theobald IV, count of Blois and Champagne, for example, is unknown, although it probably predated the death of Theobald in January 1152.⁶³ In 1158, at the instigation of his brother-in-law, Theobald V of Blois, Rotrou was persuaded to exchange custody of the castles at Moulins and Bonsmoulins for that of Bellême and in 1173 Rotrou joined a family party consisting of, among others, his brother-in-law, Count Theobald and nephew-in-law, John of Alençon, in an attack on Sées.⁶⁴

While there is little information about Count Rotrou during the middle years of the twelfth century his younger brother Stephen presented a remarkably high profile, if only for a short time. In 1166, when apparently on the way to the Holy Land, he was summoned to Sicily by the Queen regent, his cousin, Margaret of Navarre. There he was elevated to the archbishopric of Palermo, but his attempts to rule the turbulent baronage of Sicily met with little success, and he was expelled, dying in the Holy Land in 1167.⁶⁵ The count's other brother, Geoffrey, took control of the English lands during the 1170s when he was active in the Plantagenet court.⁶⁶ By 1180/1 however he too was dead, for 58s. 4d. is accounted by the sheriff for his property of Aldbourne in Wiltshire and in 1182 or 1183 Rotrou was granted control of his property.⁶⁷

Count Rotrou was an active patron of the church, despite the apparently negative evidence of a papal letter urging the dean and chapter of Chartres to resist incursions by Rotrou and other

tenebat. It is possible that Giles, bishop of Evreux was also a son of Rotrou. He was described by Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen as a *cognatus*, AD Seine-Maritime G1135/17 cited in M. Pacaut, *Louis VII et les élections épiscopales dans le royaume de France* (Paris, 1957), 123, n.2.

⁶² *CMPerche*, no. 28/29bis.

⁶³ Torigni, i, 315, 329.

⁶⁴ Torigni, i, 315. Rotrou must have persuaded his cousin to part with Bonsmoulins. Diceto, i, 379.

⁶⁵ Bry, *Perche*, 201-4; F. Chalandon, *Histoire de la Domination Normande en Italie et en Sicilie* (Paris, 1907), ii, 320-40.

⁶⁶ *Actes Henri II*, ii, 53, 66, 83, 84, 176, 210, 258, 453; *Cartae antiquae rolls 1-10*, ed. L. Landon (PRS NS, 17, London, 1939) no. 221; *Cartae antiquae rolls 11-20*, ed. J. Conway Davies (PRS NS, 33, London, 1960), nos. 359, 465, 577; *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, ed. L.C. Loyd and D.M. Stenton, (Oxford, 1950), no. 43; *The cartulary of Worcester Cathedral Priory (register 1)*, ed. R.R. Darlington (PRS NS, 38, London, 1968), no. 249; *Reading abbey cartularies, i, General documents and those related to English counties other than Berks.*, ed. B.R. Kemp (Camden Society, 4th series, 31, London, 1986), 237. Geoffrey appears once in his brother's acts, *Clairrets*, no. I (before 1181).

⁶⁷ *PR 27 Henry II 1180/1, 97: censu statuto de Aldeburn' post mortem Galfridi de Pertica; PR 29 Henry II 1182/3, 128: de firma Aldiburna et de Wamberga terra Galfridi de Pertico antequam comes frater ejus habuisset*. Geoffrey's debts continued to be recorded in the pipe rolls well into the reign of John among the pledges to Aaron of Lincoln.

members of the local nobility on church property.⁶⁸ In 1170 he founded a Carthusian house at Val Dieu in the forest of Réno,⁶⁹ and he seems to have been the most likely candidate as founder of the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon, near Bellême.⁷⁰ He was also generous with his family's English property, which he used to make a grant to the Augustinian house at Bradenstoke in Wiltshire, founded by his grandparents, Walter and Sibyl of Salisbury, and to endow the hospital at Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁷¹

It is only in the later stages of his career that Rotrou can be found beyond the confines of the Perche. In 1177/8 he was in England as a guest of the king of England and in 1183 he was in Poitou where he and the bishop of Agen carried out negotiations between King Henry and his eldest son.⁷² In 1181 he was in Chartres and he makes another appearance as an envoy in England in 1189, when he discussed arrangements for the forthcoming crusade.⁷³ Like most of his contemporaries Rotrou was himself pledged to join the crusade. His wife, Matilda of Blois, had died in 1184 and he had taken the cross at the great meeting between the kings, Philip and Henry, in 1188.⁷⁴ Many of his surviving acts date from this period in which he appears to have been putting his affairs in order prior to departure.⁷⁵ His contemporary Ambroise remarked on his commitment (in M.J. Hubert's translation):

The count of Perche too, who deprived
Himself of everything, arrived.⁷⁶

Rotrou, accompanied by his son Geoffrey, made his way to the Holy Land, acting as a guarantor of the agreement made by Kings Richard and Philip at Messina.⁷⁷ He was present when the two armies of Richard and Philip met up on 9 June 1191 and was among the heavy crusader

⁶⁸ *NDC*, no. XCIX: *auctoritate vobis apostolica indulgemus ut quicumque parrochianorum vestrorum sive scilicet R comes Perticensis sive R Drocensis sive Vindocinensis sive Ebroicensis aut de Monteforti vel barones aut alii quilibet qui ecclesias aut homines vestros dampnis vel injuriis afferint vel affecerunt* (8 November 1182).

⁶⁹ AD Orne H2621.

⁷⁰ L.H. Cottineau, *Répertoire topo-bibliographique des abbayes et prieurés* (Mâcon, 1936-7) says that Chêne Galon was founded 'un comte du Perche'. The Grandmontine order specifically forbade the keeping of records, but Rotrou III's son confirmed the site of the house and surrounding woodland in terms which imply it was founded by Rotrou, Duchesne 54, p. 461

⁷¹ BL ms. Cotton Vitellius A xi, Cartulary of Bradenstoke f. 105v.; G. Bry de la Clergerie, *Additions aux recherches d'Alençon et du Perche* (Paris, Pierre Le Mur, 1621), 75.

⁷² *PR 24 Henry II 1177/8*, 121; Geoffrey of Vigeois, *RHF*, xvii, 217.

⁷³ *SJV*, no. 107; Wendover, i, 170; *Gesta*, ii, 92-3; Howden, iii, p. 19-20.

⁷⁴ Bry, *Perche, additions*, 75 gives Rotrou's act of 1190 in which he states that Matilda had died six years before; *Obits*, ii, 30, 384; Rigord, i, 83.

⁷⁵ *LT*, 587-90 (Mauves 1189); *GC*, xi, col. 823 for St Evroul (22 July 1189); *CMPerche*, no. 34 (June 1190); *NDC*, i, p. 221 (19 June 1190); *CSJ*, C/108 (1190). The act of foundation for Rotrou's Carthusian house at Val Dieu may well have been rewritten in 1189. Surviving copies have caused some difficulty to scholars because they are dated 1170 but are given in the names of Rotrou, his wife Matilda, his son Geoffrey and daughter-in-law, Matilda of Saxony, AD Orne H2621 for single transcripts, H2622 for a register copy, but the best text is RCVD, fos. 1-2. Rotrou's daughter-in-law was not born until 1172 and married Geoffrey in July 1189, K. Jordan, *Henry the Lion* (Oxford, 1986), 183; *Gesta*, ii, 73. Such a redrafting would have given the scribe the opportunity to add the younger Matilda's name to an act whose extensive witness list is otherwise reliable.

⁷⁶ Ambroise, *Crusade of Richard the Lionheart*, ed. M.J. Hubert and J. La Monte. (New York, 1941), 192, ll. 4543-44.

⁷⁷ *Diplomatic Documents preserved in the Public Record Office, i, 1101-1272*, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1964), no. 5. Rotrou is described simply as the count of Perche.

casualties at the siege of Acre and his final benefaction made to the Templars may have been a eve of battle or deathbed donation.⁷⁸ His obituary was celebrated at Nogent-le-Rotrou on 27 July.⁷⁹ He left five sons named after various members of his own and his wife's families. Geoffrey, who succeeded him, Stephen⁸⁰ and Rotrou⁸¹ were given names from the previous generation of the Rotrou family, while Theobald⁸² and William⁸³ were the names of the countess's father and brother. A daughter, Oravia, became a nun at Belhomert.⁸⁴

Geoffrey III July 1191 - April 1202

When Geoffrey succeeded his father as count of Perche in July 1191 he was in the Holy Land, but it is possible to know something of his career before that time. He had for example been associated with a number of his father's acts and had witnessed in 1182 an act of his uncle Theobald of Blois and in 1189 a benefaction to Belhomert, made by Erembourg of Friaize.⁸⁵ Geoffrey's first appearance in the chronicle sources occurs with his marriage in July 1189 to Richenza-Matilda, daughter of Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and his wife, Matilda, daughter of King Henry II of England, whose *maritagium* considerably enhanced the English lands of her husband's family, bringing substantial property in Suffolk, Essex and Kent.⁸⁶

Geoffrey, count of Perche is specifically mentioned among a deputation of nobles who remonstrated with Richard about the behaviour of the Anglo-Norman forces at Messina on 4 October 1190 and he remained with Richard, keeping Christmas with him at Messina and witnessing his marriage settlement in Nicosia in May 1191.⁸⁷ Although his father Rotrou was killed shortly after he arrived at the siege of Acre, Geoffrey remained in the Holy Land for more than a year afterwards. On 12 June 1192 he took part in an engagement outside Jerusalem,

⁷⁸ *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta regis Ricardi*, in *Chronicles and Memorials Richard I*, i, ed. W. Stubbs (RS 38, London, 1864), 213. Howden, ii, 88 for his death. Duchesne 20, f. 230 for the Templar bequest.

⁷⁹ *Obits*, ii, 396.

⁸⁰ Stephen was born before 1173. Before the death of his brother in 1202 he made a career for himself in the service of the kings of England, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 137, ii, 386, 396. His contribution to the fourth crusade, after he took command of the Percheron contingent in 1202, is summarised in J. Longnon, *Les compagnons de Villehardouin: recherches sur les croisés du quatrième croisade* (Geneva, 1978), 105.

⁸¹ Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 866. He was treasurer of St Martin's of Tours before his election, AN S2238 no. 15. This was something of a career post, J. Boussard, 'Le trésorier de Saint-Martin de Tours', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, xlvii (1961), 67-88. In 1190 Rotrou was elected bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, but not consecrated until 1196, *RHF*, xix, 299. Rotrou was a member of the tribunal which pronounced Philip's marriage to Ingeborg of Denmark invalid, Howden, iii, 307.

⁸² Theobald is listed among Geoffrey III's brothers, *NDC*, no. CXXXIV and probably became dean of Tours. *GC*, xi, col. 692, an act by Count Geoffrey's widow is witnessed by Theobald dean of Tours and William provost of Chartres, an office known to have been held by Geoffrey's youngest brother, William.

⁸³ *NDC*, no. CXXXIV; *GC*, xi, col. 692.

⁸⁴ For Oravia see her brother's act, BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303. Romanet, *Géographie*, 60 attributes another daughter, Beatrix, to Rotrou in order to assimilate James of Château-Gontier, a thirteenth century descendant of the counts of the Perche, to the family line, but I have been unable to find any evidence for her existence.

⁸⁵ BN mss. franc., 20691, f. 560v., 24133, p. 307.

⁸⁶ Howden, iii, 3. Matilda's given name had been Richenza, Arnold of Lübeck, *Chronicle of the Slavs*, *MGH SS*, xxi (1869), 116, but this appears to have been dropped when she came to Normandy with her parents in 1182, Jordan, *Henry the Lion*, 183. It has been reinstated here to distinguish her from the three other women who were called Matilda, countess of Perche. *CRR*, xiii, no. 684 for the *maritagium*.

⁸⁷ *Gesta*, ii 128; Howden, iii, 57. *Gesta*, ii, 150; Howden, iii, 93 for Christmas.

saving the Christian forces from defeat with a late rally led by himself and the bishop of Salisbury, Hubert Walter, but the author of the *Itinerarium* is rather sparing with praise, suggesting that Geoffrey had hitherto been rather dilatory.⁸⁸ By the end of 1192 Geoffrey was safely back in Nogent-le-Rotrou, where he confirmed, rather than augmented, the benefactions of his ancestors in return for £200 in Angevin money.⁸⁹

Chronicle references to Geoffrey as count of Perche are few, but a great deal of information can be obtained from a remarkably large corpus of surviving *acta* and from the records of the French and English crowns.⁹⁰ Geoffrey's acts indicate, for example that a son, Geoffrey, had been born in the years before 1196, but he must have died young since other acts refer to Thomas as Geoffrey and Richenza-Matilda's son and heir.⁹¹ English records suggest that Geoffrey enjoyed a cordial relationship with his wife's uncles, the Plantagenet kings, Richard and John, and he secured further extensions to the family's English property as well as the area around Moulins and Bonsmoulins.⁹² He was an active patron of the church, founding a college of canons at Nogent-le-Rotrou and an Augustinian priory on his English lands at Sandleford in Wiltshire. He had apparently planned to make a further foundation, but was prevented by his sudden death, and his widow Richenza-Matilda carried out his wishes by founding the nunnery at Les Clairets.⁹³

Count Geoffrey again took the cross in preparation for what was to become the fourth crusade, but he was taken ill in Lent of 1202 and in March of that year he made a series of deathbed dispositions.⁹⁴ Geoffrey died during the Easter festival of 1202, but it is impossible to give a precise date as the evidence of necrologies is inconsistent.⁹⁵ 'A truly good and valiant knight...deeply mourned by all the people on his lands', Count Geoffrey III left as his heir his second, but only surviving son, Thomas.⁹⁶

Thomas 1202-1217

When Count Thomas succeeded his father he was probably less than ten years old. His mother the countess Richenza-Matilda therefore assumed control of his inheritance. She had made a second marriage to the ambitious Enguerrand de Coucy by 1205, but, despite using the title count of Perche, Enguerrand seems to have played little part in the running of the Perche. Thomas

⁸⁸ *Itinerarium*, 372: *qui tamen se timide habuit*.

⁸⁹ NLR, CX: *cum fuisset redditus de transmarinis partibus, valde magnis debitis graviter oneratus*.

⁹⁰ For chronicle references, Howden, iii, 218; Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ed. F. Madden (RS 44, London, 1866-9), ii, 51; Howden, iv, 54; William the Breton, *Gesta*, in *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde (Paris, 1882-5), i, 211; Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxxiii, 877.

⁹¹ CMD, no. CCIII for Geoffrey; Duchesne 54, p. 450; RCVD, f. 9: *ut deus et dominus noster tam ipsos quam filium suum charissimum Thomam sub alis suae misericordiae custodiat*.

⁹² AD Orne H721.

⁹³ AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 13v.; *Monasticon*, vi, 565; *Clairets*, no. IV.

⁹⁴ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, *RHF*, xviii, 438-9.

⁹⁵ Clairets - 27 March, Chartres Cathedral and the College of Saint-Jean, Nogent-le-Rotrou - 5 April, Grand Beaulieu - 7 April, *Obits*, ii, 281, 55, 391, 405; Saint-Evroul - 6 April, *RHF*, xxiii, 486.

⁹⁶ Villehardouin, 439.

probably attained his majority in 1208 for in that year he first accounts for his English taxes, and then on 13 January 1210 the Countess Richenza-Matilda herself died and the English property of the family was repossessed by King John.⁹⁷

Thomas makes few appearances in chronicles covering the early years of the twelfth century, but more than twenty of his acts survive. He married Helisende, the daughter of Hugh of Rethel, but the date of the marriage is unknown.⁹⁸ Roger of Wendover says that Thomas fought in the Bouvines campaign, although there is no reference to it in his acts.⁹⁹ In the autumn of 1216 Thomas joined the French campaign led by Prince Louis in England and came to prominence in the spring of 1217 when he and the earl of Winchester were sent to relieve the castle of Montsorrel.¹⁰⁰ After raising the siege Thomas made his way to Lincoln where the castle was still holding out for the young king, Henry III. In the battle which followed outside the castle at Lincoln Thomas was killed on 20 May 1217, as the result of a blow through the eye. He was hurriedly buried with two of his companions in the orchard of a hospital outside the walls of Lincoln.¹⁰¹ Shortly after his death his second cousin, Theobald VI of Blois, set up a window in the newly rebuilt choir of Chartres cathedral in his memory.¹⁰² His widow Helisende retained her title of countess of Perche even after her remarriage to Garnier of Trainel, but there were no children from her marriage to Thomas.¹⁰³ His successor was his father's youngest and only remaining brother, William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne.

William 1217-1226

William of Perche, like his brothers Rotrou, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne (1190-1201) and the virtually unnoticed Theobald, was destined for the church.¹⁰⁴ He spent his early life first as provost, then chancellor of the cathedral at Chartres, where his cousin, Reginald of Bar, was the bishop.¹⁰⁵ It may have been his practical experience in administering the property of the

⁹⁷ *PR 10 John 1208*, 5, 29; *Comptus Fulconis de Kantelu de terris comitisse de Pertico*, *PR 12 John 1210*, 204; the day of her death is given in *Obits*, ii, 281.

⁹⁸ I have found no chronicle references to the marriage of Helisende and Thomas, but she refers to him as her husband in an act given in August 1218, *Trésor de Chartes du Comté du Rethel*, ed.G. Saige and H. Lacaile (Monaco, 1902), no. XXXIX: *dominum meum Thomam comitem Perthicensem*.

⁹⁹ Wendover, ii, 109.

¹⁰⁰ *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard (RS 36, London, 1864-9), iii, 49.

¹⁰¹ Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ii, 213. Thomas was probably buried in the grounds of the Malandry, which had been founded by Bishop Remigius of Lincoln, though it is possible the burial took place in the grounds of the hospital of the Holy Sepulchre, J.W.F. Hill, *Medieval Lincoln* (Cambridge, 1948), 343, 345.

¹⁰² Y. Delaporte and E. Houvet, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres: histoire et description* (Chartres, 1926), 230. I am grateful to Dr. Lindy Grant for her help with this reference.

¹⁰³ *Rethel*, no. LVII; *LT*, 450, 451.

¹⁰⁴ For his attestation of family acts, *NDC*, no. CXXXIV; *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 164; *Canterbury D & C Carta Antiquae R62*; *Monasticon*, vi, 565. Unlike his brothers, Geoffrey, Rotrou and Stephen, he did not attest his father's act made in favour of Saint-Denis, perhaps implying that he was very young in 1190, AN S2238, no. 15.

¹⁰⁵ *GC*, ix, 885 gives William some exotic offices, including archdeacon of Brussels and these have been accepted by Baldwin in his appendix on the incumbents of regalian sees, Baldwin, *Government*, 440, but there can be little to gainsay the necrology of Chartres: *Guillelmus Catalaunensis episcopus et comes pariter Perticensis a primis annis usque ad pontificatum suum in hac ecclesia prius in honore prepositi, deinde in officio cancellarii laudabiliter conversatus*, *Obits*, ii, 40.

cathedral at Chartres which led his nephew Thomas to consult him in May 1216 over a contract concerning the meadow mill at Nogent.¹⁰⁶ In 1215 he was elected bishop of the regalian see of Châlons-sur-Marne in Champagne and on 11 April 1217 he was going about his normal business as bishop, jointly confirming with the archbishop of Reims the foundation of the priory of Spineuseval, but on 20 May his nephew was killed at Lincoln and by June William was doing homage to the king for the county of Perche.¹⁰⁷

For the rest of his life William was to be an important figure at the courts of Kings Philip and Louis VIII. In August 1218 he stood surety for his cousin, Isabelle of Amboise when she inherited the county of Chartres and was to do so again for Guy of Saint Pol in May 1221.¹⁰⁸ He was involved in the settlement of the long drawn out dispute over succession to the county of Champagne and in the year 1219 he patched up a quarrel between the duchess of Burgundy and the bishop of Châlon-sur-Saone.¹⁰⁹ He may well have been something of a diplomat for he was sent on a mission to the emperor Henry in 1219 and again in 1224 he was sent by King Louis to negotiate with the papal envoys at Viterbo.¹¹⁰

In July 1223 William was among the large number of French bishops who conducted the funeral of Philip Augustus at Saint-Denis and it may be that the event raised the possibility of his own death in William's mind.¹¹¹ He founded a new *cancellaria* in the church of Toussaints at Mortagne and in 1225 arranged that the monks of La Trappe should remit the proceeds of a mill on the River Sarthe to the *cancellarius* so that daily masses for his soul could be said. Learning perhaps from the experience of his brother, Geoffrey, whose final illness had clearly come as a surprise, William began a new foundation in September 1225, establishing an abbey in the order of Tiron at Arcisses, just outside Nogent-le-Rotrou.¹¹²

William's position at the court of Philip Augustus was unique, for he was both an important noble and a great prelate. A pen portrait of William from the *Philippidos* of William the Breton indicates that he was nonetheless well thought of:

*Nec Guillelme tibi Catalauni presul avaro
Copia precipuos cornu diffudit honores;
Qui Thome lugenda tui post fata nepotis
Invida quem rapuit primevo in flore tibi mors,
Angligenum fines aggressum cum Ludovico
Dignus es inventus et episcopus et comes esse
Sufficienter onus dispensaturus utrumque
Subsit ut heredi justo tibi Perticus axis;*

¹⁰⁶ *Clairrets*, no. IX. For William at work as provost, BN ms franc. 24133, p.303.

¹⁰⁷ *GC*, x, chartes col. 177; *Catalogue des actes de Philippe Auguste*, ed. L. Delisle (Paris, 1856), no. 1748.

¹⁰⁸ *Layettes*, i, nos. 309, 1448.

¹⁰⁹ *CPA*, no. 1348; *Layettes*, i, no. 1484; *GC*, ix, col. 885.

¹¹⁰ *GC*, ix, col. 885; *Dip. doc. 1101-1272*, no. 153.

¹¹¹ William the Breton, *Gesta*, 324.

¹¹² *LT*, 136; *Tiron*, no. CCCLVIII.

*Ut cui nobilitas gemina est a sanguine regum
Nobilitatis apex gemino splendescat honore.*¹¹³

When he died on 13 February 1226 he left his property in good order according to the anonymous chronicler of Tours, but there was no direct heir to the county of the Perche, a fact commented upon by contemporaries, but scarcely unforeseen.¹¹⁴

Excasura Pertici

Several individuals were potential successors to William as count of the Perche. To modern eyes much the best claim was presented by Ela of Almenêches and her nephews, Aimeri of Châtellerault and Robert Malet, descendants of Rotrou III's elder sister, Philippa.¹¹⁵ An act of the count-bishop himself dated 1224, however, implies that he favoured the claims of his distant cousins, the Navarrese princesses Blanche, countess of Champagne and Berengaria, the widow of Richard the Lionheart, who were descendants of Juliana the sister of Rotrou II.¹¹⁶ Even more tenuous were the claims of the descendants of the sons of Rotrou I, whose families were represented in 1226 by Geoffrey *vicecomes* of Châteaudun, his sister, Alice of Fréteval and their distant cousin, Rotrou of Montfort-le-Rotrou.¹¹⁷ In addition there were candidates the nature of whose claims cannot be verified by modern scholarship, including Hugh of La Ferté-Bernard,¹¹⁸ Ralph of Beaumont¹¹⁹ and James of Château-Gontier.¹²⁰

When William died in February 1226 preparations were already well-advanced for the new crusade against the Albigensians and it may be that King Louis VIII was unwilling to arbitrate on the complexity of these claims.¹²¹ Alberic of Trois Fontaines suggests that the king took the

¹¹³ William the Breton, Philippidos, ll. 706-715, in *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde (Paris, 1882-5), ii, 375.

¹¹⁴ *RHF*, xviii, 312 for the chronicler of Tours: *rebus bene dispositis*. Alberic of Trois Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 918: *cum itaque tanta difficultas extiterit mortuo episcopo Wuilelmo in ecclesiastica dignitate, maior etiam difficultas extitit de eius successione in comitatu Pertici*.

¹¹⁵ *Layettes*, ii, no. 1774, a statement by Aimeri in April 1226, is one of a series of such documents dating from the earliest negotiations concerning the Perche inheritance, but his place is often taken by his aunt, Ela of Almenêches, the sister of the late count of Alençon, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, nos. 13, 14. Robert Malet makes his first appearance in an act of partition dating from 1231, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 23. For the family relationship, *Perseigne*, 54 n.

¹¹⁶ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 7.

¹¹⁷ *Layettes*, iii, nos. 1771-3.

¹¹⁸ Romanet, *Géographie*, i, 62 was able to uncover no link between Hugh and the Rotrous, though it is possible that he was descended from Rotrou II's younger daughter Felicia.

¹¹⁹ Romanet, *Géographie*, i, 61 asserts that Ralph and his brother William bishop of Angers were the sons of Lucy of Laigle the daughter of Juliana of Perche, but this is chronologically difficult, since Lucy's alleged mother was married around 1092 and therefore Lucy was unlikely to be born later than 1120. Her sons would therefore have to be born before 1165 and so be well into their sixties in 1226.

¹²⁰ Romanet, *Géographie*, i, 60 describes James as the great-nephew of the count-bishop William, whose sister Beatrix was the wife of Reginald of Château-Gontier. I have been unable to verify this with contemporary evidence, although a (probably) seventeenth century interpolation in the necrology of the College of Saint-Jean at Nogent-le-Rotrou mentions a Beatrix, *fille de Rotrou premier du nom*, AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 2v.

¹²¹ Louis had called a great council in January 1226, Chronicle of Saint-Martin of Tours, *RHF*, xvii, 311-2. An impression of unfinished business is created by a series of promises dating from April 1226 in which a number of the claimants promise that they will hold whatever falls to *obveniet* or comes to *perveniet* them from the *excasura*, *Layettes*, ii, nos. 1771-4. The guardians of James of Château-Gontier, who was still a minor in the 1220s, also undertook that he would honour *compositionem illam*, when he came of age and financial guarantees were given, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, nos. 13-15.

greater part of the county into his own hand, an action which de Romanet suggests he justified on the grounds that Queen Blanche herself was descended from the counts of the Perche.¹²² The unexpected death of Louis VIII in November 1226 and the period of uncertainty which followed as the Queen-Mother struggled to retain control of the young Louis IX postponed still further the settlement of the Perche. Bellême and La Perrière were detached from the rest of the county and given to Peter Mauclerc, the duke of Brittany,¹²³ but Peter remained at odds with the queen and

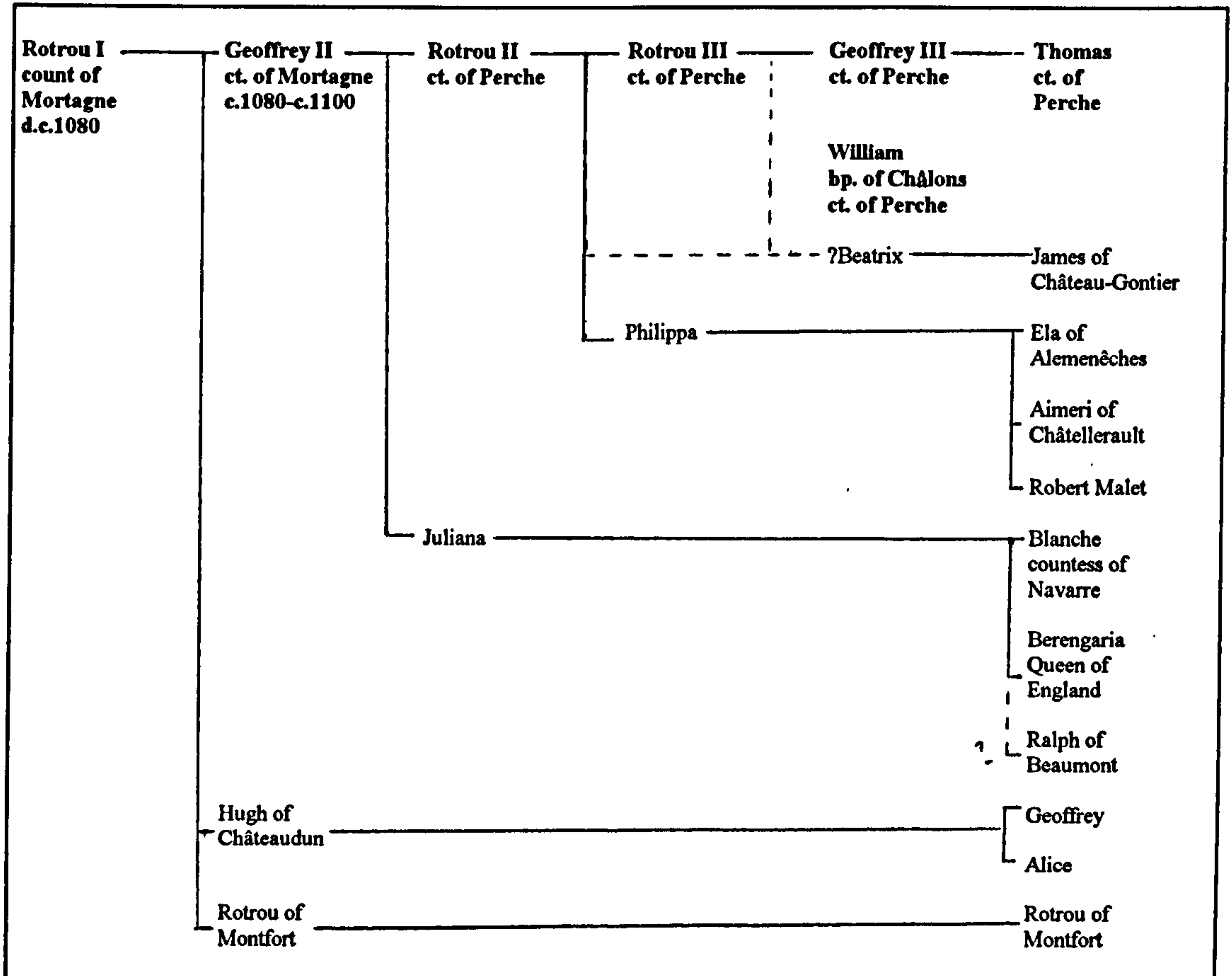


Figure 2:4 *Claimants to the excasura Pertici*

after he failed to answer a summons to the royal court in December 1228, he was besieged at Bellême by royal forces in a military engagement which was to make a profound impact on the Perche.¹²⁴ Peter then went on to enlist the support of Henry III of England and it was not until the truce with the English king and Peter's voluntary exile in 1230 that the royal party was able to repossess Bellême.¹²⁵

¹²² Alberic of Trois Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 918: *Rex tamen majorem partem super caeteros habuit*. Romanet, *Géographie*, i, 63-6.

¹²³ AN J241, no. 4, cited in Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 16. It is unclear whether Peter received this property from Louis VIII or whether it was conceded later. He was in possession by May 1227 when his seneschal, Matthew of Coimes notified a sale of property to the priory of Sainte-Gauburge, AN LL1158, p. 416.

¹²⁴ For complaints about the devastation caused by the siege, Querimoniae, nos. 111-240 *passim*. S. Painter places the siege in 1230, *The scourge of the clergy: Peter of Dreux, duke of Brittany* (Baltimore, Md, 1937), appendix I.

¹²⁵ On Peter, see J. Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1983), 69-70.

When an agreement was finally reached in June 1230 it covered only the comital property which was divided into two halves.¹²⁶ James of Château-Gontier had been judged to have the strongest claim to the inheritance, and was given one half for himself, but he was not given the title of count of the Perche, while the other half was to be shared among the other heirs. In the 1230s those heirs can be found at work administering their new property, although some of them had dropped out of the long-running *excasura*.¹²⁷ By 1247, when Louis IX took pleas from the county of Perche concerning grievances against the crown, James of Château-Gontier was still agitating, alleging that, although he had been judged the closest heir to the Perche, the king was still withholding the Corbonnais and Bellême.¹²⁸ His demands included the castles of Bellême, La Perrière, Mortagne, Mauves and Maison Maugis. It took him over ten years to secure a settlement, for the king continued to enjoy the revenues of Bellême and La Perrière, while Mauves and Mortagne, which had been the dower of Countess Helisende, the widow of Count Thomas, were assigned to the king's wife, Queen Margaret, after Helisende's death.¹²⁹ In 1257 James finally acquired Maison Maugis and an annual pension of £300 tournois in return for the surrender of his claims to the other castellanies.¹³⁰

The comital title was not bestowed on any descendant of the Rotrou family, but seems to have gone into abbeyance until 1269, when Mortagne, Mauves, Bellême and La Perrière were used to form the apanage of Peter of Alençon, a younger son of Louis IX.¹³¹ The county of Perche had been effectively dismembered and while retaining some sense of identity as the seat of a *coutume*, it would never again be an independent unit.

¹²⁶ The agreement was probably first considered early in 1227, *Layettes*, ii, no. 1931, but not notified by Matthew of Montmorency, constable of France and father-in-law of James of Château-Gontier until June 1230, *Layettes*, ii, no. 2064.

¹²⁷ Alice of Fréteval and her husband were early casualties in 1227, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, nos. 17-18, and in 1231 her brother Geoffrey of Châteaudun sold his rights to James of Château-Gontier, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 25. Theobald of Champagne specifically retained his rights in the Perche when he sold much of the rest of his property to Louis IX in 1234, *Layettes*, ii, no. 2310 and he used it to dower his daughter Blanche in her marriage with the duke of Brittany, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 35. In the later thirteenth century the duke of Brittany's bailiff in the Perche was administering former comital property as a result of that marriage, PRO DL 25/3387 and DL 25/3394.

¹²⁸ Querimoniae, no. 121: *adjudicatum quod ipse erat propinquior heres Guilelemi comitis Pertici*.

¹²⁹ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, nos. 34, 37, 38; *Layettes*, iii, p. 535, n.1.

¹³⁰ *Layettes*, iii, no. 4354.

¹³¹ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 41.

Part II - Foundations of Power

Chapter 3

Revenues and rights: the Perche under the house of Rotrou

The wealth of the Rotrou family, like that of all the medieval nobility, was primarily based on their domination of the communities who worked the land and upon direct control of a considerable amount of land, their demesne. In addition they received revenues accruing from their position as counts of the Perche, which included the yields of various indirect taxes such as customs and the profits derived from administering justice. In the period between the turn of the twelfth century and the extinction of the Rotrou dynasty (1100-1226) the profits derived from these resources probably increased considerably, for the economy of the Perche appears to have flourished despite a number of military campaigns in the region.¹ Quantities of grain were produced in an area which is scarcely noted for its arable products today and there is much evidence of livestock rearing, including horses, the commodity for which the area is now famous.² A lively market handled these agrarian products and the growth of a cash economy is suggested by the number of currencies which were acceptable within the Perche.

The Rotrou Patrimony

The demesne lands under the direct control of the Rotrou family were the very basis of their power for they provided the resources which permitted the family to exercise lordship over other lineages and to secure the title of count. Ownership of demesne land entitled its lord to a variety of benefits above and beyond the enjoyment of its agricultural products and the family's failure throughout the twelfth century to give away more than the odd *mansura* of that land indicates that its members were only too well aware of the importance of these resources.³ The woodlands of demesne property provided fuel, its meadows and pastures yielded cash rents and its inhabitants rendered labour services as well as lucrative fines for minor misdemeanours in the lord's court.

The records of the Rotrous' religious benefactions indicate that the core of their family property lay in the south of the county in and around Nogent-le-Rotrou and there is evidence that the family made every effort to exploit it with efficiency. During the course of the twelfth century

¹ Major campaigns took place in 1150, 1168 and the early 1190s. The latter campaign is not specifically mentioned in chronicle sources, but Count Geoffrey III undertook in 1195 to rebuild the hospital of Maison-Dieu at Mortagne, which had been destroyed in fighting in the area, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 156ff, and the Norman pipe rolls also give indications of fighting on the Norman borders, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 237, 244.

² *LT*, 141-2. Cf. Davis' contention that monasteries were convenient stud farms, R.H.C. Davis, 'The warhorses of the Normans', in *ANS*, x (1987), 77.

³ Reluctance to alienate land was not unusual in twelfth century France, G. Duby, *Rural economy and country life in the medieval west* (London, 1968), 198, but grants of land by the counts were remarkably scarce. For rare examples, Bry, *Additions*, 75 (three *mansure*); *Pièces détachées pour servir à l'histoire du diocèse de Chartres*, ed. C. Métais (Chartres, 1899-1904, ii, 419 (*Duas mansuras..quamdam terram*); *Obits*, ii, 391 (*masuras de Mouloyn, du Marchees et de Campo Memorie*).

various developments were undertaken. Vineyards were established around the town of Nogent, for example and new mills were built, while in the wooded hills to the south and east of the town *medietaria* or share cropping holdings were in operation. The counts also possessed demesne at other sites in the county, including Mortagne, Longpont, Mauves, Maisonmaugis, Bellême, Le Theil, La Perrière, Montisambert, Nogent, Rivray, Montlondon, La Ferrière, Nonvilliers and Montigny.⁴ These properties were to remain with the comital family throughout its existence and form the bulk of the comital property divided among the collateral heirs in the *excasura Pertici* of 1230.⁵

At the end of the twelfth century two important extensions were made to these demesne resources by Count Geoffrey III (1191-1202), who acquired new interests at Moulins-la-Marche (Orne, ch. l. du ct.) and Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny). Moulins, its castle and surrounding area, together with its neighbour Bonsmoulins (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche) were granted to Geoffrey by the king of England in his capacity as duke of Normandy and were therefore perhaps rather less secure than Geoffrey's other acquisitions at Marchainville.⁶ There the count had obtained the settlement and its associated woodland by exchange with the monks of Saint-Evroul to whom he gave various rights at Maison Maugis.⁷

In the process of development which followed it is possible to see the care with which the family managed their demesne, for the count proceeded to issue a charter to its inhabitants to encourage settlement there.⁸ The men of Marchainville were to be free of all comital dues and to have rights to fuel, timber and pasture within the comital woodlands in return for an annual payment of 12d. Geoffrey's attempt to encourage settlement, which was similar to that undertaken by his cousins the counts of Champagne, must have been successful for he was later able to endow his own *anniversarium* using the resources of Marchainville and his widow made further benefactions on his behalf from the same source.⁹ His son, Count Thomas (1202-1217) continued to take an interest in the area, confirming his father's arrangement with Saint-Evroul and his charter to the inhabitants.¹⁰ At some point before 1212 a fortification (*forteritia*) was built, which was probably Thomas' residence when he gave an act at Marchainville in 1217.¹¹

⁴ Duchesne 54, p. 460.

⁵ *Layettes*, ii, no. 2064.

⁶ On Geoffrey's acquisition of Moulins, see chapter 7. For his activities in the area, AD Orne H721.

⁷ AD Orne H702 printed as Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 205-7.

⁸ Geoffrey's own act was destroyed in a fire, but it is referred to in a replacement act granted by his brother, William, BN Collection Dupuy, vol. 222, 127-8.

⁹ For the counts of Champagne, T. Evergates, *Feudal society in the baillage of Troyes under the counts of Champagne, 1152-1284* (Baltimore, Md., 1975), 41-59. AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, *Registre de Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois*, p.42. *NDC*, no. CLIX: *concedo et assigno in redditibus de Marchesvilla ab eodem marito meo et a me communitur acquisitis, annuatim in festo Purificationis beate Marie percipiendos...*

¹⁰ AD Orne H702, BN Collection Dupuy, vol. 222, 127-8.

¹¹ AN J399, no.16 printed as *Layettes*, i, 379 with note that this piece is no longer in the archives, although Delisle appears to have seen it. *CMPerche*, no. 44 was enacted at Marchainville.

The precise nature and extent of the demesne resources at each of these places cannot be determined with any precision, although we do know that the count-bishop William anticipated an annual return of about £100 from Montigny-le-Chartif, which he left to his cousin in 1221.¹² A comital residence is associated with several of the sites and it therefore seems likely that the core of the property, before Count Geoffrey's additions, represents the location of substantial bodies of landed property from which the Rotrous derived their material support.¹³ (Map 3:1 *Comital demesne and prepositure in the Perche*) Much of the produce of this property would have been rendered in kind and the counts drew on these resources for benefactions such as the tithe of the grain in his storehouses granted by Rotrou II to Tiron and Rotrou III's confirmation to the Augustinian priory of Chartrage near Mortagne of half the tithe of the lord's table while he resided at Mauves.¹⁴ There is, however, some evidence of money payments dating from the early twelfth century and it is clear that, as the century progressed, money was always available at these centres.¹⁵ Cash payments made for pasturage rights in woodlands and meadows would have increased as the economy expanded and labour services may also have been commuted for cash.

One of the most important devices available to landowners such as the Rotrou dynasty for the generation of additional income from their landed property derived from their control of the watercourses of their estates. For in addition to the fishing rights, which only infrequently find their way into comital acts, they also enjoyed the revenues of the mills which were established along their banks.¹⁶ Mills might render their profits either as portions of their products¹⁷ or as cash from their fees.¹⁸ In either case they were efficient ways of exploiting the land for they permitted the detention as a milling fee, in one form or the other, of a further portion of the produce of the land, above and beyond that already rendered to the lord from the grain crop. The Rotrou counts had not been slow to realise the potential of mills, for they form part of the original endowment of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou made during the eleventh century and by the early twelfth when Rotrou II (1100-1144) came to establish his new foundation of Tiron additional mills were under construction at Nogent.¹⁹ Although there is no evidence of an attempt to enforce a comital monopoly over milling in the Perche, the counts continued to profit from further

¹² Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, no. 6.

¹³ Cf. P. Sawyer, 'The royal tun in pre-conquest England', in *Ideal and reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. P. Wormald (Oxford, 1983), 281-2. On princely rural residences, P. Heliot, 'Sur les résidences princières bâties en France du X^e- XII^e siècle', *Moyen Âge*, lxi (1955), 291.

¹⁴ *Tiron*, no. XXII, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131-6. On tithes of the lord's table, Duby, *Rural economy*, 197.

¹⁵ *Tiron*, no. CVI for pasture rents at La Ferrière. On commutation, Duby, *Rural economy*, 210.

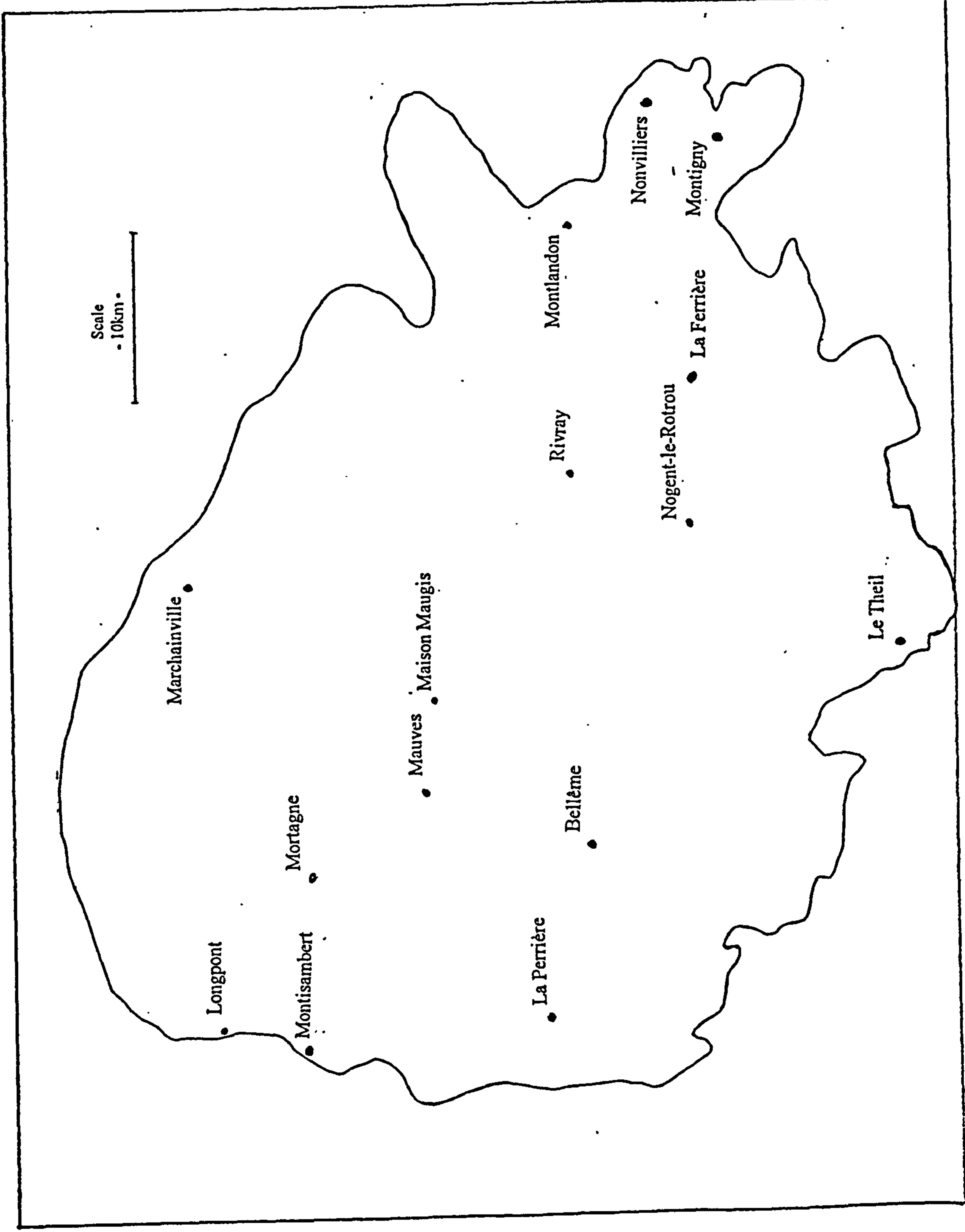
¹⁶ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 206: *perpetuam licentiam piscandi, cum quibuscumque instrumentis voluerint de filo, de lignis vel de junchis, ex utraque parte aquarum*. On fishing, Duby, *Rural economy*, 106-7.

¹⁷ *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 160: *sex modios bladi, III frumenti et III siliginis*.

¹⁸ *LT*, 588: *quartem partem molturae molendini de Montgiun*; 19: *quadraginta solidos usualis monete perticensis in molendinis nostris de Mesun Maugis*.

¹⁹ *NLR*, nos. V-VII for the foundation of Saint-Denis. These charters present a number of potential problems related to interpolation, but the references to the mills occur in the very core of the charters and must be a reflection of the original endowment, though much of the rest of their text has been reworked. The word used for mills *farinarios* is apparently the form used in the earlier middle ages. For the new mills, *Tiron*, no. XXXIII: *et novorum molendinorum qui sunt sub Nongento*.

Map 3 : 1
*Comital demesne and
Prepositure in the Perche*



mill development on their own property as is demonstrated by an elaborate contract from the early years of the thirteenth century between Count Thomas (1202-1217) and one Odo Grandin, in which arrangements are spelt out for maintenance of the mills and division of the profits.²⁰ By the early years of the thirteenth century water mills were tapping not only the revenues generated by cereal production, but also a lively market in cloth, for fulling mills were similarly lucrative.²¹ So effective were the mills in generating cash that when the count-bishop William (1217-1226) died he left the revenues of some of his mills to his cousin, Isabelle of Chartres, with instructions to undertake charitable works among the poor.²²

In addition to the direct control of agricultural communities and their products, the Rotrou counts of the Perche possessed a second major source of income in the woodlands which covered much of their territory. The northernmost tip of the Perche, for example, was, and still is, made up of the forest of the Perche and the contiguous forest of La Trappe. Placename evidence suggests that many of the settlements in this area to the north of Mortagne were recent colonies in the woodland.²³ To the east of Mortagne, between the Vilette and Commeauche rivers, lay the forest of Réno and beyond that the forest Longny. Directly to the south of Longny across another small river valley the Bois de Voré and the forest of Saussay occupy the hills between the valleys of the Huisne and the Corbionne rivers. All these forests lie on flinty clays, which continue in a southwestern sweep behind Nogent-le-Rotrou to bear the bois de Thiron.. Small outcrops also survive near Nogent-le-Rotrou on which lie the Bois de Perchets and the woods of Les Clairets. In the southwestern parts of the county, within the loop of the River Huisne, however, there was only one major wooded area, the forest of Bellême and its continuations, the Bois Dambrai and the Bois de Sublaine. (Map 3:2 *The Woodland of the Perche*)

The sources of this lucrative woodland property is unclear. In contemporary documentation distinctions are made between the *boscus*, a wood, *nemus* which is the most common word for woodland in the comital acts and *foresta*, which seems to imply property outside *foris* cultivation.²⁴ Some of the counts' woodland must have been attached to their landed estates, similar to that which was given to monastic houses by other landed proprietors.²⁵ Most of it, however, must have originally been fisc, that is have been property which in Carolingian times had belonged to the king. Certain areas are always described as *foresta*, for example the forest of Bellême and the forest of Réno, while others are *nemora*, for example the woods of Authou, where the counts had joint authority with the chapter of Chartres cathedral or the woods of

²⁰ *Clairets*, no IX.

²¹ *Clairets*, no. IX: *quartam portionem in eisdem molendinis scilicet in fullagio draporum et in mottura bladorum.*

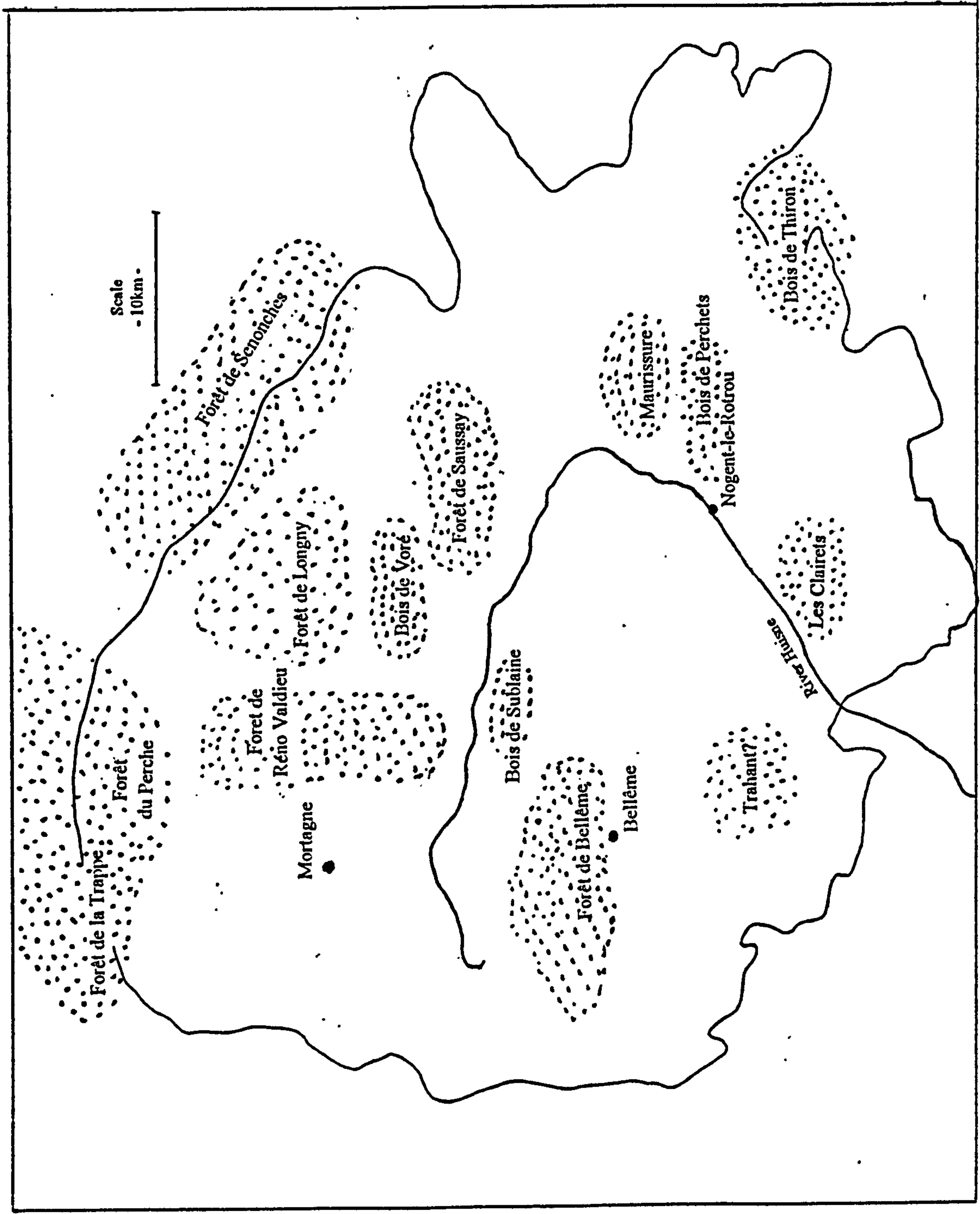
²² *Cartulaire de Notre Dame de l'Eau*, ed. C. Métais (Chartres, 1908), no. XXIX.

²³ Hagiotoponyms, that is placenames derived from saints' names, which are common in this area of the Perche, are related to colonisation in the forest around the year 1000 by E. Le Roy Laudrie and Z. Zysberg, 'Géographie des hagiotoponyms en France', *Annales*, xxxviii (1983), pp. 1312.

²⁴ On terminology, Bechmann, *Trees*, 13-4; O. Rackham, *Trees and woodland in the British landscape* (London, 1976), 152-5.

²⁵ *LT*, 587ff.: *Ex dono Girardi de Asperis partem boschi juxta Freteium. Ex dono praedicti Hugonis de Campis boscum quod est juxta stagna monachorum, sicut metae discernunt. Ex dono Pagani de Buat et Hugonis filii ejus partem gastinae juxta grangiam abbatiae et nemus sicut metae discernunt et pasnagium in bosco de Buat.*

Map 3 : 2 *The Woodland of the Perche*



Clairrets, where the nunnery was established by the countess Richenza-Matilda in memory of her husband. It may well be that the *nemora* were in fact survivals of earlier *foresta*.

The woodlands were exploited in a variety of ways, including the production of mature timber trees, the management of the by-products of that crop, such as prunings and deadwood, and the harvesting of pollarded trees for other uses such as stakes and poles. Animal husbandry was also practised within the woodland with pigs foraging among the trees and the revenue raised from *pasnagium*, a payment associated with pig rearing within the woodland, could be considerable.²⁶ Other animals, such as horses and cattle, might also be pastured there, as an act of Count Thomas makes clear, and further revenue might be derived from the licensing of enclosures or *haies*, whose profits are itemized in an act in favour of Saint-Evroul given by Stephen of Perche.²⁷ Such woodland property formed one of the major components of the counts' grants to their favoured religious houses. Under Count Rotrou II around 1120 for example Tiron received timber for building purposes, firewood, rights to run their pigs and pasture for their animals.²⁸ This balance between wood production and animal foodstuff was very much the traditional woodland economy of the early middle ages.²⁹

During the course of the century however there was a substantial movement towards land clearance, which initially took the form of assarts into the woodland.³⁰ Such clearances are described in an act given by Rotrou III in 1190 and Count Thomas granted one such assart to the abbey of La Trappe.³¹ This replacement of the traditionally managed woodland with arable land increased the value of remaining woodland, particularly of its timber products. Demand rose for building timber and for wood products such as stakes for fencing of arable land or for use in vineyards and cooperage. Where Count Rotrou II had casually granted whatever wood was considered necessary to establish a vineyard around the year 1130, by 1223 his grandson the count-bishop William specified that the monks of La Trappe could take two oaks annually from his forest of Bellême for use in their vineyards at Vaunoise, but for no other purpose, and in 1218, in an act defining the rights of the priory of Sainte-Gauburge within the comital woodlands at Trahant, he went so far as to specify the size of cart which should be used.³²

²⁶ Rackham, *History*, 122 observes that, unlike the English, French woodsmen could rely on a good acorn crop every year.

²⁷ For Thomas' act, *CMPerche*, no. 44. For Stephen's, BN ms lat. 11056, *Cartulaire de Saint-Evroul*, f. 32b: *agriculturis, de herbagiis, de fructibus et de omnibus exitibus et obventionibus*. On Percheron *haies*, J. Pelatan, 'La haie percheronne', *Cahiers Percherons*, lxii (1980), 2-9. On *haies* in general, C. Higounet, 'Les grandes haies forestières de l'Europe médiévale', *Revue du Nord*, lxii (1980), 213-7.

²⁸ *Tiron*, no. XXII: *Dono...omnia nemora mea ad domos suas faciendas et ad suum ardere, et cursum porcorum suorum, et pasturam peccorum suorum*.

²⁹ Wickham, 'European forests', 523-8.

³⁰ Duby, *Rural economy*, 144.

³¹ *NLR*, no. XCIX: *explanationum nemoris factarum et faciendarum quod dicitur les Clairets*. *LT*, 235: *essartia que Aucherus fecit in foresta de Nuisement...illa essartia vocantur Liverie Aucheri*.

³² *Tiron*, no. XXXIII: *ad construendum quicquid vineis comprehenditur esse necessarium*, *LT*, 460-1. AN LL1158, p. 404: *uidelicet in quolibet septimana unam quadrigatam bracarum ad duos equos uel ad quatuor boues in eadem forestia*.

Although hunting could play an important role in the conservation of woodland by controlling the deer which might overgraze the foliage and growing shoots, there are few references to it among the comital acts.³³ Four hunters had formed part of the Carolingian royal household 'for the purpose equally of carrying on the hunt and nourishing themselves', and a similar officer might be expected to assume an important role in an area with such extensive woodland as the Perche.³⁴ Instead, Count Geoffrey III's prohibitions on hunting in certain parishes of the Bellêmois and a reference to Robert, the count of Perche's huntsman are the only indications of this activity.³⁵

Although there are no references to metalworking in the comital *acta*, the recurrence of placenames containing the element -Ferrière- suggests that there must have been considerable metalworking expertise in the area.³⁶ The inquiries made towards the end of the eighteenth century assert that forges had existed in the Perche from time immemorial and there is documentary proof, which dates from the fifteenth century, locating them in the Avre valley and at Boissy Maugis, where tenants had rendered iron to the abbey of Saint-Germain some seven centuries before.³⁷ Charcoal burning, which provided the essential fuel for ironworking, took place within the forests of the northern Perche and there is a reference to metalworkers at Chennebrun (Eure, ct. Verneuil-sur-Avre) in the eleventh century, but nothing to indicate what contribution, in any, was made to comital revenues by an activity which might find a natural home within the woodlands of the Perche.³⁸

Comital rights and revenues

The foundations of the Rotrou family's success lay then in the resources which were available to them as landed proprietors, but the Rotrous were not simply local seigneurs. From the mid eleventh century they claimed to be counts. No sanction for the adoption of the title from an external authority, such as the king, has survived, but by 1058, when Rotrou I attested two royal acts, he had already assumed the title and the draftors of the royal acts accepted it.³⁹ The Norman historian Orderic Vitalis associates the title with the town of Mortagne and refers to

³³ On the ecology of hunting, Bechmann, *Trees*, 26-7. On hunting within the honour of Mowbray, *Charters of the honour of Mowbray, 1107-1191*, ed. D.E. Greenway (London, 1972), xlvi-xlix.

³⁴ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, trans. D. Herlihy, *History of feudalism* (London, 1970), 220.

³⁵ Querimoniae, no. 163; *Tiron*, no. XXI (1119).

³⁶ La Ferrière (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles), the site of comital demesne; Les Ferrières (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche, cme. Saint-Martin-les-Pézerits) and Mont Ferré in the forest of Réno. Eighteenth century ironworkings are discussed in L.C.N. Delestang, *Chorographie du IV^e arrondissement communal du département de l'Orne ou du district de la sous-préfecture de Mortagne* (Argentan, 1803), 35-6.

³⁷ F. Dornic, 'L'industrie dans le Perche: textile et fer', *Cahiers Percherons*, xviii (1963), 22-23. *Polyptique*, ii, 192 (XIII 66): *Solvit unusquisque c libras de ferro*. Metalworking slag has been recovered from a 12 km section of Roman road leading from Moulins-la-Marche through Soligny and Tourouvre to the Eure valley, G. Dubourg, 'Les voies romaines: leur relation avec l'industrie gauloise et gallo-romaine', *BSHAO*, xliii (1924), 395-400.

³⁸ *LT*, 587: *Si duae fossae carbonariae in ipso Freteio fuerint*; *SPC*, 668 for a tithe of the rents of *fabricorum ferrariorum*. On metalwork for tools, *Histoire de la France rurale*, i, 403-7.

³⁹ *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^{er}*, nos. 112, 114. For other assumptions of comital titles, J. Lemaignier, *Le gouvernement royal aux premiers temps capétiens* (Paris, 1965), 126. The records of the abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres preserve the name of a Hervey count of Mortagne dating from 954, but the manuscript dates from the twelfth century and there are other errors of nomenclature in it, such as describing Geoffrey count of Mortagne as count of Perche, so it would be unwise to put too much emphasis on this reference, *SPC*, 199.

Rotrou's son, Geoffrey II and grandson, Rotrou II, by that form, although towards the end of his life it seems that Rotrou II preferred to be called *comes Perticensis et dominus Bellismensis*.⁴⁰ His son, Rotrou III, also occasionally used that style, but more often is described simply as the Percheron count. The form *comes Pertici*, count of the Perche, is first used in an act dating from between 1157 and 1184 and becomes more common under Geoffrey III.⁴¹ The precise form of the counts' title is difficult to determine because it seems to have evolved in this fashion over the best part of a hundred years and the problem is made more difficult because most of the acts of the early counts are preserved in cartulary copies which were compiled after the new style had become conventional usage. The incorporation of the Percheron element, however, does seem to date from Rotrou's lifetime and it may be that it was acquired during his time in Spain, where Mortagne would be virtually unknown.⁴²

It is unclear whether the counts assumed the title and then took on the rights of public power formerly held by the kings, or whether they held those rights and then adopted the title, but their possession of all the powers of public authority is absolutely apparent.⁴³ They administered justice and sought payment for the provision of public security in the form of taxes, known as tallage, and commercial impositions, such as tolls. Although these former public rights and others, such as minting of coin and the capacity to call out military aid from the community in times of crisis, can be shown to have rested with the Rotrou counts of Perche however, there is little justification for the exercise of those powers in the comital acts. There are three references which might imply a religious sanction for the family's power: an act of Rotrou II, for example, describes him in 1141 as count of the Perche with the approval of God and two acts of Geoffrey III use the formula 'Percheron count by grace of God', but it may be more significant that the attestations of royal acts made by Counts Rotrou I, Geoffrey II and Rotrou II often simply take the form of the title and the count's Christian name.⁴⁴ This association of the title of count with the name of the count alone implies that in some senses the dignity was a personal one, and the most frequent form of the family's title, the Percheron count, lends some support to this view.

The Rotrou family assumed the dignity of count at some point in the mid eleventh century, but their lands were not described as a county (*comitatus*) within their own acts until the time of Count Thomas (1202-17).⁴⁵ The usual means employed to describe the jurisdiction of the counts

⁴⁰ For the association of Mortagne with the comital title, OV, ii, 360, iv, 200, *VLM*, no. 609. For Rotrou II's new title, AD Orne H2153 published as *CMPerche*, no. 21.

⁴¹ AD Orne H2154 published as *CMPerche*, no. 175 is a surviving original. This form of the title is used by Rotrou II, but in an act which is preserved only in a cartulary copy only, *Tiron*, no. CCLVI (1141).

⁴² Rotrou is first described as *Comes Perges* at Tudela in 1125, *Doc. Ebro*, no. 124.

⁴³ J.P. Poly and E. Bournazel, *La mutation féodale x^e-xii^e siècles* (Paris, 1980), 65-100, D. Barthélemy, *L'ordre seigneurial* (Paris, 1990), 165-67, 87-95.

⁴⁴ *Tiron*, no. CCLVI, *LT*, 457-8, 205 for divine association. D. Crouch, *The image of aristocracy in Britain 1000-1300* (London, 1992), 13-4, 218 for comparable associations by the counts of Meulan and Eu and the decline in the practice in the thirteenth century. On the hereditary nature of the title count and its use with personal names by members of the same family, C. Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', *ANS*, xii (1990), 211.

⁴⁵ AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128, Cartulaire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Laumer de Blois, pp. 628-30: *Ego vel qui comitatum Perticensem tenuerit requiremus...*

was to refer to their land (*terra mea*), though a surviving act of Count Rotrou II uses the word lordship (*dominatus*) to describe the power he exercised over the Bellêmois after 1113.⁴⁶ The attitude of the counts to their power and their exercise of that power, in so far as it can be gleaned from their acts, therefore, is essentially pragmatic: they held power in a personal capacity because they were able to hold power and their role as counts, in which they exercised public authority, was a recognition of that capacity.

i. Keeping the peace

The maintenance of public order within the Perche was clearly the most visible aspect of that comital role of the Rotrous. Orderic Vitalis is most emphatic on the success of Count Geoffrey II in this respect, describing how he "kept valiant barons and warlike castellans in firm subjection to his government" and wrongdoers were forced (*compulsi*) to come to his court.⁴⁷ An incident in the early 1090s which led to the marriage of Geoffrey's daughter, Juliana, to the Norman lord, Gilbert of Laigle, is an important demonstration of Geoffrey's comital pretensions, for it reveals Geoffrey taking responsibility for the actions of his men. Gilbert's uncle had been killed as he rode unarmed near the castle of Moulins-la-Marche in an apparently unprovoked attack launched by Gerald Capreolus, Roger of Ferrières and other adherents of Count Geoffrey. The killing was probably unintentional, but might easily have led to a longlasting feud on the northern borders of the Perche and Geoffrey chose to avert such conflict, preferring instead to acknowledge the fault and arrange a marriage between his daughter and the man who would otherwise have been obliged to pursue the feud.⁴⁸

The episode indicates that the preservation of public order was a difficult task for the early Rotrou counts and suggests that the peace they maintained in the volatile border areas was fragile. The warrior aristocracy over which they exercised lordship can never have been easy to control and the success with which Arnold of Échauffour had secured support from the men of the Corbonnais and Mortagne for his raids on Normandy in the mid eleventh century indicates the bellicose qualities of their inhabitants.⁴⁹ Orderic in his account of Count Geoffrey's peace making stresses the count's "prudent precautions for the welfare of his subjects" and he also presents Geoffrey's son, Count Rotrou II, as an upholder of law and order, for he captured and hanged the brigand Robert Poard, who had threatened the peace on the Norman/Percheron border.⁵⁰ Nonetheless the Rotrou counts cannot have been without such military energy themselves.

⁴⁶ CMPerche, no. 21: *eo die quo in manum meam devenit dominatus Castri Belismi*; AD Eure-et-Loir H619: *monachos Sancte Boneuallensis ecclesie in tota terra nostra ab omni absoluimus consuetudine* (1173); AD Sarthe H927: *ipsi per totam terram meam sint liberi*.

⁴⁷ OV, iv, 160, NLR, no. XIX, (p.62).

⁴⁸ OV, iv, 200-2.

⁴⁹ OV, ii, 124. Compare the warfare of raid and counter raid described in R.R. Davies, 'Frontier arrangements in fragmented societies: Ireland and Wales', in *Medieval frontier societies*, 83-4.

⁵⁰ OV, vi, 548.

Considerable force would have been required to assert the family's ascendancy in the first place and the martial abilities of Count Rotrou I are apparent in nearly every reference to him.⁵¹ The later Rotrous certainly kept the peace, but only after they had become successful warleaders themselves and the mounting of regular military expeditions beyond the borders of the Perche, both to crusade in the Holy Land or to fight in Spain, is a manifestation of that prowess. Orderic is able to present Counts Geoffrey II and Rotrou II as noble warriors dedicated to the preservation of public order and their external expeditions may well have had the effect of promoting public order by removing young and aggressive warriors, but his dark reference to William the Conqueror's expedition against the 'lords of the Corbonnais' in the 1070s may obscure the rather less praiseworthy activities of Count Rotrou I in the years when the lordship of the Rotrou dynasty was being imposed.⁵²

While the preservation of order among the warrior elite was the task of the counts, the maintenance of the peace among the other orders of society had been delegated. All the indications are that the operation of criminal justice was regarded as a lucrative business to be granted out on a franchise basis by the counts. In this instance public powers had been privatised below the level even of the territorial prince and had been granted by him to his associates, either to local lords or to the officials who are described in comital acts simply as *viarius*. When Gerald of Les Apres granted property to the abbey of La Trappe during the absence of Count Geoffrey III on crusade, a Hugh *viarius* to whom the "mastery of that land pertained" promised the countess that he would preserve and keep the peace on the property for the monks.⁵³

The lucrative nature of administering justice meant that there was a lively market in such jurisdictions, which often changed hands for considerable sums. In 1182, for example, Giroie *Bastardus*, a member of a prominent Percheron family, ceded the jurisdictional rights he held at Dame-Marie to the abbey of Jumièges and secured a good payment for his grant, implying the potential profit the monks might expect from the privilege.⁵⁴ The fundraising activities of Aylmer of Villeray, undertaken on the eve of the third crusade, however, give us our most detailed information on the administration of local justice within the Perche. Aylmer, and presumably his ancestors, had possessed rights of justice over two areas in the Bellêmois, Dancé (Orne, ct. Nocé) and Berd'huis (Orne, ct. Nocé). In 1190 Aylmer sold his rights in Dancé to the priory of Saint-Léonard of Bellême for £35 plus a payment of 100s. to his brother Geoffrey and in Berd'huis to the monks of Sainte-Gauburge for £200 with another payment of 100s. to his brother.⁵⁵

⁵¹ NLR, no. XIX: ...*cum domino suo Rotroco Mauritaniensi comite ad bellum pergens ad Domionem castrum*; LBSMS, f. 28: *In anno quo Rogerius vicecomes de Montegomerici et Rotroco comes de Moritania assalierunt Braiou*; OV, ii, 360.

⁵² OV, ii, 356. Subsequent changes in warfare and the emergence of chivalry are considered in J. Gillingham, 'Conquering the barbarians: war and chivalry in twelfth-century Britain', *Haskins Society Journal*, iv (1992), 67-84.

⁵³ AD Orne H1846: *dominium illius terre pertinebat*.

⁵⁴ *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII.

⁵⁵ *CMPerche*, no. 34; AN S2238 no.15.

In both cases the formula used to describe the property is the same - *quicquid iuris et consuetudinis et iusticie in terra* and in both sales the same procedure was followed. The property was resigned into the hands of the count, who then regranted it to the monks - *totum in manu mea resignavit et ego monachos de tota uenditione inuestiui*. Even though the nature of the transaction as a sale is made absolutely clear, the premise is that the rights of justice had been granted by the count and must therefore return to him for regrant, leaving his rights unaffected. A second version of the contract preserved by the monks of Sainte-Gauburge defined the obligations which the monks still owed to the count, acknowledging that, while the monks were to have rights to settle local disputes in the prior's court, they still owed suit at the count's court and various comital dues are still to be paid including the count's *chevage*.⁵⁶

ii) Taxation

The second great public power was the ability to tax, either in the form of controls on commercial life, such as tolls and market fees, or to extract payment in the form of tallage. It is the commercial controls, however, which are most apparent in the acts of the counts of the Perche. The machinery to tap commercial activity took many forms, though the most visible were the tolls collected by the *tolonearii*, such as Henry the *tolonearius* who witnessed two comital acts in the late twelfth century, and it may be significant that three comital *prepositure*, Montlondon, Le Theil and Montisambert are situated on main roads at the fringes of the modern Perche.⁵⁷ An exemption granted to the monastery of Perseigne in northern Maine indicates the range of impositions which might be made - *ipsi per totam terram meam sint liberi et quieti ab omni thelonio et pontagio et passagio et uenali et exituali requisitione*.⁵⁸ Comital exemptions from grants of this nature were granted to a number of religious houses and to specific individuals, who were nominated by the count to act on behalf of favoured institutions.

Such tolls would be a source of ready cash for the counts and it may be significant that where early comital acts involve payments of cash, as for example Rotrou II's grant of 100s. to the monks of Tiron for their clothing or Rotrou III's grant to La Trappe, they usually involve payments by bailiffs of Mortagne and Nogent-le-Rotrou, both of which were situated at nodal points on the road network.⁵⁹ The position of Mortagne on the road from Alençon to Verneuil, therefore, becomes significant for its association with the comital title. Roger of Montgomery

⁵⁶ For the two versions of the act, AN S2238, nos. 15, 11 (Cartulary copies, AN LL1158 vol. ii, pp. 402-3, 415-6). For the monks obligations, AN S2238, no. 11: *seruitia monachorum debet facere uidelicet duellum et bannum*, but AN S2238, no. 15 (AN LL1158, vol. ii, p. 402): *Hanc uenditionem concessi saluo ceruagio meo quod prius habebam in iamdictam terra retenta tantum michi et heredibus meis in ipsa terra tali iusticia qualem habeo in uilla sancte Gauburgis*. On the association of powers of justice and taxation, F. Lot, 'La vicaria et le vicarius', *Nouvelle Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger*, xvii (1893), 286. On *chevage*, Poly and Bournazel, *Mutation féodale*, 207.

⁵⁷ RCVD, f. 8v (1185), AD Orne H1846 (1191/2).

⁵⁸ AD Sarthe H927.

⁵⁹ Tiron, no. XXXIII: *Dedi etiam eis ad vestituram, in redditibus prefecture Nongenti, centum solidos; LT, 587: sex libras de redditibus meis apud Mauritaniam, ad festum Sancti Remigii persolvendas*.

was able to draw on similar cash resources at Alençon which he used to endow Saint-Evroul around the year 1080 and it may be that, at much the same time, Rotrou I also profited from to increased traffic along the roads of southern Normandy, access to which he obtained by possession of Mortagne.⁶⁰

In addition to the taxes on movement of goods, sales taxes from markets also generated considerable income. Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and Tiron were both recipients of market tolls and Count Thomas established a new market at Bonsmoulins, which had only recently come under the jurisdiction of his family.⁶¹ From the twelfth century, perhaps with the example of their cousins, the counts of Champagne, in mind, the counts of the Perche also encouraged fairs. The monks of Saint-Léonard at Bellême had held a fair on their patron's feast from the period before the Rotrou family took over the Bellêmois, but the fair of St. James and St. Christopher organised by the Augustinian canons at Chartrage was only established in the mid twelfth century.⁶² Further comital grants permitted fairs at Moulins-la-Marche for the benefit of the priory there, at Préaux for the local lord on the understanding that he remitted part of the profit to the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou and at Mortagne for the countess Richenza Matilda's new foundation of Toussaints.⁶³ The potential profits of these gatherings, both in fees and fines for infringement, are outlined in Geoffrey III's grant to Saint-Evroul.⁶⁴ A further act of Geoffrey III, this time for the Maison-Dieu at Mortagne, suggests that these commercial controls extended beyond simply taxing and policing commercial gatherings even to the oversight of the transactions. For Geoffrey conveys to the house the right to inspect the wares of the shoemakers at Mortagne and to confiscate unsatisfactory workmanship.⁶⁵

The other great money-raising device available to the Rotrou family in their capacity as counts of Perche was the ability to tallage. This payment, which was ostensibly a contribution to public security, could be set at any level and must therefore have been universally disliked. Exemption from it would be a much sought after privilege and rarely granted. Pagan of Saint-Quentin's house at Nogent-le-Rotrou was granted such relief by Rotrou II, as was that of Baldwin the doctor, and Rotrou III conceded a similar privilege to the area immediately outside the monastery of Saint Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou, though he had hitherto insisted on his right to it.⁶⁶ Similar

⁶⁰ For Roger's revenues at Alençon, OV, iii, 138.

⁶¹ NLR, no. XIII, Tiron, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 160, Querimoniae, no. 236.

⁶² CMPerche, no. 22, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131-6.

⁶³ AD Orne H721. AD Orne IG1071/30, *Inventaire des pièces justificatives que produisent part devant ... évêque de Séz les chappellains perpetuels et prebends de l'église collegiale et royalle de Toussaints de la ville de Mortagne au Perche*, (1743) p. 1, where the countess's act of foundation for Toussaints is noted, but no text is given. Bart however seems to have seen the act at the turn of the seventeenth century and reports it in his *Antiquitéz*, 160-1.

⁶⁴ AD Orne H721: *omnes forisfacturas et emendas habebunt et placita et transitum uille de Molendinis et theolonea*.

⁶⁵ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 157.

⁶⁶ *Clairêts*, no. I; Tiron, no. CCLVI; NLR, no. XCIX, IX: *quittavi talliam, quam dicebam me debere habere in terra monachorum Sancti Dionsii, extra burgum Sancti Dionisii, sicut idem burgus clauditur aquis*. This act appears twice in the cartulary with slight copyists' variants.

exemptions were specified in a series of grants in which favoured monasteries were given the services of free men in towns such as Nogent and Mortagne.⁶⁷

Such arbitrary impositions came to be associated with the bad customs of the eleventh and twelfth century lords. By the mid twelfth century there are signs of some resistance to such impositions because the counts begin to define, presumably at the request of their tenants, exactly what payments are due.⁶⁸ When Aylmer of Villeray sold his rights at Berd'huis to the monks of Sainte-Gauburge Count Rotrou III felt it necessary to specify precisely the residual powers of imposition which were conveyed with this grant.⁶⁹ By the time of Count Thomas there must have been a considerable demand for clarification, for he issued letters patent laying down precise obligations for the knights of the *castellania* of Bellême.⁷⁰ It is in such an atmosphere of clarification of obligation that many towns sought enfranchisement from their feudal lords. Within the Perche such a tendency can only be perceived at Marchainville, to the inhabitants of which Geoffrey III issued a charter.⁷¹

iii) Defence

Of the additional public power, the ability to call for military assistance, there is very little evidence in the acts of the counts. Count Rotrou III granted a virtual exemption from comital authority to the priory of Moutiers in 1159, but insisted on their help in repairing the defences of the castle at Rivray,⁷² and there is a brief reference in an act made in 1209 to "the custody of one month" owed at Mortagne by Hugh of Courgaudry upon the summons of the count.⁷³ It is possible that a vestige of the body of knights intended to defend the castle of Bellême, one of the 'semblables collèges chevalresques' described by Bournazel, is preserved in the group of knights addressed by Count Thomas in his act of 1215.⁷⁴ This group may also have furnished the ten

⁶⁷ Chêne Galon: Duchesne 54, p. 461; Saint-Evroul: Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 206; La Trappe: *LT*, 16.

⁶⁸ A. Gouverneur, *Essais historiques sur le Perche* (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1882), 215-6: *concedo vicariam terrae eorum cum omnibus consuetudinibus, videlicet ea potestate ea virtute qua antecessores mei in manu sua eam habuerunt, nullam omnino retinens inquisitionem nullam exactionem, nec ego, nec aliquis successorum meorum, vel propter captionem meam, vel filiorum meorum, vel filiarum meorum, aut successorum meorum.*

⁶⁹ AN S2238, no. 11: *A monachis uero non fiet tallia nisi tres que secuntur: si abbas Romam perrexit et alias obedientias tallia uoluit aut si monachi inibi commemorantes in reddituum amplicatione euidenti se dilitare uoluerint aut si combustio ecclesie sue quod absit acciderit tallia fiet a priore.*

⁷⁰ AD Orne H2164: *Ad universorum notitiam volumus pervenire, quod milites nostri de castellania Bellismensi talliam de feodis suis et hominibus suis nobis debent tantummodo feodaliter pro hiis quatuor rebus que sequuntur: pro prima militia nostra, pro prima captione nostra de guerra, pro militia filii nostri primogeni viventis et pro prima filia nostra maritanda. Preter has tallias nec a militum feodis, nec ab eorum hominibus tallias possumus feodaliter extorquere, et ne hujusmodi libertas ab aliquo heredum nostrorum in posterum infringatur.*

⁷¹ BN Collection Dupuy, vol. 222, p. 127.

⁷² Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6: *praeter mandatum trium dierum in anno ad reparanda fossata de Reveriaco tantum modo.*

⁷³ RCVD, f. 11: *custodiam unius mensis, ad summonitionum ipsius comitis.*

⁷⁴ AD Orne H2164; E. Bournazel, *Le gouvernement capétien au XIIIe siècle 1108-80: structures sociales et mutations institutionnelles* (Paris, 1975), 50.

knights' service owed by the counts of Perche to the kings of England in their capacity as dukes of Normandy.⁷⁵

By far the most frequent reference to the military responsibilities of the society over which the Rotrou counts presided is to be found in dues rendered to them which are of a military character and imply a commutation of service. Exemptions from *equitationibus*⁷⁶, for example, suggest a tax intended to fund the purchase or maintenance of horses, and an exemption from taxation given to one Robert Ingun also implies exemption from military service.⁷⁷ Most informative of all, however, are the exemptions which Geoffrey III granted to Saint-Evroul's priory at Moulins-la-Marche. Here in the later 1190s in an area which had experienced conflict in the recent past Geoffrey granted exemption from *avenagiis* (supply of oats), *carragiis* (carriage), *muragiis* (upkeep of walls) and *fossatis* (upkeep of ditches), while at much the same time he approved the grant to the same house by one Simon le Bret of a tenement in the same town whose tenants were henceforth to be free of many comital exactions including watch duties.⁷⁸

iv. Control of minting

It is in relation to control of the coinage, however, that the Rotrou counts made what appears to be the clearest expression of their independence. A number of currencies are specified within charters given in the Perche in the twelfth century with manceau, angevin and tournois reckonings mirroring political predominance of the Plantagenet or Capetian kings, but there is by no means a rigid sequence of acceptable currencies throughout the century and payment could also be given in chartrain and dunois currency, or even both, until late in the century or into the thirteenth.⁷⁹ The existence of a specifically Percheron coinage, however, is attested by surviving pieces and there is a lively local tradition that the counts of Perche minted locally with Corbon usually given as the site of the mint.⁸⁰

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the location of mints was usually determined by the presence or absence of a mint within a locality in Carolingian times before the breakdown of central authority.⁸¹ In general, mints continued to exist where they had existed as instruments of the Carolingian kings, but in the case of the Perche an entirely new mint seems to have been established. Surviving coins bearing the legend *Perticensis* have been assigned to a type

⁷⁵ PR 6 John 1204, 33; *Rotuli de liberate ac de misis de praestitis regnante Johanne*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1844), 74: *servicium decem militum de Belhem sicut comes dominus ejus inde facere consuevit.*

⁷⁶ *Clairrets*, no. I.

⁷⁷ LT, 16: *liberi ab omni servicio et tallia et seculari consuetudine et exercitu et equitatu.*

⁷⁸ AD Orne H721: *liberi sint et quieti ab omnibus talliis et gardis et auxiliis et consuetudinibus et theloneis.*

⁷⁹ A. Chédeville, 'La role de la monnaie et l'apparition du crédit dans le pays de l'ouest de la France xi^e-xiii^e siècles', *CCM*, xvii (1974), 307; Spufford, *Money*, 200; F Dumas, 'Les monnaies normandes (x^e-xii^e siècles)', *Revue Numismatique*, 6s, xxi (1979), 98.

⁸⁰ F. Poey d'Avant, *Monnaies féodales de France* (Paris, 1858-61), 262-3.

⁸¹ On feudal money, Spufford, *Money*, 57. On the devolution of monetary rights, T. Bisson, *Conservation of coinage: monetary exploitation and its restraint in France, Catalonia and Aragon (c. AD 1000-c. 1225)* (Oxford, 1979), 4-6.

descending from the coinage of the Thibaudians at Chartres and their first appearance has been tentatively dated to the 1150s.⁸² The first reference to a specifically Percheron coinage in comital acts, however, does not appear until the 1190s in the acts of Count Geoffrey III and it is tempting to see them as an expression of the position of influence and independence achieved by that count. For while their appearance coincides with the so-called 'heyday' of feudal coinage after the discovery of silver resources at Freiburg, there are few surviving examples implying that they were a short-lived issue.⁸³

Relations with the Church

The public powers which devolved on the counts of Perche, then, were one of their main sources of wealth and authority, but they also derived benefit from the exploitation of the church as did many of the territorial princes.⁸⁴ Unlike their greater fellows, however, the counts' access to ecclesiastical resources was limited. Their lands did not correspond to one of the ancient divisions of the Carolingian kingdom, but grew up at the margins between those divisions and lay in the two dioceses of Sées and Chartres, neither of whose episcopal cities were situated within the boundaries of the county. In the mid eleventh century Rotrou I probably worked with his wife's uncle, Ivo bishop of Sées, in establishing the archdeaconry of Mortagne, which was one of the most advanced developments in church organisation of its day, but once the diocese of Sées became firmly incorporated into the Norman episcopal hierarchy, that close working relationship ceased and the counts were never able to dominate their local prelates.⁸⁵ Neither were there any

⁸² A. Blanchet and A. Dieudonné, *Manuel de numismatique française, iv, Monnaies féodales françaises* (Paris, 1936), 322; F. Dumas, 'La monnaie dans le royaume au temps de Philippe-Auguste', in *La France de Philippe-Auguste: le temps des mutations*, ed. R.H. Bautier (Paris, 1982), 564.

⁸³ BN ms. lat. 10089, p. 381; AD Sarthe H930 for Percheron money in comital acts. For heyday, Spufford, *Money*, 105. There appear to have been no Percheron coins in hoards recently recovered and published in *Revue Numismatique*, and a hoard dating from around 1150, which was discovered at Nogent-le-Rotrou in the nineteenth century, also contained no Percheron coins, *Bulletin de la Société Dunoise*, iv (1881-5), 367-8 cited in Chédeville, Chartres, 434, n.17.

⁸⁴ Poly and Bournazel, *La mutation féodale*, 95ff.

⁸⁵ Bates, *Normandy*, 215 discusses the formation of cathedral chapters and the precocious development of the archdeaconry of Mortagne in the 1050s and 1060s. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 163 mentions the tithe of Courgeon, part of which had been assigned to the priory of Chartrage at Mortagne to maintain the assembly of the *kalends* which met there: *chargé de bailler chacun an dix-neuf provendes de froment aux prieur et religieux de Chartraige pour la despence de la Callande du Corbonnoys y establee*. It is difficult to determine the nature of this assembly, which is mentioned again by Bart, 152 in a précis of Geoffrey III's act of confirmation to Chartrage: *confirma les donations et fondations faictes par Rotrou et Rotrou, son père et ayeul, à la maison et léporoserye de Chartraige lès Mortagne et les biens y donnez et à la Callende de Corbonnoys y establee* and he goes on to suggest that it was some sort of annual consultative assembly: *les dictes comtes du Perche et leurs successeurs faisoient chacun an au dict lieu de Chartraige les assemblees de la Callande des gens d'eglize, de la noblesse et aultres pour les affaires du pays* (p.155). His justification for this appears to be the presence of various armorial bearings within the building: *en tesmoignage de quoy et pour perpétuelle mémoire de la dicte assemblee, les comtes du Perche, seigneurs et gentilsz hommes y assistans feirent coucher et pendre leurs escuz et armoiryes dedans la grande salle du dict Chartraige où se tenoient la dicte assemblee*. Since there is no reference to such an assembly within comital acts, it seems more reasonable that the assembly was in fact one of clergy, living by the Augustinian rule. The Latin word *calendae* can be used to mean rural chapters held on the first of the month, C.T. Martin, *Record interpreter*, 2nd ed. (London, 1910), 206. Since Ivo bishop of Sées (d. 1071) was the uncle by marriage of Rotrou I, it seems likely that such arrangements could be most effectively put in place during their lifetimes.

great Merovingian or Carolingian foundations within the Perche, whose resources the counts might seek to control.⁸⁶

Nonetheless they were to benefit from control of church lands and much of the territory over which the counts of Perche exercised power had been church property alienated in the ninth or tenth centuries. The extensive property formerly owned by Saint-Germain-des-Prés, for example, never found its way back to that house, though some of the land which Rotrou III was to assign to the Carthusian house of Val-Dieu may have originally belonged to Saint-Germain and some of the churches which formed part of the endowment of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, may also have come from the same source.⁸⁷ Longstanding property disputes with the bishop of Chartres, which were not resolved until the eve of Rotrou III's departure for the third crusade in 1190, indicate that episcopal property was also seized by the counts and Rotrou I is accused on precisely that charge by Orderic.⁸⁸

In addition the church provided a number of useful services for the counts. Their great foundation of Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou for example seems to have served not only a religious purpose, but to have been a combination of status symbol, family mausoleum and banking facility, while Rotrou II's foundations of Tiron and La Trappe asserted the family's influence at the very edges of its lordship.⁸⁹ Ecclesiastical office was also a career option for its younger sons: Rotrou II's son became archbishop of Palermo and two of Rotrou III's sons were to be bishops of Châlons-sur-Marne, while a third became dean of Tours, but these careers were pursued necessarily outside the Perche. Within the county, even after the Gregorian reforms, the counts still appropriated minor properties belonging to great religious houses which lay outside the Perche. Geoffrey III, for example, secured the property at Parfondeval (Orne, ct. Pervençères) owned by the abbey of La Couture in Le Mans for his clerk Philip of Prulay, as well as Pontlevoy's cell at Brénard (Orne, ct./cme. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne) for his brother Rotrou's chaplain.⁹⁰

Most significantly, however, the counts could still call upon certain religious houses to provide them with lodging and maintenance, which were precisely the rights they might draw from their own demesne properties. Such a service to the counts and their retinue was obviously a major burden upon those who had to provide it and constituted a considerable subsidy from the church to the counts. The abandonment by Count Geoffrey III of such a right, formerly possessed by the

⁸⁶ Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', 256.

⁸⁷ For the endowment of Val Dieu, RCVD, fos.1-2. For the churches, *NLR*, nos. XXI, XXII, XXIII concerning Saint-Germain of Loisé, where Saint-Germain-des-Prés held property, *Polyptique*, ii, 172 (XII 46); *NLR*, no. LVIII for Saint-Pierre at Mauves, mentioned in *Polyptique*, ii, 165 (XII 9); *NLR*, no. CIII for Saint-Prejet of Villiers-sous-Mortagne, *Polyptique*, ii, 168 (XII 23, 26); *NLR*, no. CIII for Saint-Martin of Gemages, *Polyptique*, ii, 164, 169 (XII 5, 28).

⁸⁸ OV, ii, 360.

⁸⁹ Compare *NLR* no. XXVIII where Rotrou II grants money to one Lancelin because he has patronised Rotrou's church: *Comes...dedit ipsi Lancelino octo libras de suis nummis in caritate, quia hoc donum fecerat sue ecclesie.*

⁹⁰ *Cartulaire des abbayes de Saint-Pierre de la Couture et de Saint-Pierre de Solesmes* (Le Mans, 1881), no. CLXXX; AD Loir-et-Cher 17 H55.

counts on property owned by the cathedral chapter of Chartres at Grandhoux (today Grandhoux-Nonvilliers, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron), constituted a considerable benefaction, and when the count-bishop William was entertained by the prior of La Chaise in 1225 the prior was so anxious that a precedent should not be established that he secured letters patent from William to that effect.⁹¹

Conclusion

The position of their territory between the two dioceses of Chartres and Sées meant that the Rotrou counts derived less benefit from their relationship with the church than many other territorial magnates. They dominated the church within their territory, exploiting church property for their own purposes, but ecclesiastical resources were limited for there were no great foundations or episcopal centres. In this respect they were hampered by the marginal position of their territory away from the urban centres where the church held valuable property. In other respects the Rotrous benefited from that situation. Their power was founded firmly on ownership of land and the exercise of public powers, and they were able to exercise that power because their lands lay at the fringes. Unlike the great territorial princes around them, they were not heirs to a body of delegated rights and powers exercised within the area of a Carolingian *pagus* or county, but were in effect self-made counts. K.F. Werner defines the starting point of princely power as the viceroy of the king in a complete kingdom and places the single large counties, such as Anjou or Blois beneath them.⁹² The Rotrous represent a further stage in the fragmentation of power, for they created their county on the margins of the old units of regional power, seizing what powers they could enforce over as large an area as would acknowledge their lordship. The very existence of their county was therefore based on the energy and ambition of the lineage which created it.

⁹¹ *NDC*, no. CXXXIV, AD Loiret H22, Cartulaire de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, p. 188, no. 298.

⁹² Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', 248-51.

Chapter 4

Men and means: the agents of the counts of the Perche

The potential benefits to be derived by the counts from the body of property, revenues, rights and relationships, which made up their personal and comital property were considerable, but their realisation depended upon the machinery available for their exploitation and more particularly upon the calibre of the men who could be engaged to assert the counts' power and execute their wishes. While no direct evidence in the form of, for example, estate rolls or court records has survived, the comital acts contain the names of various *servientes*, *famuli* and *clientes*, who surrounded the count and there are references to the offices and tasks which they undertook. From these pointers it is possible to reconstruct the general arrangements by which the counts ran the Perche and to draw some conclusions about the personnel involved.¹ It is convenient to divide these arrangements into those which functioned in the localities and those which operated around the person of the count.

i. The localities

To gather the resources which supported them and sustained their comital aspirations the Rotroues relied in particular on the *prepositus*, occasionally called the *pretor* or *prefectus*. There is evidence for the presence of *prepositi* in a number of locations where the counts had property which needed to be managed, including the urban centres of Bellême, Mortagne and Nogent-le-Rotrou and elsewhere throughout the Perche, such as La Ferrière, La Perrière, Le Theil, Longpont, Maison Maugis, Marchainville, Mauves, Montigny, Montisambert, Montlondon, Moulins-la-Marche, Nonvilliers and Rivray.² The nature of this property might vary from the control of salt distribution at Nogent or Mortagne through the management of landed property to the collection of commercial tolls in the major urban centres.

In some of the larger centres the *prepositus* probably had a series of assistants and, together with the stewardship of the property, he was also responsible for the administration of justice on the count's demesne property, the role elsewhere assumed by the *viarii*.³ In an important centre of

¹ NDC, no. CXIV: *per servientem capituli et servientem comitis vendetur*; Tiron, no. XCV: *Odo nepos Girardi et cliens comitisse Beatricis*, BL ms Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105v: *Helia famulo comitis*.

² Duchesne 54, p.460. Rivray (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne) was the site of a comital residence, BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 310: *in arce comitis*. The motte at Rivray and the Romanesque chapel, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, on the site have been excavated and traces of a wooden castle, succeeded by a stone keep have been found, J. Decaëns, 'La motte de Rivray, chronique des fouilles médiévales', *Archéologie Médiévale*, xxii (1992), 489-90. The *prepositus* of Rivray often appears in comital acts: AD Orne H5441: *pretor de Rivere*, AD Eure-et-Loir, H5211: *Willelmo Russello tunc temporis preposito de Rivereio*.

³ LT, 16: *mando et precipio ut prepositus meus et ceteri ballivi mei de Mauritania tantum faciant*. Clairnets, no. I: *ab omni justitia senescalii et praefecti*, AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128, p. 628-30: *quod si reddere distulerint vel super eisdem redditibus eis injuriati fuerint eidem sententiae cui praepositus Moritaniae de qua inferius dicetur subjacebunt*.

comital power such as Mortagne or Nogent therefore the count's *prepositus* could exercise significant powers. Occasionally the *prepositi* must have chosen to exercise those powers in an arbitrary way, refusing to make regular payments to religious houses according to the counts' standing instructions, for example, for many comital acts contain penalty clauses designed to guarantee satisfaction from these officers.⁴ The terms of their tenure of office is unknown, although the evidence of an act of Count Rotrou III addressed to his *baliuuis, prepositis, firmariis et ministris*, together with the frequent penalty clauses in comital acts implies that some at least held their positions as farmers.

A number of individuals who acted as *prepositi* are known by name and it is even possible to reconstruct a little of their careers. Blandinus regularly attested acts in favour of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and is described as the count's *prepositus* in the years around the turn of the twelfth century.⁵ Pagan of Saint-Quentin(-de-Blavou) attests several of the acts of Count Rotrou II as his *prepositus*.⁶ His area of competence was Bellême where in the 1120s he attempted to increase his master's revenue by curtailing the trading privileges of the priory of Bellême.⁷ The responsibilities of his office secured for him the grant of a burgage tenement in Nogent-le-Rotrou, but his own lands were probably insignificant for he gave the priory of Chartrage only half an arpent of meadow at Saint-Quentin.⁸

While the counts' agents at Bellême and Nogent are clearly visible, there is the possibility of a veritable dynasty of *prepositi* at Mortagne. In 1065 Robert *prepositus* of Mortagne witnessed an confirmation to Saint-Vincent of Le Mans made by Rotrou I and the *prepositus* of Mortagne for the next century and a half always seems to be called Robert. Around the year 1100 Robert *prepositus* of Mortagne, in company with his wife Bertha and son Robert, conceded a benefaction made to Nogent; in 1144 a *prepositus* Robert attested Rotrou III's confirmation to Chartrage and a Robert *prepositus* of Mortagne attested a further comital act in 1182 and appeared in an act of Geoffrey III.⁹ The rewards of their tenure must have been more considerable for they appear as independent landed proprietors not only in the act for Nogent, but also in other benefactions for the Fontevraudine house at Belhomert and must have been patrons of Saint-Evroul for the name of Robert the *prepositus* of Mortagne appears among the obits of that house.¹⁰ There may even

⁴ AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128, pp. 629-30: *in praepositura Mauritaniae per manum praepositi...quicumque vero praeposituram Mauritaniae acceperit cum praeposituram habuerit tenebitur jurare eamdem pecuniam saepedictis fratribus statutis terminis persolvere quod si ad terminos assignatos eamdem pecuniam non persolverit per singulas hebdomadas quibus eam retinuerit viginti solidos pro poena solvere monachis tenebitur et ut majori vinculo teneatur astrictiis ipse et uxor ejus et familia tota ab illo die et deinceps donec de summa debita poena addita praedictis fratribus non fuerit satisfactum totum se noverit innodatos quod si nec ita reddiderint. Ego vel qui comitatum Perticensem tenuerit requiremus et si infra quindecim dies ipsis fratribus non fuerint satisfactum castrum Mauritaniae cum castellania interdicto a diviniis officiis exclusum subjacebit.* On the emergence of *prepositi*, L. Halphen, 'Prévôts et voyers du XI^e siècle: région angevin', *Moyen Âge*, xv (1902), 297-325.

⁵ NLR, no. XIX, XXIV, XXII, XXXV, XLVII, LII, LXXIX, LXXXII.

⁶ Tiron, nos. LXII, XXXIII, CCLVI, NLR, no. XXXII, Beaulieu, no. 58 as *prefecto*.

⁷ CMPerche, no. 22.

⁸ *Clairêts*, no. I, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 136.

⁹ NLR, no. LVIII; Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131; *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII; RCVD, f. 9v.

¹⁰ For Robert *prepositus*' act in favour of Belhomert, AD Eure-et-Loir H5132. For the obit, *RHF*, xxiii, 485.

be a case for comparing their situation with that of the family of Bjarni of Glos, a baron of the honor of Breteuil, who held office under the fitz Osberns and their successors.¹¹

Although a large proportion of the counts' property was managed by *prepositi*, the agents who controlled their woodland seem from an early stage to have been distinguished from the general *ministeriales*. Richer and Gerald the foresters appear before 1094 and in 1129 Count Rotrou III sent his forester Gerald to supervise the transfer of some meadows to the abbey of Tiron.¹² The foresters really come to prominence, however, towards the end of the twelfth century, when the counts were taking more trouble to conserve their forest resources. Count Geoffrey's grant to the priory of Saint-Laurent at Moulins-la-Marche, made around 1200, was particularly valuable since it permitted the monks to take firewood and timber for the construction of their church from his forests at Moulins and Bonsmoulins without the approval of the forest officials.¹³ In the early thirteenth century Count Thomas relied on the skills of his foresters in the forest of Bellême to make good his benefactions to the monks of Bellême.¹⁴

There is, however, no evidence that a forester within the service of the counts of the Perche was able to establish himself as a landed proprietor in the same way as the *prepositi* of Mortagne were able to do, but a further group of comital agents, the *viarii*, do seem to have been more successful in using their office as a means of enhancing their family's status. Although the *viarii*, or peace officers have usually been considered of lowly rank, similar to that of the *maiores* of rural communities, two men who attest acts of the Rotrou dynasty appear to be of some substance.¹⁵ Ralph who appears in two of Rotrou III's acts gave an arpent of meadow on the River Erre to La Trappe as well as a rent of 20s., while his widow Heloys gave a measure of wheat from the mill of *Ponte* to Clairets before 1218.¹⁶

It may even be possible to reconstruct a dynasty who had founded their fortunes on the office of *viarius*. One Simon *viarius*, who witnessed Rotrou III's foundation of the charterhouse at Val Dieu in 1170, was able to grant a meadow near the mill at Chapelle de Montligeon, together with a quarter of the product (*moltura*) of the mill at Montgiun to La Trappe. He was probably the Simon who attested Rotrou III's act for the priory of Moutiers made in 1159, but the act is of uncertain provenance and the attestation appears as *Simonis Mariti* and similarly he may be the Simon Mercier/Marnier who attests Rotrou III's act for Chartrage, another act where the text has been transmitted by a seventeenth century antiquarian.¹⁷ In 1220 a knight called Simon *Viarius*

¹¹ Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 106, 169.

¹² *NLR*, no. XVIII. *Tiron*, nos. XCV, CVI for Gerald's activities.

¹³ AD Orne H721: *de branchiis videlicet et furcatis arboribus sine liberatione forestiariorum et de alio bosco cum necesse habuerunt ad ecclesiam sancti Laurentii faciendam.*

¹⁴ *CMPerche*, no. 44: *Si autem contigerit quod prefati monachi, in predicta foresta, non possint de predictis generibus nemorum usagia sua more prescripto sufficienter invenire, forestarius noster, ab eisdem vel eorum nuntio propter hoc requisitus, in ipsa foresta eis tenebitur demonstrare et providere de alio nemore unde quatuor asini ter in die sufficienter valeant honerari.*

¹⁵ Lot, 'Vicaria et vicarius', 293.

¹⁶ *LT*, 584, 589, *Clairets*, no. XIV.

¹⁷ *RCVD*, f. 2; *LT*, 584, 588. Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6; Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131.

notified that his father Matthew *Viarius* had granted a money fief of 10s. from the *prepositura* of Mortagne to Gervase of Longpont.¹⁸ This would give a family descent over some sixty years of Simon/Matthew/Simon and the *Matheo Viario* who appears in an act for Val-Dieu in 1185 could be identified with the son.¹⁹ This man clearly enjoyed comital confidence and the 10s. money fief from the *prepositura* at Mortagne may indicate his retainer. By the time of the Simon of the third generation the family had attained knightly status.

The precise nature of their office is difficult to recover, but the evidence of two documents recording a transaction which took place at Mortagne in the early 1190s is revealing.²⁰ During the absence of Count Geoffrey III on crusade Gerald of Les Apres chose to make a benefaction to the Cistercian house at La Trappe. The circumstances are unknown and it may have been a deathbed donation which could not be postponed. The countess Richenza-Matilda appears to have been unwilling or unable to effect the conveyance of the property herself and it was taken into the custody of the *vicecomes*. The second document is an afterthought in which the witnesses to the transaction are recorded and in it the officer who takes charge of the property is described as Hugh *viarius*. The inference is therefore that the role of the *viarius* is analogous to that of the *vicecomes*, though there is no evidence for the financial responsibilities of some of the English baronial sheriffs.²¹ Nonetheless the general conclusion seems to be that the counts' demesne properties in the localities were managed by the *prepositi*, that his forests were the responsibility of specialist foresters and the count's jurisdictional rights over the rest of the county were maintained by his *viarii*.

None of these officials came from the greatest landed families of the Perche and, while it is possible to detect some family relationships, like those of the Matthews and Simons, which suggest that certain families made a living from comital service, there is little evidence for the hereditability of offices outside of Mortagne.²² In their choice and use of personnel the Rotrou family may have learned a great deal from the policies of their neighbours, the counts of Anjou. *Prepositi* had been placed at the most basic level of Angevin power, the demesne lands, since the early eleventh century and there is some evidence that the Thibaudian counts had similar officials.²³ In their recourse these men counts might hope to avoid the perennial problem of all rulers in the central middle ages, that of loss of control over their own representatives to whom

¹⁸ *LT*, 11-12.

¹⁹ RCVD, f. 8v.

²⁰ AD Orne H1846, printed as *LT*, 458. The second document listing the witnesses was not copied into the cartulary.

²¹ For a discussion of the English baronial sheriff, B. English, *The lords of Holderness, 1086-1260: a study in feudal society* (Oxford, 1979), 70-6.

²² Ralph of *Curia* and his brother the *prepositus* of Rivray attest an act together in the 1190s, AD Orne H5441. Robert son of Pagan of Saint-Quentin, the *prepositus* of Bellême under Rotrou II secured a confirmation from Count Rotrou III of a house given to his father, *Clairêts*, no. I.

²³ Quoted by K.F. Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', 257.

they had delegated power.²⁴ During their early history the Rotrou lineage may have owed something of their own power to delegation from the counts of Blois/Chartres and they might therefore be wary establishing new vicecomital lineages, which might in turn come to threaten them. The Latin word *vicecomes* is used only twice in the entire corpus of acts relating to comital government,²⁵ suggesting a reluctance to employ this term, while the *prepositus*, who was the counts' chief agent in the exploitation of their demesne property, seems to have been removable at will, as the repeated references to the serving *prepositus* in comital acts indicate.²⁶

While it is possible to discern the agents responsible for gathering the revenues to support the counts of the Perche, there seems to have been no separate machinery disbursing payments or for accounting. When a count wished to make a payment he might assign revenues from a particular source of income, which is usually described as a *prepositura*. At some point after 1160, but before 1191, for example, the revenues which the count received from the mills and bakehouses of Mortagne were directed to a third party, one Simon of Vove.²⁷ After the appearance of Albericus *Camb'* in what is probably the very earliest comital act, chamberlains seldom appear in the comital *acta*.²⁸ Although this official lacked status in comparable noble entourages, it is unusual for them to be quite so inconspicuous and in other noble households dynasties of *camerari* can be reconstructed.²⁹ If the chamberlains' role was indeed to handle cash for the counts' immediate use, then their absence suggests that the counts travelled frequently around their *prepositura*, where cash would be readily available, thus reducing the importance of an official such as the chamberlain.³⁰

There is every reason therefore to assume that most payments were made against *prepositura* in the same way as the English kings could order payments against the revenues of different counties. Even quite complex transactions such as the liquidation of Count Geoffrey's debts after his death in 1202 were effected by payments against specific sources of income and in that case the widowed countess assigned £300 from the revenue of the forest of Belleme.³¹ A single

²⁴ Guillot, *Comte*, 397: *savoir comment prolonger son propre pouvoir, en investissant plus ou moins complètement certains représentants, sans attribuer à ceux-ci aucun moyen qui leur permette de transformer leurs attributions en des pouvoirs propres.*

²⁵ There is a reference to Henry *vicecomes* of Mortagne, which must date from the early 1080s, *NLR*, no. XLIX. This may represent an early experiment by the Rotrou counts which was subsequently abandoned. Alternatively it may be a misreading by the fifteenth century copyist of the cartulary. AD Orne H1846 (1191) also contains a reference to a *vicecomes* and is discussed below.

²⁶ AD Eure-et-Loir H5211: *Willelmo Russello tunc temporis preposito de Riuereio; Beaulieu*, no. 153: *in prepositura nostra de Nogento singulis annis ab illo qui predictam preposituram tenebit; Duchesne* 54, p. 460: *ab illis qui predictorum castellorum secundum tempus preposituram tenebunt persolvendos.*

²⁷ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 132.

²⁸ *VLM*, no. 609 for Alberic. *NLR*, no. LXXIII: *Oddo camerarius; Tiron*, no. XXII for Arbert son of Odo the chamberlain; *Jumièges*, no. XXXIII: *Guillelmo de Clif, camerario; Tiron*, no. CCLXXVII, pp. 156-7: *Roberto camerario comitis R. Perticensis.*

²⁹ Their relatively humble social origins are discussed by Bur, *Champagne*, 435. For comparisons, Greenway, *Mowbray*, lxxv, English, *Holderness*, 86-9; Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 144-6.

³⁰ At Cluny chamberlains distributed the alms, G. Duby, 'Le budget de l'abbaye de Cluny entre 1080 et 1155', *Annales*, vii (1952), 155-71.

³¹ AD Loiret H22, p. 185-6, no. 290: *finem feci cum Laurentio Flaaut de omnibus quae dominus meus bonae memoria Gaufridus comes Pratici ei debebat et quae idem Laurentius eidem comiti praedicto promiserat tali modo*

mention of the count's *camera* at Le Theil, dating from the 1190s, is the only indication of a move towards central accounting and may of course simply refer to the count's dwelling there. On the other hand Count Geoffrey had considerably extended the family's property in England and it may be that some location within the Perche had to be nominated for the receipts from the English lands, but there is no evidence for the existence in the Perche of the sort of auditing system available to the earl of Leicester.³²

As the twelfth century drew to a close the sums which the counts had authorised the *prepositi* to disburse begin to appear in the records when they are in turn redirected towards a monastic house. Thus the pension which Geoffrey III granted to Osanna in 1202 became the property of Les Clairets, the payment of £5 which Hugh of Vaunoise received from the tolls of Mortagne was paid to La Trappe on St. John's Eve and the £10 which Bartholomew Drogo was granted from the *prepositura* at Mortagne in June 1217 in return for his *homagium* was in turn granted by his son to La Trappe.³³ It is impossible to provide a definitive explanation for the increasing reliance of the counts on cash receipts. It may be that some of the renders of their demesne property had been commuted to cash payments, that increasing economic activity was reflected in higher revenue from comital exactions or that there had been a general growth in the use of cash, or indeed a combination of all these factors, but substantial sums were certainly available for the payment of money fiefs by the later counts and often from *prepositurae* such as La Perrière, where there can have been little commercial activity.

By the end of the twelfth century greater recourse to the *prepositi* for the disbursement of cash may also have led to administrative changes. For in the 1190s the word *castella* begins to appear in the comital acts in a quasi-administrative sense and under Counts Thomas and William, in the form *castellania*, it does indeed convey a clearly defined area.³⁴ A list of such *castellania* appears in an act of Count Geoffrey III, where they are gathered in three groups: four castles in the Corbonnais, four in the Bellêmois and six others.³⁵ Later Count Thomas was to add two

quod ipse Laurentius tantum erga me fecit et tantum mihi accomodavit quod ipse de omnibus quae erga me sunt quitus est et ego illi debeo 300 libras andegavenses de quibus ego ipsi Laurentio solutionem facio in foresta Belesmii usque dum 300 libras persolventur.

³² For Le Theil, *La Couture*, no. CLXV. For exchequers, Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 163-6, cf. D.B. Crouch, 'The administration of the Norman earldom', in *The earldom of Chester and its charters: a tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough*, ed. A. T. Thacker, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, lxxi (1991), 80-3.

³³ *Clairets*, no. II; *LT*, 16-17, 9. On the Capetian kings' use of the *fief-rente* for their stipendiary knights, Poly and Bournazel, *La mutation féodale*, 281-3.

³⁴ *LT*, 16: *unum hominem in castello meo de Mauritania* (c. 1200); *LT*, 16-17: *precipio quod tolonearius castelli mei Moritaniae quicumque ille sit reddat monachis beate Marie de Trappa singulis annis in crastino sancti Remigii undecim libras* (1191-1202); AD Orne 2164: *milites nostri de castellania Bellismensi* (1215); AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128: *castrum Mauritaniae cum castellania interdicto a diviniis officiis exclusum subjacebit* (1215); *Clairets*, no. XIV: *Guillelmus de Folieto duos sextarios bladi in molendino Mausagii ad mensuram castellani* (1218); *LT*, 136: *in tota castellaria de Mont Isenbert ab heredibus et successoribus nostris alia non poterunt de cetero construi molendina* (1225); *Tiron*, no. CCCLVIII: *nos nec heredes nostri nec illi qui castellanium de Rivereyo tenerent in tota castellania de Rivereyo alia poterunt de cetero construere molendina*, (1225).

³⁵ Duchesne 54, p. 460: *concessimus in perpetuam elemosinam singulis diebus singulos denarios in uno quoque castello nostro ab illis qui predictorum castellorum secundum tempus preposituram tenebunt persolvendos: In Corboneris in quatuor castellis scilicet in Mauritania, in Longponte, in Manvis & in domo Mausagii similiter in*

other *castellania* to the list, those of Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins, which had been granted to his father.³⁶ Castles were indeed associated with several of these sites and it may be that the revenues derived from the hinterland of each castle were now gathered and guarded within those castles.³⁷ Alternatively Geoffrey's scribe may be only emulating the terminology of Geoffrey's cousin, the count of Champagne, whose great inquest into the fiefs of his territory undertaken in 1172 was arranged under *castellaniae*.³⁸

ii. The comital court and household

While the count's *prepositi*, foresters and *viarii* made his power apparent in the localities, it was around the person of the ruler himself that the most effective manifestations of his power could be made. Much activity which expressed the count's authority, even apparently minor transactions, remained in the hands of the counts themselves and access to the ruler was therefore of great importance. As a result the great ceremonial gatherings in which the count took counsel with his *fideles*, the lordly proprietors of the Perche, were vital expressions of his power and influence.

a. The comital court

The comital court or *curia* met in a variety of places, wherever, presumably the count happened to be, and an act in favour of the abbey of Tiron describes such an assembly within the count's hall at Nogent, indicating how it might be used to lend authority to an action.³⁹ The count might invest new tenants with landed property on such an occasion, calling upon those present to bear witness to the act and, leading on from investitures, it was within these gatherings that the counts often chose to approve arrangements which in any way amended the status quo within the Perche.⁴⁰ When the tithes of Le Pin, Colonard and Dancé, for example, came into the hands of Robert Maschefer as security for a loan he made to the monks of Saint-Léonard of Bellême the arrangement was transacted with the approval of Count Rotrou II in the *curia*.⁴¹ Similarly when the advowson of the church at Chapelle-Souef was granted to the priory of Bellême in 1167

Bellesmeo in quatuor castellis scilicet Belismia, Tilio, Ferraria, Monteisemb', Item in alis sex castellis Nogento, Riverio, Montelaudini, Ferraria, Longovilerio, Monte igieio.

³⁶ Duchesne 54, p. 459: *redditum quem pater meus G comes Perticensis viris religiosis fratribus Grandimontis apud Quercugalonem manentibus dederat videlicet in una quoque castello suo singulis diebus singulos denarios ab illis qui castellorum secundum tempus praeposituras tenerent persolvendos ipsis augmentavi in duobus castellis scilicet apud Molins et apud Bonsmolins.*

³⁷ On the administrative functions of castles, Powicke, *Loss*, 198-204. For castles at Longpont, Louise, 'Bellême', ii, 261; Bellême, Louise, 'Bellême', ii, 62-67 and Querimoniae, no. 164: *Gaufridus comes Pertici cum fieri faceret in eisdem fossatum turris Bellismi*; Montisembert, Querimoniae, no. 122 and Louise, 'Bellême', 235 for remains of *un tertre circulaire*, Rivray, Decaëns, 'La motte de Rivray'.

³⁸ *Documents relatifs au comté de Champagne et de Brie, 1172-1363*, ed. A. Longnon, i, (Paris 1901), 1-172.

³⁹ *Tiron*, no. XXXIII: *dum apud Nongentum in aula plenaria mea circumstante curia residerem..., cum presentium baronum auctoritate totiusque presentis curie, concessi, corroboravi, confirmavi.* For the court at Bellême, *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII, *CMPerche*, no. 64; in the *hospitium* of Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, *NLR*, no. LIII; *apud Nogentum in aula comitis*, *NLR*, no. XIII; in the church of Rivray, *RCVD*, f. 8v; at Le Pin, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 135. On the history of such courts, F.-L. Ganshof, 'Contribution à l'étude des origines des cours féodales en France', *Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger*, 4 série, vii (1928), 644-65.

⁴⁰ On investitures, Greenway, *Mowbray*, lvii.

⁴¹ *CMPerche*, no. 63.

Rotrou III approved with many of his nobles *astantibus*.⁴² Thus any sales of property, changes in inheritance patterns or benefactions to religious houses might become the business of the court, which was called on to form, in effect, the collective memory of the Perche.

As the twelfth century progressed this function seems to have become that of the "rubber stamp" as property transactions were made and seen to be made, but this is not to lessen the significance of this business, for by its very passage through the count's court his power and ability guarantee the transaction were acknowledged, and Geoffrey III outlines this warranty function in his guarantee of the benefaction of William of Gemages to the priory of Bellême.⁴³ The count's approval was generally indicated by the addition of his seal to a memorandum of the act and the use of formulae such as *sigilli mei munimine fecimus roborari*, or *sigilli sui attestacione ut ratum et stabile in perpetuum manere*.

The count was also the source of justice within his lands and many of the disputes, particularly those over land, which were brought to him for settlement, found their way to his court. A disagreement over tithes, for example, between one Lancelin and the monks of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou came *ad iudicium in curia comitis*, and a challenge to Ingelric the monk's gift was brought to the count's presence by his daughter and son-in-law.⁴⁴ Sometimes these settlements have a law-finding quality to them, as if the problem has taxed the expertise hitherto available to handle it and had been brought to the count and his counsellors for arbitration. In the early twelfth century for example Rotrou II's court was faced with a problem over labour services (*famulatus*) when a lord had given demesne land to the church. Did the grant also include the labour services of the inhabitants or were those services the exclusive property of two knights who had earlier been settled in the village?⁴⁵ A dispute between the monks of Bellême and the count's *prepositus*, Pagan of Saint-Quentin, must have been a particularly difficult decision and may perhaps have arisen during the absence of the count in Spain.⁴⁶

The count's court continued to function throughout the twelfth century, but by the beginning of the thirteenth century information on its workings becomes sparser. All the surviving acts of Count Thomas (1202-17) and the count-bishop William (1217-1226) are letters patent and so lack the witness lists of the great diplomas. The only evidence therefore for the comital court in this period is Count William's meeting with *multis nobilibus praesentibus* which took place when the abbey church at Les Clairets was dedicated in 1218.⁴⁷

⁴² *CMPerche*, no. 227.

⁴³ AD Orne H 2163: *Ego autem eandem elemosinam presenti pagina ad opus predictorum monachorum confirmavi et concessi in perpetuam possessionem ut habeant eam quiete honorifice et pacifice ut nullus eos super elemosina eadem audeat inquietare aut molestiam sive fatigationem aliquam inferre. Coram me enim data est elemosina et ego auctoritatem prebui et garantiam promisi et garantizabo ego et omnes heredes mei.*

⁴⁴ *NLR*, no. LIII, *NLR*, no. LXXIII: *quod ad presentiam comitis pervenerunt calumpniatores.*

⁴⁵ *NLR*, no. LXXXVIII.

⁴⁶ *CMPerche*, no. 22 is attested by Rotrou II's sister Juliana, who is described as acting on his behalf while he was in Spain in another act, *NLR*, no. XXVII. The judgement may have been postponed until the count's next visit.

⁴⁷ *Clairets*, no. XIV. A similar difficulty in discerning the thirteenth century comital court is related by English, *Holderness*, 62.

b. The comital household

The *curia comitis* was then both an expression and a tool of comital power, but it met only at intervals, and for support in the day-to-day running of the Perche the counts looked to those individuals who waited on them every day, the household officers. Dr. Greenway identifies four departments of the household in her study on the honour of Mowbray, the responsibilities of the constable, the steward, the chaplain and the chamberlain. Under the Rotrou counts, as we have already seen, the role of the chamberlain was inconspicuous and that of constable is equally obscure.

In the household of most medieval magnates the constable took charge of military matters, supervising the household knights and controlling the fortifications, and indeed in certain English honours was the senior comital official.⁴⁸ No individual is ever described as holding this position in the service of the Rotrous. Two constables, Peter fitz Geoffrey and Richard of *Eiland*, attest separate English acts of Count Geoffrey III, but there is nothing to link them with the count's household and the only other reference is to Geoffrey III's appointment of Gouffier of Villeray as constable of the castle at Bellême.⁴⁹ The Vivian *de Stabulo*, who witnesses an act of Count Rotrou II, may have been a constable, but equally could be a marshal, that is the man in charge of the comital stables, and of altogether less importance. Three other marshals are mentioned by name: Matthew, Clement and Henry. Clement first appears in 1165 and was still serving in 1186 when Rotrou III gave an act at his house in Nogent-le-Rotrou. He appears to have been succeeded by Henry, who held the post under Geoffrey III and who occupies a prominent position in those witness lists in which he appears.⁵⁰ The implication seems to be that, while the Rotrous required and retained the specialist services of the marshals, a constable was unnecessary. The marshals do not take an inconspicuous position in comital acts and it may be that the constable's duties were subsumed within those of the marshal, or, alternatively, the counts may have preferred to function as chief of staff themselves.⁵¹

The evidence for the other great offices of the household, those of the steward and the chaplain, is plentiful within the comital acts. The first individual to be described as a seneschal appears in an act of 1167, but it is clear that he had succeeded to a role which had existed earlier under the title of *dapifer*.⁵² It was the *dapifer* of Count Rotrou II, Hubert Capreolus, who had taken it upon himself to seize the person of the bishop of Le Mans, Hildebert of Lavardin, in the early

⁴⁸ Greenway, *Mowbray*, lix-lxii. Crouch, 'Chester', 74-6.

⁴⁹ PRO E 210/1532; BL Harley ms. charter 54.g.26 for English acts attested by a constable. *CMPerche*, no. 45 for Gouffier at Villeray. The office of constable at Bellême had been held by a member of the Villeray lineage in 1113, OV, vi, 182.

⁵⁰ On the social origins of marshals, Bur, *Champagne*, 433. For Vivian, *Tiron*, no. CXVIII. For Matthew, who may not be a comital official at all, but the marshal of the monks of Jumièges, *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII. For Clement, *NLR*, no. XIII, *Le Mans* no. XXVIII. For Henry the count's marshal, RCVD, fos 9, 10, 13.

⁵¹ Cf. an apparently similar decision by Robert II earl of Leicester, Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 144.

⁵² *CMPerche*, no. 227 for the seneschal. On the shift from *dapifer* to seneschal, Crouch, *Image*, 290, 303.

twelfth century as security for the safety of the count, then imprisoned at Le Mans, leaving the bishop to make word plays on the diabolical conduct of the *dapifer* in an indignant letter to his fellow bishops.⁵³ A Gervase appears as *dapifer* in Rotrou II's act of confirmation for the priory of Bellême and since Gervase Capreolus takes a prominent position in the witness lists of other acts given by the same count, it seems likely that he inherited the office of *dapifer* from his Capreolus relative.⁵⁴ A third *dapifer*, Count Rotrou's otherwise unknown cousin (*cognatus*) Robert is revealed by the proceedings of lawsuit, probably dating from the 1120s.⁵⁵

The role of these early seneschals/*dapiferi* must have been that of the count's deputy, as the activities of Hubert Capreolus in seizing the bishop of Le Mans indicate, and their duties could be adjusted as the need arose.⁵⁶ That flexibility seems to have been retained with the passage of time and a seneschal might, for example, take on administrative tasks. Around the year 1208 Robert of Ferrières was responsible *ex precepto comitis perticensis* for an inquiry surveying the boundaries of an estate which had been granted to La Trappe⁵⁷ and at the turn of the thirteenth century the seneschal was specifically ordered to enforce grants to the monks of Saint-Evroul.⁵⁸ There was also a management function for the seneschal, who was on one occasion directed to act as a check on the *tonlearius*, but the seneschals of the Rotrou counts lacked the household concerns of many seignorial stewards in England.⁵⁹

There is indeed very little evidence of the domestic arrangements of the *familia*. There are no references to a comital *dispensator* or a comital *pincerna*, and it may be significant that the only

⁵³ Rotrou II, who was held captive at Le Mans, asked the bishop, Hildebert, to take instructions to his mother concerning his will and the disposition of his property. When the bishop went to Nogent accompanied by the dean, Hugh, and the precentor, Fulchard, Count Rotrou's *dapifer*, Hubert Capreolus, convinced that the dean had been implicated in the count's capture, imprisoned the bishop, who raged against the *dapifer*: *Porro filius ille perditionis Hubertus Capreolus est. Hubertus consilium malignavit adversum me, manus iniecit in me, captum tenet me, de dapifero comitis factus dapes diaboli*, Hildebert, Letter xviii to Serlo bishop of Sées, *PL*, vol. 171, cols. 225-8. See also Geoffrey Grossus, *Vita*, col. 1414 and the *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in urbe degentium*, ed. G. Busson and A. Ledru (Le Mans, 1901), 406-7.

⁵⁴ *CMPerche*, no. 21. *Tiron*, nos. XXII, CVI. Hubert was not Gervase's father, who was called Gerald, *NLR*, no. XI, while Hubert's son was called Warin, *Tiron*, no. LXVII.

⁵⁵ *NLR*, no. LIII. Rotrou's father, Geoffrey, was one of at least six children so there was plenty of scope for cousins, though it may be significant that Robert Mandaguerra appears in comital acts and seems to have been an illegitimate son of Rotrou II. It was not uncommon for Normans in England to use their kinsmen as officers, J.F.A. Mason, 'Barons and their officials', *ANS*, xiii (1990), 256.

⁵⁶ On the vagueness of duties of the royal seneschals, Bournazel, *Le gouvernement capétien*, 96. Earl Roger of Hereford defined his seneschal's role, 'Charters of the earldom of Hereford, 1095-1201', ed. D. Walker, in *Camden miscellany*, vol. xxii (Camden fourth series, 1, London, 1964), no. 57: *Sicut honorem meum strenue diligitis*.

⁵⁷ Robert's act is undated and does not give his title of seneschal of Mortagne, AD Orne H1846. AD Orne H1847, an act of Matthew of Montgoubert covering the same transaction, is both dated and detailed: *divisiones ille facte sunt et mete posite communi assensu et voluntate me et monachorum et mandato comitis Perticensis per senescallum Mauritanie*.

⁵⁸ Before 1202 Geoffrey gave various privileges to Saint-Evroul in his newly acquired castles of Moulins and Bonsmoulins and included in the acts rights in the surrounding forests: *et ad aliud herbergagium suum per [liberationem senescali mei et forestiarorum meorum]*, AD Orne, H721. The word *senescali* is missing from the surviving copy of Geoffrey's act which is badly damaged, but the text can be reconstructed from the *vidimus* given by his son count Thomas in April 1216, AD Orne H722.

⁵⁹ *LT*, 16-17: *si ita facere prefatus tolonearius facere distulerit mando et precipio senescallo meo Moritanie quod tolonearius sepredictum cogat viriliter et strenue visis presentibus litteris ad solvendo monachis dictos denarios omnes*. N. Denholm-Young, *Seignorial administration in England* (Oxford, 1937), 6.

strictly domestic officers to be discerned are cooks.⁶⁰ The implication again is that the comital household moved from demesne property to demesne property, where it was serviced by the *prepositus*, and it therefore had no need for specialists to organise food supplies, only those who could prepare it to the counts' individual tastes.

The duties of the seneschal in the twelfth century certainly do not imply that he held, or had ever held, any domestic responsibilities. Instead the primary function of the seneschal was most closely aligned to that which Hincmar outlines for the count of the Carolingian palace - 'chief responsibility for the just and reasonable settlement of all disputes, which, although arising elsewhere, were brought to the palace for equitable decision.'⁶¹ An act of Count Rotrou III mentions this judicial function when he grants exemption from "all the justice of the seneschal", and he specifically distinguishes the seneschal's justice from that of the *prepositus*, which suggests that the seneschal was responsible for the administration of the count's high justice, rather than for the settlement of minor disputes and the punishment of misdemeanours which fell to the count's officials in the localities.⁶²

In fact most references to the seneschal show him taking a leading role in the count's court. Ivo of Rémalard, *dapifer* under Rotrou III, for example, can be seen in just such a role, settling a dispute over control of the water level in the River Rhône, while Warin of *Lonreio*, seneschal of Bellême dealt with a disputed land sale.⁶³ In effect the seneschal was a deputy for the count, protecting the count's interests in all matters related to tenure. The cases he heard were those involving land and disputed boundaries, and there is just a hint that he also had control of the property of under-age heirs. In a case involving a bequest to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, the monks sought possession of the property from the seneschal William of *Lonreio*, rather than from the heir (*cui de jure hereditatis acciderat*), presumably because he was still underage. They were only able to secure the bequest upon payment of a substantial fee to the seneschal, while the heir and his associates sought to minimize the property so that his patrimony should not be diminished.⁶⁴

A share of the profits of such wardships and the fees associated with justice presumably formed some of the rewards of the seneschal's office. It is possible too that the seneschal received the profits of a portion of woodland, for an act in favour of the abbey of La Trappe describes a piece

⁶⁰ On butlers, English, *Holderness*, 92-3, Mason, 'Barons', 253. On the *dispensator*, Greenway, *Mowbray*, lxiii. For the cooks, *NLR*, nos. XIII, LXXXVIII, *CMPerche*, no. 21, *Tiron*, no. XCV, *Querimoniae*, no. 215. It is just possible that a family founded by William Malenutritus and represented at the turn of the twelfth century by Reginald Malnori were comital *dispensatores*, *Tiron*, no. CXVIII for William; *Chartularium insignis ecclesiae Cenomannensis quod dicitur liber albus capituli*, ed. A. Cauvin (Le Mans, 1869), no. XXV, AD Orne H1846 (1191/2). Cf. Crouch, 'Chester', 81 on a similar wordplay for chamberlains.

⁶¹ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, 219.

⁶² *Clairats*, no. I: *ab omni justitia senescalii et praefecti*.

⁶³ *NLR*, no. XCII; AD Orne H5441.

⁶⁴ *NLR*, no. XCIII: *cum in dicto termino prior et monachi cum dicto seneschallo et aliis multis in unum venirent ad divisionem bosci predicti, Guillelmus de Brueria et complices sui, cupientes elemosinam minuere...*

of land which is bounded by the seneschal's wood.⁶⁵ Otherwise it is impossible to discern the benefits of office, although they must have been worthwhile for at least two families, the Capreoli and the *Lonreio* lineage, retained their seneschalcy through the generations.⁶⁶ Other holders of the office have proved more difficult to trace, but it is possible that a career progression was possible between the office of *viarius* and seneschal.

As the twelfth century progressed the number of seneschals increased and they seem to have territorial areas of competence.⁶⁷ By the time Warin of *Lonreio*, who enjoyed a career of over twenty years as seneschal, made his first dateable appearance in 1167, he was described as seneschal of Bellême and he attests an act in 1182 in company with another seneschal, William.⁶⁸ At much the same time Ivo of Rémalard held the office of *dapifer* with authority in the area around Nogent-le-Rotrou and there was certainly a seneschal of Mortagne in the years before 1190 and a seneschal of the Corbonnais in the years afterwards.⁶⁹ By 1194 Warin's seneschalcy had been inherited by his son William, but in Mortagne the succession was rather less stable.⁷⁰ At some point between 1191 and 1202 the office was held by Gervase of Prulay, but by January 1206 he had been succeeded by Robert of Ferrières and then shortly thereafter by one Simon.⁷¹

A similar proliferation of stewards was observed in the Norman lands of the earl of Leicester by David Crouch, who suggests that there may have been a deliberate policy of increasing offices to counteract the influence of a particularly powerful family who had secured a hold on one office.⁷² In the Perche such a development might have taken place in reaction to the Capreolus dynasty. Between 1197 and 1201 Hubert Capreolus was calling himself seneschal of the Perche in an act he issued settling a dispute involving the canons of Brou.⁷³ He was given the same title in 1195 when he attested a comital act, even though the hearing involved William of *Lonreio*, who was described as the seneschal of Bellême, so there can be little doubt that the two men were

⁶⁵ *LT*, p. 589; ...*usque ad nemus senescalli*...

⁶⁶ The Capreolus dynasty is discussed in chapter 5. The *Lonreio* family can be traced through the twelfth and into the thirteenth centuries. The following genealogy can be constructed: William, *CMPerche*, no. 63; - his two sons, Warin the seneschal, *CMPerche*, no. 227 (1167) and Gervase; - William nephew of Gervase *CMPerche*, nos. 64 and 42 (1212); - John, son of William, *CMPerche*, no. 72 (1231) and William *de Longreio* ?son of John, (1257), *LT*, 470-1. Philip Augustus gave property to William of *Longuo Radio* in April 1214, *Actes Philippe Auguste*, no. 1329. Odo Rigaud was the guest of William of *Nonreio*, knight at *Looniacum* in the region of Bellême/Alençon in 1255, Odo Rigaud, *Regestrum visitationum archiepiscopi Rothomagensis*, ed. T. Bonnin (Rouen, 1852), 234. The family's interests as indicated in these acts all lie in the Perche, including in the wood of *Looneio*, which is probably Lonné (Orne, ct. Bellême, cme. Igé). Their toponymic has proved to be a problem. The editor of the La Trappe cartulary unhesitatingly identifies it with Lonray (Orne, ct. Alençon-ouest) and suggests that the heiress of the fee was married to the illegitimate son of William Talvas of Alençon, *LT*, 470, n.1. This is unsatisfactory on chronological grounds since the first William of *Lonreio* disappears by 1144 and had first appeared as William of *Longoreti* in the records of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans before 1124, *VLM*, no. 579.

⁶⁷ For similar developments at Meulan, Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 141. For a tendency for a life interest in the office to develop under the Thibaudian counts of Champagne, Bur, *Champagne*, 431-2.

⁶⁸ *CMPerche*, no. 227; *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII.

⁶⁹ *NLR*, no. XCII; *LT*, 401: *G. senescallus Mauritanie*; AD Orne H5441: *Henricus Corboneris senescallus*.

⁷⁰ *CMPerche*, no. 64.

⁷¹ *RCVD*, f. 9v. *LT*, 207-8, 209.

⁷² Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 142.

⁷³ *SJV*, no. 132.

described as seneschals at the same time.⁷⁴ By 3 May 1208 the title of seneschal of the Perche had passed to Warin Capreolus and remained with him well into the thirteenth century.⁷⁵ While it is possible that Hubert had been the seneschal for the Gouet lands of the Perche, it seems equally likely that he had taken up the name of the office held by his family and used it as an title.⁷⁶

By the turn of the thirteenth century then a series of courts were in existence at various centres within the Perche at which comital justice might be dispensed in preference to pursuing the count himself. It may be that the land market was now too lively for the count to approve, and the court to witness, every transaction. Such courts were under the supervision of seneschals such as Robert of Ferrières who around 1208 notified the settlement of a dispute *in curia comitis Perticensis coram me tunc senescallo Mauritanie*.⁷⁷ Such a system would be potentially useful to the later counts of the Perche, for Geoffrey III had commitments in England, Count Thomas succeeded while still a child and Count William was also bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne.

These changes reflect a growing specialisation in government and administration which becomes apparent in western Europe at the end of the twelfth century, and they placed an increased emphasis on another part of the comital household, the clerical establishment. Under the earliest Rotrou counts most comital business would have been conducted orally and written records of comital acts only survive where they have been drawn up by the beneficiaries. The great act of confirmation which Rotrou II gave to the priory of Bellême was clearly drafted in the house and held there before its list of attestors and dating clause were added, together with the name of the countess Hawise, Rotrou's second wife.⁷⁸

From the time of Rotrou III, however, a much greater emphasis on writing in administration is suggested by the survival of documents in multiple copies, and a hybrid secretarial system seems to have been in operation, similar to that detected by Robert Patterson in the Gloucester household.⁷⁹ Where the act concerned an established religious house such as Jumièges, Bellême, Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou or the priory of La Chaise it was drafted in that house, but if the

⁷⁴ *NLR*, no. XCIII.

⁷⁵ *Tiron*, no. CCCL, *Clairêts*, nos. XXIII, XXVII. The seneschals of the counts of Blois/Champagne seem to come from a similar background, *Bur*, *Champagne*, 427-32.

⁷⁶ *SJV*, no. 132 concerns property at Brou, one of the focal points of the lands of the Gouet family, which had been a rival lineage of the Rotrous. By the late 1190s that property had descended through the marriage of its heiress to Hervey of Donzé, *Torigni*, ii, 15-16. A seneschal of the Perche, Hugh of *Castro novo* also appears in an act of Arnold of La Ferté-Vidame, (BN ms. lat 5417, p. 271) so it is possible that many of the magnates with interests in the area formerly known as the forest of the Perche used the title. I am indebted to Dr. Katharine Keats-Rohan for a transcription of this act.

⁷⁷ *LT*, 208.

⁷⁸ AD Orne H2153 printed as *CMPerche*, no. 21.

⁷⁹ *NLR*, nos. VIII and XII are the same act with only slight copyists' errors and some omissions in the witness list. *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII survives in two copies. *CMPerche*, no. 227 is taken from AD Orne H2170, on which the act is enrolled twice, *coté 3*, nos. 4 and 36. There are slight variations between the two, again suggesting that there were two copies of the original. For the Gloucester household, *Gloucester charters*, 27.

act favoured an individual, a new foundation or a smaller house, such as the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon, then clerks retained by the count would be used.⁸⁰

During Count Geoffrey's time the increase in the use of writing within comital business continued. Over ninety acts can be traced from Count Geoffrey's administration (1191-1202) as against less than fifty from nearly fifty years of his father's rule (1144-91). The nature of comital acts changed too, with letters patent beginning to replace the old diploma form. Where legal settlements in the count's court, for example, had formerly been recorded in diplomas with a full list of witnesses, from the 1190s they might be notified in comital letters patent and the attestation of the members of the court would no longer be necessary.⁸¹

It was probably to their chaplains that the counts originally turned for the writing skills necessary to produce such documentation. Although the primary function of the clergy within the *familia* was the spiritual welfare of the count and his household, they were always on hand and possessed the necessary skills. It is rare, however, to find a comital act which expressly states, as does the document drawn up by Geoffrey III's chaplain Albert in 1201, that it has been drafted by a chaplain.⁸² The way in which the chaplain might be utilised for secretarial tasks is more clearly seen in the countess's household, where the chaplain Reginald drafted an act in July 1204 and the chaplain William was probably responsible for an act issued in 1191.⁸³ In the early days of literate administration the counts may also have turned to local clergy for professional help. The acts of Count Rotrou III, for example, are frequently attested by Gerald Goherius, who appears in non-comital acts as the priest of Mortagne.⁸⁴

Clearly the increasing workload could not fall entirely to the chaplains and local clergy, and, during the second half of the twelfth century, there are signs that clerks were retained in the comital household or nearby whose skills could be used by the counts. As early as the 1140s a clerk, Stephen, must have been attached to the comital household for he attests both an act of Count Rotrou II and one by his wife's second husband, Robert, the king's brother.⁸⁵ The most visible of these clerks, however, was one Adam of Loisail, who first appears in an act dated

⁸⁰ *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII; *CMPerche*, nos. 21, 22, 63, 175, 227; *NLR*, no. XCII; AD Loiret H569 p. 185, no. 288. For participation of comital clerks, *Clairêts*, no. I, RCVD, f.1; Duchesne 54, p. 459: *datum de manu Lucae Boneit*. Under Count Geoffrey III one comital act survives in two copies written by different hands, perhaps implying the employment of both the beneficiary's and the count's scribes, AD Orne H2163 printed as *CMPerche*, no. 64.

⁸¹ *LT*, 205; AN S2238 no. 8: *Ego Gaufridus comes Pertici presentibus et futuris notum facio quod controuersio quod uertebatur inter monachos sancte Gauburgis et Odonem Cheurol et heredum eius hunc in conspectu nostro consequeta est finem.*

⁸² AD Eure-et-Loir H5211.

⁸³ *Clairêts*, no. IV for Reginald. AD Orne H1846 printed as *LT*, 457-8 is witnessed by William and probably drafted by him. It concludes with the formula *teste me ipsa*, which was common in the acts of the countess's uncle, King Richard I, and contains the sole mention of a *vicecomes* in the twelfth century Perche, suggesting that the drafter had received his training in the Anglo-Norman world. Countess Adela of Blois apparently took an English clerk with her to Blois: *Rodgerius clericus regis Anglorum scripsit chartam ipsam*, quoted in Bur, *Champagne*, 425. On use of the formula in an English context, H.M. Prescott, 'The early use of "Teste me ipso"', *English Historical Review*, xxxv (1920), 214-7.

⁸⁴ Gerald witnessed *LT*, 313, RCVD, fos. 18, 10 and appeared as priest of Mortagne in *Tiron*, no. CCCXVIII.

⁸⁵ *Tiron*, no. CCLVI; AD Loiret, D668, f. 9v.

1159. Loisail lies some four kilometres outside Mortagne and Adam usually attested with his toponymic, using it in the formula *Datum per manum Adae de Loseel* including in a surviving autograph act.⁸⁶ The lords of Loisail had been benefactors of Nogent-le-Rotrou in the early years of the twelfth century, so it seems likely that Adam belonged to a family with a tradition of support for the comital house. His last attestation dates from the period 1190s and after his death his property, which included the the church of Bubertr  (Orne, ct. Tourouvre), half its tithe and 5s. from its altar dues, was given to the Cluniac house at Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁸⁷

Adam spent over thirty years in comital service and under Count Geoffrey III two further names appear in comital witness lists. Luke Bonnet names himself as the drafter of two comital acts and attested a third, while the clerk Gerald who appears frequently with Count Geoffrey III, must have been closely associated with the count, for he travelled with him, appearing in two acts in England.⁸⁸ These men, however, remain distinct from the chaplains, for although there are examples of chaplains and clerks with the same, common Christian names, it is impossible to prove a transition from one role to the other by any individual.⁸⁹ The implication is that the chaplain's function remained spiritual, while that of the clerks was administrative. Adam is described on three occasions as the count's chancellor, although the provenance of these acts is uncertain.⁹⁰ Since Rotrou III was the brother-in-law of Theobald of Blois it is likely that clerical practice at the court of Perche was influenced by that of Blois, where a chancellor, Huldric, is well-attested.⁹¹

From the 1170s too a number of individuals to whom the title magister is given attest comital acts. This group includes men such as Master Reginald (1170), Master Geoffrey Ignard (1179),

⁸⁶ *LT*, 587-90: *Actum est hoc publice apud Manves anno ab Incarnatione Domini MCLXXXIX. Datam per manum Adae de Loseel*; AN S2238, no. 15: *Hoc autem factum est publice apud Nongentum in aula comitis anno ab incarnationi domini MCXC tempore quo reges Ierosol' profecti sunt. Datum per manum Adam de Loseel*; RCVD, f. 8v: *Actum publice in ecclesia de Rivere anno ab incarnatione 1185 data per manum Adae de Loseel*. For autograph: AD Eure-et-Loir H619: *Data per manum Adam de Loisello anno ab incarnatione domini m^oc^olx x^oiii kalendas januarii*.

⁸⁷ *NLR*, no. XI for the benefactions of William of Loisail; RCVD, f. 9v for Adam's attestation; *NLR*, no. CIII. Cf the property of Ralph *presbiter* the chancellor of Robert of Mortain, B. Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', *ANS*, xiii (1990), 138. It is not clear if Adam's property was inherited from his family or was a comital grant.

⁸⁸ *NLR*, no. CX: *Datum per manum Luce Bonnet, clerici*; Duchesne, 54, p. 459: *datum de manu Lucae Boneit*, CSJ A/6. For Gerald, *CMD*, no. CCIII (1196): *Datum per manum Girardi clerici mei*; AD Eure-et-Loir H5211 (1199): *clerico qui presentem cartam composuit*; Canterbury D & C carta antiq. R62: *qui predictum notavit*; BL ms. Harley charter 54.g.26.

⁸⁹ Adam the chaplain appears in RCVD f. 1, but this is a late transcript and may be an error for Adam de la Chapelle, meaning a clerk. He does not use the title in acts he drafted.

⁹⁰ Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6, *NLR* XIII. The provenance of the Saint-Laumer charter has proved impossible to establish. René Courtin was aware of it and included it in his manuscript, but gives no source, *Histoire du Perche*, ed. O. de Romanet and H. Tournouer (Mortagne, 1893, repr. Marseilles, 1980), 195, n.1. In the nineteenth century it was alleged to come from a cartulary of Moutiers-en-Perche a priory of Saint Laumer of Blois, H. Godet, *L'abbaye et le prieur  de Moutiers-en-Perche (ancien Corbion)*, *BSHAO*, x (1891), 134, n.3. The diplomatic of the charter seems on the whole reliable and the witness list is representative of the period. The charter from the fifteenth century cartulary of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou presents a number of problems, such as inconsistencies in the name of the prior, but these difficulties may be attributed to misreading of an original rather than to fabrication. Count Theobald's chancellor Huldric appears in this charter and it seems likely that the fifteenth century scribe inflated the style of Rotrou's scribe, either in imitation or confusion.

⁹¹ J. Benton, 'Written records and the development of systematic feudal relations', in *Culture, power and personality in medieval France*, ed. T. Bisson (London, 1991), 280, 283; Bur, *Champagne*, 427.

Master Geoffrey (1185), Master William the small (1185), Master Hugh Vivandarius (1190) and Master Nigel Bonvalet (1190s). These men probably represent specialist clerical advisers and the most significant of their number is one Robert of Loisail. Robert, who may have been a relation of Adam of Loisail, began his service to the counts of the Perche under Geoffrey III and ended it as Count William's representative in the county. Master Robert appears prominently in comital witness lists as Count Geoffrey III's chaplain, travelling to England with the count, and around the turn of the century he seems to have become the countess's chaplain.⁹² By 1203 he apparently held a prebend at the new foundation of Toussaints, Mortagne and by 1220 had advanced to the highest office, describing himself in a letter written in that year, as *generalis procurator totius terre comitis Pertici*.⁹³ In effect Robert had become a clerical seneschal for the absentee clerical count.

In many ways the clerical advisers of the Rotrou counts were an effective solution to the problem of preventing office becoming entrenched within a family, but even though the clerical establishment could not pass on offices it still had to be paid for and there are a few hints in the comital acts about its funding. Count Geoffrey's new college of Saint-Jean within the walls of the castle at Nogent-le-Rotrou may well have been one answer. The foundation mirrors that of his uncle, Henry I of Champagne, who established the College of Saint-Etienne within the new palace complex which he built at Troyes in 1157.⁹⁴ The clergy resident in such foundations would always be available to provide clerical services when the count was in residence and comital business could be expedited. A similar collegiate foundation, that of Toussaints, made in Geoffrey's memory by his widow the Countess Richenza-Matilda, may have provided clerical services at Mortagne, which had hitherto been rendered by the clerks attached to the Maison-Dieu there or those of the priory of Chartrage nearby.

Warin, a former clerk of the king, so impressed Count Geoffrey that he was given control of the salt monopoly at Nogent as a reward for his services, but usually the counts' clerical advisers seem to have been given an office.⁹⁵ Reginald the chaplain of the countess Richenza-Matilda may be identical with Reginald the head of the Maison Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou who accompanied the count and countess to England in the 1190s.⁹⁶ He may also have been the Reginald *medicus* who attests an act of Count Rotrou III and have been retained for his medical skills, which were put to good use as the head of the Maison Dieu.⁹⁷ Robert of Loisail probably received a prebend at Toussaints in the early years of the thirteenth century, while Adam of

⁹² BN ms lat. 10089, p. 381, *Monasticon*, vi, 565, *La Couture*, no. CLXV. AN S2238, no. 34 (1201) as the countess's chaplain, *Clairrets*, no. II (March 1202) with Bernard the chaplain. He appears as Master Robert of *Losello* in Hampshire Record Office 1M54/1-3, Cartulary of Southwick Priory, I, f. 28v.

⁹³ *NLR*, no. CIX, *CMPerche*, no. 211. For Robert as *generalis procurator domini Cath' in comitatu Pertici*, CSJ C116.

⁹⁴ For Geoffrey's foundation, AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 13v. For Henry's foundation, Heliot, 'Sur les résidences princières', 39-41.

⁹⁵ *Obits*, ii, 389.

⁹⁶ *Clairrets*, no. IV, Southwick, I, f. 28v.

⁹⁷ *NLR*, no. XCII.

Loisail held a living at Bubertré and Master Hugh Vivandarius another at Préaux.⁹⁸ Geoffrey III even went so far as to endow a chaplaincy with landed property, an unusual step for a member of the Rotrou family, which preferred to keep its patrimony intact.

The efficient administration of demesne resources and the exploitation of comital rights was then the basis of the Rotrou family's power for over one hundred and fifty years. Neither those demesne resources nor their jurisdiction as counts was extensive, but by good management the Rotrou lineage and their officers were able to secure material support for the comital dignity. The absence of certain offices suggests some of the distinctive characteristics of the Perche, such as the warrior qualities of its ruling family. Most strikingly however the counts' possession of a relatively compact bloc of property, none of it more than a day's ride from any other part, allowed them to remain in close contact with the bailiffs and agents who administered it, so that elaborate arrangements to remit proceeds and to provision the comital household were not necessary. Although the Rotrous did not possess the farflung properties of many Anglo-Norman magnates, the machinery they developed was tested by the prolonged absence of Rotrou II in Spain and seems to have withstood the test satisfactorily. As the twelfth century drew to a close there are signs of an increasing professionalisation in the running of the county, so that rather less personal involvement was required from the count himself, and by the time of William, the count-bishop, the Perche could and would be left to run itself.

⁹⁸ *NLR*, nos. CIII, CSJ A/6.

Chapter 5

Lordship and lineage: *proceres Pertici et Corboniae*

The energy and vigour with which the early counts set about establishing and ruling the area which would become the county of the Perche suggests that the history of the county is essentially that of the Rotrou family.¹ Most histories of the Perche have indeed been written with such a perspective, but it is important to realise that the Rotrous were only one among many such families. Close at hand a number of other lineages were engaged in similar activities and it is important in a consideration of the lordship exercised by the Rotrou dynasty to place that dynasty in context. Although the Rotrous were ultimately to emerge as the most successful of the lineages which sought to establish lordship over a wide area in the watershed between the Eure and Sarthe rivers, they were by no means alone in their territorial ambitions. A number of neighbouring families sought their own ends. Some of those lineages found their interests were best served by maintaining amicable relations with the Rotrou dynasty and they became allies, associates or subordinates, but other families were to be serious rivals, challenging each of the Rotrou dynasty's steps as it increased its power and often provoking long-lasting conflict.

To the south of Nogent, for example, the Gouet family was consolidating its hold from the 1040s in the river valleys which flowed into the River Ozanne, while to the north the lords of Bellême had established a lordship which stretched from Bellême in the east through Alençon to Domfront in the Passais. These two families were to be lively opponents of the Rotrous during the eleventh century, but there were others, less actively opposed to the dynasty. Most important among these magnates was the lineage established to the north east of the modern Perche at Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais. Here from the middle of the eleventh century the descendants of Hugh, nephew of Albert Ribaud controlled a lordship, whose precise area is difficult to determine, although the family's importance is indicated by their attestations of royal charters, their marriage alliances with other lineages and their appearance in the work of contemporary historians.² To the north west the Rotrous encountered the Norman lineage established at Laigle, whose interests chiefly lay in the valleys of the Rivers Iton and Avre, although they may well have entertained ambitions to exert authority over some of the forest of Perche. To the south west another lineage of Norman origins, which had established itself in Maine, the lords of La Ferté-Bernard, presented yet another alternative to the lordship of the Rotrous, this time over the lower valley of the River

¹ It is presented as such in M. O. des Murs, *Histoire des comtes du Perche de la famille des Rotrou de 943 à 1231* (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1856) and much of his questionable approach is still accepted today, cf. A. W. Lewis, *Royal succession in Capetian France: studies on familial order and the state* (Boston, Mass., 1981), 61-2.

² On the Gouet, P. Siguret, 'Le Perche-Gouet', *Cahiers Percherons*, v (1958). On the Bellême, Boussard, 'Bellême'. On the Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, Romanet, *Géographie*, i, 143-156 and L. Merlet, *Notice historique sur la baronnie de Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais* (Paris, 1865).

Huisne.³ All of these families were potential rivals, offering another option to the lordship demonstrated by the Rotrous.

It is within this context of rival lordships and competing lineages that the achievement of the Rotrou dynasty has to be assessed. All these families needed to maintain an ascendancy over the masters of the localities, the *seigneurs de seconde zone* to whom many public powers had descended.⁴ It was in their ability to attract and control these local magnates that the success of the territorial overlords, such as the Rotrous, depended, as Orderic Vitalis makes clear in his observation on the career of Count Geoffrey II (c.1080 - c.1100). Geoffrey, he declares, 'kept valiant barons and warlike castellans in firm subjection to his government' and without the support of such men the counts could scarcely hope to retain control of their county.⁵ Like the history of all of northern France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, therefore, the history of the Perche and its formation is the history of competing lineages and the exercise of lordship over them, rather than simply the history of the Rotrou dynasty itself.

Foundations of lordship: the years before 1113

In the days when Count Rotrou I (c. 1040-c.1080) looked to expand his territory beyond Nogent any ambitions he might have entertained to extend his authority northwards towards Bellême would have encountered the resistance of the lineage established there. Instead he seems to have turned his attention towards the upper reaches of the Huisne valley and the hills around Mortagne. During the second half of the eleventh century and into the opening years of the twelfth century the Rotrous assiduously asserted their lordship in this area, as the early acts relating to the family foundation of Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou indicate. The churches of Saint-Germain of Loisé (Orne, ct. Mortagne) and Saint-Jean Baptiste at Mortagne were secured, for example, by comital intervention. Gerald of *Sassi* was persuaded to grant his rights in half the churches in return for 300s. dunois and land in Mortagne,⁶ while Walter Gruel's grant of a further third of the same churches was rewarded by a similar gift of cash and the produce of a half a ploughland.⁷ The Rotrous themselves gave Saint-Denis a *medietaria* or share-cropping

³ The history of the seigneurie at La Ferté-Bernard (Sarthe, ch. 1. du ct.) is obscure in the extreme. It seems to owe its origins to a castle built in the early eleventh century by Bishop Avesgaud of Le Mans during his struggles with the counts of Maine and held on his behalf by a Norman, Joscelin. Joscelin's descendants appear to have retained the castle as well as asserting claims to other property in the region, L. Charles, *Histoire de la Ferté-Bernard* (Mamers, 1877). It is possible that eventually the Rotrous resorted to the expedient of the marriage alliance to secure the cooperation of these lords, see chapter 2, note 60.

⁴ Lemarignier, 'Dislocation', 401-10, Barthélemy, *L'ordre*, 13-51. The description is taken from J. Decaëns 'De la motte au château de pierre dans le nord-ouest de la France', in *Manorial domestic buildings in England and northern France*, ed. G. Meirion-Jones and M. Jones (London, 1993), 66.

⁵ OV, iv, 160.

⁶ NLR, no. XXII: *Pro hoc autem dono accipio in beneficio a domino Gaufrido comite Mauritanensis et Beatrice uxore sua, trecentos solidos Dunensium totamque terram meam quam senior meus dominus Gaufridus comes tenebat de tota Mauritania.*

⁷ NLR, no. XXIII: *Pro hoc autem dono accipio in benefacto a seniore meo domino Gaufrido Mauritanensi comite et uxore sua Beatrice libras solidorum Dunensium triginta quinque et undecim solidos et fructus terre Yvernadii medietatis unius aratri.*

holding at Mauves, though this gift was later disputed in their court and the church of Mauves was substituted, and other gifts in the locality followed.⁸

Among those who attested in the presence of Rotrou and his son, Geoffrey II, are several whose toponymics link them to this area. Pagan of Rémalard, for example, took his name from a settlement in the valley of the River Huisne, where the remains of a motte are to be found today and at the turn of the twelfth century the church of Saint-Germain had been given to the monks of Marmoutier as a priory.⁹ Hubert and Solomon of Courcerault (Orne, ct. Nocé) are linked with a village on the right bank of the Huisne on the edge of the Bois de Sublaine, which lies some 10 kilometres from Réveillon (Orne, ct. Mortagne), whose name had been adopted by Fulbert, son of Ralph as his toponymic.¹⁰ Robert, son of Arnald of Mortagne was associated with the town of Mortagne itself and Hugh of *Cortoslen's* toponymic links him with the village of Courtoulin (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne), north west of Mortagne, where Saint-Germain-des-Prés had possessed property in the ninth century.¹¹ (Map 5:1 *Toponymics of attestors of comital acts*)

These men were members of the secondary lineages, lords of a valley or a village, whose acknowledgement of the Rotrous would be the basis of the dynasty's power. It is rare, however, to know much more than the names of these men and only very occasionally is it possible to flesh out their careers, but one such a career is that of Guy Bollein (variously *Bollenus*, *Boslenus*). In the years before 1071 he witnessed a grant to Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou made by William Bornus in the presence of Count Rotrou I and the scribes of Saint-Père of Chartres placed a *Widonem filium Busleni* among the *fideles* of Gouffier of Villeray in their cartulary. There, as an eleventh century Percheron, his career might be left, were it not for the *Ecclesiastical History*.¹² For Orderic gives a surprisingly full account of the great nephew of the elder Giroie who lived honourably in the Corbonnais with his wife Hodierna and made his fortune as a knight. By the wise administration of his affairs he was able to place four sons successfully: Norman and Walter became knights, while Geoffrey and William Gregory became priests, with William Gregory entering the monastery at Saint-Evroul. By the turn of the twelfth century his descendants must have been held in some respect in the Corbonnais, for a Guy Boslenus was first lay witness to the foundation of the priory of Boissy Maugis and his son Norman continued to attest comital acts under the rule of Rotrou II.¹³

⁸ *NLR*, nos. LVIII, XXXIV, LXI.

⁹ For the castle at Rémalard, Louise, 'Bellême', 270. *CMPerche*, no. 152 describes the foundation of a priory at Boissy-Maugis, *in territorio castelli quod vocatur Remalast*.

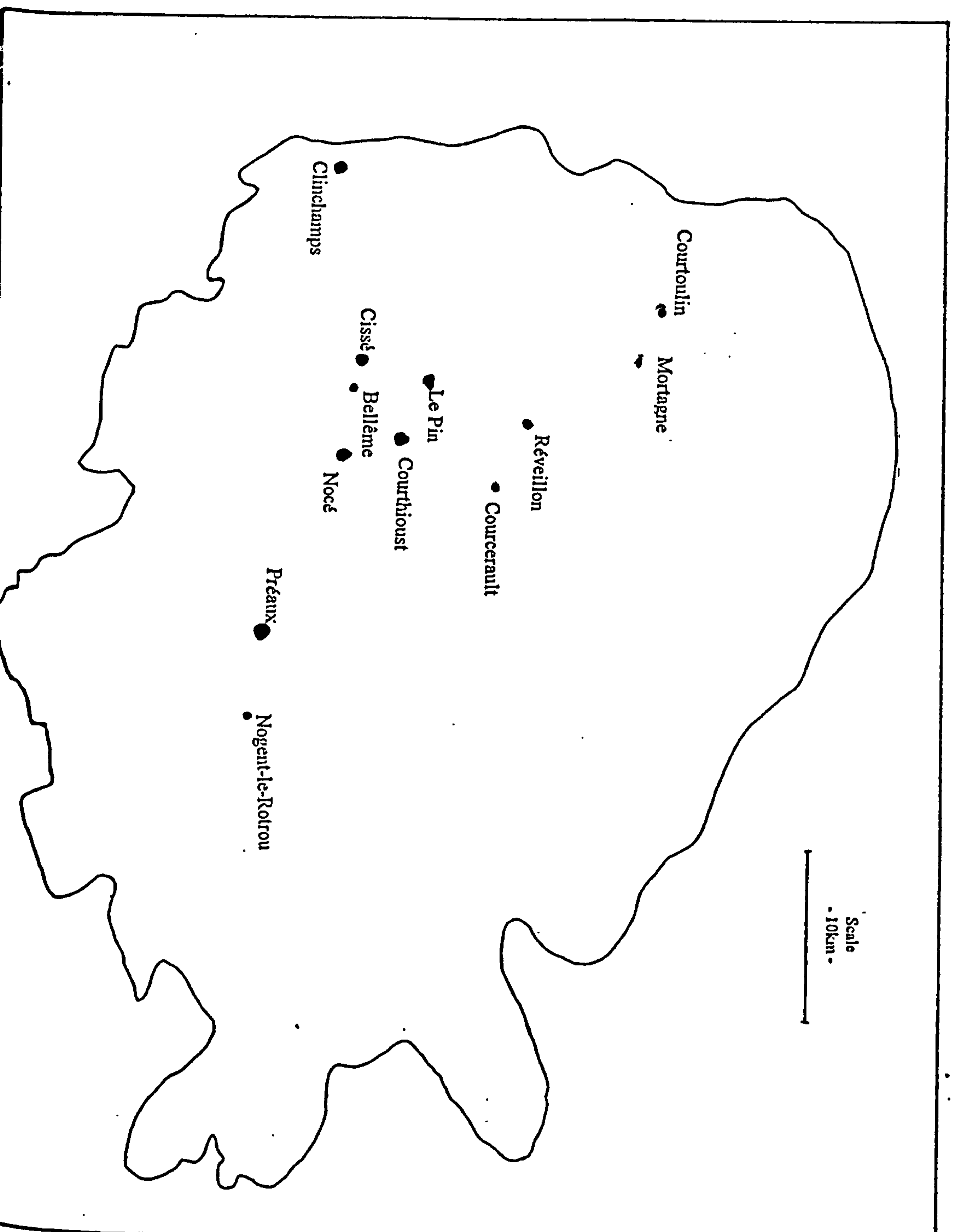
¹⁰ *VLM*, no. 609 for Solomon, no. 589 for Hubert of Courcerault. Orderic links the Giroie family with Courcerault, *OV*, ii, 22. For Fulbert, *VLM*, no. 589 (1076).

¹¹ *Polyptique*, ii, 164, 168 (XII, 7, 24).

¹² *NLR*, no. XXXVIII, *SPC*, 337-8, *OV*, ii, 84.

¹³ *CMPerche*, no. 150. For Norman Boslenus, *NLR*, nos. XI, LVIII, *CMPerche*, no. 170. For William Boslenus, *SPC*, 266-7, *Tiron*, nos. CLXVII, CLXXVI. Guy Bollenus witnessed an act of Hugh of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, *Beaulieu*, no. 55. For Walter at the foundation of Val Dieu, *RCVD*, f. 2.

Map 5 : 1
Toponymics of Attestors of
Comital Acts



Attestors of early comital acts shown thus:

Attestors of Rotrou II's acts shown thus:

None of these men, however, important though they are as indicators of the extent of the Rotrous' authority, were the great powers within the area. For the men without whom the Perche could not be ruled, it is necessary to look for more significant lineages, the *proceres perticensis*, many of whose lineages were as long-established as that of the Rotrous and, in other circumstances, they might have aspired to greater authority. In some cases these magnate families have lineages which can be traced through the eleventh and twelfth centuries; they have their own households, retainers and pretensions; sometimes they make their own religious foundations. They are the *proceres Pertici*, the magnates of the Perche.

Among the most visible of all these lineages was an important local family, which was based at Villeray (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condeau), a bluff above the River Huisne, some eleven kilometres from Nogent-le-Rotrou, from which they dominated a bloc of territory extending from the village of Condeau on the valley floor up into the hills behind Villeray itself. (Lineage IV) The earliest detectable member of this lineage was Aylmer of Villeray, who can be found among the entourage of Count Rotrou I as it attended the foundation of the priory of Chuisnes near Courville sometime before 1064.¹⁴ He was also present, together with Count Rotrou I and Bishop Ivo of Sées, when half the church of Saint-Pierre-la-Bruyère (Orne, ct. Nocé) was granted to Saint-Denis of Nogent in the years before 1071, but in that act he appears in the guise of Aylmer of Condeau.¹⁵ So it would appear that Aylmer represents the generation of his family which erected a new castle at Villeray and then became known by the name of that fortification rather than by that of the village from which his family probably originated.

Aylmer had farflung interests from the church at Vieuvicq (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Brou), whose tenure he disputed in the 1050s, to the woods of Monceaux (Orne, ct. Longny) where he purchased rights and whose grant to the abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres he approved in 1071.¹⁶ The construction of the castle at Villeray, however, implies that the focus of his power lay in that area, and in such a location he might choose to lend his support either to the lords of Bellême or to the lords of Nogent. The uncertain nature of his allegiance is demonstrated by Orderic's account of the campaign against Rémalard, waged by William the Conqueror in the late 1070s. Although the king-duke had secured the cooperation of Count Rotrou I, Aylmer chose not to support this alliance, for Orderic says that the king's enemies, presumably associates of the rebellious Robert Curthose, were lodged within Aylmer's castle.¹⁷

Aylmer had close links with the Rotrous' rivals, the Bellême family. When a priory had been founded for monks of Marmoutier at Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême in 1054, Aylmer had attested the act of foundation, together with the then lord of Bellême, Ivo, bishop of Sées, and it

¹⁴ *CMD* no. CIX

¹⁵ *NLR*, no. XXXVIII. The link between the two toponymics is provided by two items in *SPC*, 206, 337 which both describe a single benefaction by the Villeray family, but use the toponymics interchangeably.

¹⁶ *CMD*, no. CXIII; *SPC*, 206. The date of the act is deduced from the fact that a dispute concerning the woods in 1086 refers to the monks' tenure having lasted fifteen years, *SPC*, 206.

¹⁷ *OV*, ii, 358-60.

may well be that he chose to aid Robert Curthose in the late 1070s because Curthose was supported by Robert of Bellême, son of the Norman baron, Roger of Montgomery and his wife, Mabel the heiress of Bellême. When Aylmer was killed in a minor skirmish outside his castle during the Rémalard campaign, his body was taken to the camp of Roger as a trophy, implying that he was as unsteady in his association with the Bellême dynasty as he was with the Rotrous.¹⁸ Orderic says that Aylmer's son Gouffier was badly frightened by the incident and lived in peace with the Montgommerys for the rest of his life as his attestations of their acts demonstrate.¹⁹

Nonetheless Gouffier was precisely the sort of local lord whom the Rotrous needed to attract and Gouffier was prepared to acknowledge the authority of the counts, for he attended the comital court before the death of Count Geoffrey II around 1100.²⁰ Gouffier's religious benefactions indicate his position between mighty neighbours. Around 1099, for example, he gave the Rotrou foundation of Saint-Denis at Nogent all his land at Levainville (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Auneau) for the soul of his lord Count Geoffrey, from whom he held the property, while in 1097 he had given the Montgommery foundation of Saint-Martin of Sées three arpents of vineyard at Vaunoise outside Bellême.²¹

Gouffier had at least four brothers and the family may have temporarily resolved the difficulty posed by the competing lords of Nogent and Bellême by placing those brothers. Aylmer II of Villeray acted as an agent for his brother Gouffier's gift to Sées and he seems to have thrown in his lot with the Montgommerys, for he was responsible for the defence of Bellême in 1113 when it fell to the forces of King Henry I of England.²² Gouffier meanwhile developed relations with the Rotrous, giving an expensive liturgical vessel to Saint-Denis, and by the time he died in the middle 1120s his quandry had been solved, for the Montgommery lords of Bellême had been expelled by King Henry. Gouffier's final resting place in the Cluniac priory of Saint-Denis at Nogent symbolises his acceptance of Rotrou lordship and the attestation by his collateral descendants of comital acts of the twelfth century indicates their continued support for the counts.²³

A second major lineage the Chesnel family was well-established on the lower reaches of the Huisne, where their interests stretched from Avezé (Sarthe, ct. La Ferté-Bernard) on the river itself along the course of the tributary River Maroisse towards Ceton (Orne, ct. Le Theil). At Avezé in the year 1100 one William Chesnel founded a priory of the abbey of Saint-Aubin at Angers, but William's branch of the family was fairly soon eclipsed by that of Walter Chesnel,

¹⁸ *CMPerche*, no. 5. OV, ii, 360: *Rogerii comitis contra quem diu hostiliter seruierat.*

¹⁹ OV, iii, 240 (c. 1080), *Jumièges*, no. XXXIV (1086), *CMPerche*, no. 13 (1092), *NLR*, no. XVIII (<1094), *Actes de Guillaume le conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes caennaises*, ed. L. Musset (Caen, 1967), no. 3.

²⁰ *NLR*, no. XIX *Carta de terra Roberti Metsasella*, *NLR*, no. XI.

²¹ *NLR*, no. XXXVII; *LBSMS*, f. 68.

²² OV, vi, 182, *LBSMS*, f. 68: *et per cultellum Haimerici fratris sui super altare donum misit.*

²³ *NLR*, no. LIV.

who between 1082 and 1094 founded a Cluniac priory at Ceton.²⁴ Like the Villeray family Walter found himself with a choice of lordship. He might look to the Gouet family who controlled the territory to the east of Ceton and had ambitions to the south where they had constructed a castle at Montmirail (Sarthe, ch. l. du ct.). Walter's father Ivo had attested an act by the Gouet family in the late 1060s and Walter never broke his connection with them.²⁵ He attested two acts concerning property at Saint-Ulphace (Sarthe, ct. Montmirail) and Moulhard (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon) in lands traditionally loyal to the Gouet family and was present at the formal foundation by William Gouet II of the priory of Châteigneurs.²⁶ Walter was nonetheless tempted by a rival lordship. When he founded the priory at Ceton Walter secured the approval of Roger of Montgomery and his sons, Robert of Bellême and Hugh, who controlled the Bellêmois, and Walter's apparent adherence to the Montgommerys is further indicated by his attestation of Robert of Bellême's grant to Marmoutier in 1092.²⁷

Around the year 1100 Walter remained uncommitted, for a series of acts in favour of the priory of Ceton, dating from the 1090s and 1100s were approved by none of these lords.²⁸ However Walter had by that date appeared at the court of the Rotrou counts. He attested twice in the presence of Count Geoffrey II and was involved in a lawsuit in his court.²⁹ Although he was clearly drawn as much to Le Mans as to Nogent-le-Rotrou and had links with both the Montgommerys at Bellême and the Gouet of Montmirail, the area around Ceton eventually followed the *coutume* of the Grand-Perche and Rotrou ascendancy over the Chesnel lordship must have proved irresistible as the twelfth century progressed.³⁰ The Chesnel lineage disappears during that time and the failure of male heirs may have contributed to the ability of the Rotrous to assert their authority in this area.³¹

A similar choice between Rotrou and Gouet family lordship was faced by the Beaumont family. (Lineage I) The family's antecedents can be traced back nearly to the beginning of the eleventh century and lie in the area of Beaumont-les-Autels (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon) on the very edges of the area controlled by the counts. As the Rotrous began to consolidate their power in the second half of the eleventh century the Beaumont lineage was represented by Geoffrey. The men who attest Geoffrey's acts have toponymics tying them to the hills to the south west of Nogent-le-Rotrou in localities such as Mondoucet (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Souancé) and

²⁴ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Aubin d'Angers*, ed. A. Bertrand de Broussillon (Paris, 1903), no. DCXXX; *NLR*, no. XVIII.

²⁵ *CMM*, 124.

²⁶ *NLR*, no. LXXXIII, LXXI, *Tiron*, no. XII.

²⁷ *NLR*, no. XVIII, *CMPerche*, no. 13.

²⁸ *NLR*, nos. XLIII, XLII, XXXV, XLI, XLIV.

²⁹ *NLR*, no. XXXIV, XXI, XIX.

³⁰ *NLR*, LXXXI, XI. For his Manceau connections, *VLM*, no. 196.

³¹ Walter Chesnel had a son William Barbaleffa, *VLM*, no. 196, but William appears only once in the cartulary of Saint-Denis and it has not been possible to trace him elsewhere, *NLR*, no. LXXIV. A Walter Chesnel who appears in an act dated 1124 x 37 may be a grandson of the original Walter, *CMPerche*, no. 209. By 1218 the lordship of Ceton was in the hands of Gerald Capreolus who gave 5s. from its revenues to the nunnery at Clairets, *Clairets*, no. XIV and he is probably the *Geraldus dominus de Ceton* mentioned in the necrology of Clairets, *Obits*, ii, 282.

Vichères (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou), and he had authority in Coudreceau and Happonvilliers (both Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron). He clearly represented a focus of power in the area to the south and east of Nogent and was a man whom the counts of the Perche needed to cultivate, but neither he nor any other member of his family can be found in the comital entourage before the 1080s. He did, however, attest an act for William Gouet II of the rival house in 1079 and his parents and grandparents had been associated with the Gouet.³²

The means by which Geoffrey was drawn into the comital orbit are not known, but before the turn of the twelfth century he had granted the priory of Saint-Denis at Nogent considerable property at Happonvilliers and had also conceded the church of Saint-Aubin at Coudreceau, which he had earlier granted to Giroie of Orme.³³ In the early years of the twelfth century he was patronising Rotrou II's new foundation of Tiron, to which he granted a carrucate of land at *Brimont* (?Brémont, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Combres).³⁴ When the terms of his benefaction at Happonvilliers were subsequently challenged, it was to the court of Count Rotrou II that Geoffrey came to plead his case, bringing with him his men, Aldric of Montdoucet and Pagan of Villeperdue to witness the settlement.³⁵ Although his son Robert of Beaumont witnessed an act by the Gouet family, which probably dates from the 1120s, he was by then a regular attender at the court of the counts of the Perche, where he is specifically mentioned among the *proceres*, and was himself a benefactor of Tiron.³⁶

The Beaumont are particularly interesting because it is possible to reconstruct their own following in some detail. Geoffrey's knights Ansold of Chartres and Roger of *Aqua* are mentioned, for example, and both Drogo of Marolles (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) and Giroie of Orme (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon du Perche, cme. Coudray-au-Perche) held property from him.³⁷ Also associated with Geoffrey of Beaumont was Aldric of Montdoucet, who supported him in a lawsuit in the count's court in the 1090s.³⁸ This association continued over the generations. Aldric's son Robert never returned from his journey to Jerusalem in the early years of the twelfth century, but he sent instructions about the disposition of his property by the agency of Robert of Beaumont, son of Geoffrey, in whose company he had travelled.³⁹ By c. 1125 when Robert of Beaumont leased some property from the abbey of Tiron his act was witnessed by another Montdoucet, Guiard.⁴⁰

³² *CMD*, no. XLVI.

³³ *NLR*, nos. LII, LV.

³⁴ *Tiron*, no. CXXV.

³⁵ *NLR*, no. LXXXVIII.

³⁶ *NLR*, no. XL, LIII: *proceres qui ibi aderant, Robertus scilicet dapifer comitis et cognatus ejus et Robertus de Bellomonte; Tiron*, no. LXIII.

³⁷ For the knights, *NLR*, no. LXXXVIII. For Drogo and Giroie, *NLR*, no. LV.

³⁸ *NLR*, no. LXXXVIII.

³⁹ *NLR*, no. LVI.

⁴⁰ *Tiron*, no. LXII.

Of all the lineages with whom the Rotrous established relations by far the most long-lasting association was that with the family who took as their toponymic Illiers (now, thanks to Proust, Illiers-Combray, Eure-et-Loir, ch. I. du ct.).⁴¹ The settlement of Illiers itself lies outside the boundary of the historic county of the Perche on the upper reaches of the River Loir. It had been closely associated with the power of the Rotrous from the early years of the eleventh century, when Bishop Fulbert of Chartres' complaints to the king of France about the *vicecomes* Geoffrey I's (c. 1005-c. 1040) depredations in his diocese included an allegation that Geoffrey had constructed an unauthorised castle on church property there.⁴² By the end of the century an Ivo of Illiers was faced with the usual choice between the Rotrous and the Gouet family. He witnessed three acts in company with William Gouet II between the late 1070s and 1104, but also found time to attend Count Geoffrey II's court, where he witnessed on three occasions and he made three appearances in acts given in the city of Chartres.⁴³

Examination of the family's ecclesiastical patronage in the eleventh and twelfth centuries reveals that the Illiers had property throughout the Perche. They had unspecified rights in the forest of Réno and interests in a *medietaria* at Villiers-sous-Mortagne (Orne, ct. Mortagne) in the north, together with vineyards at Origni-le-Butin (Orne, ct. Bellême) and property at Biard (Orne, ct. Bellême, cme. Montgaudry) in the Bellêmois, indicating perhaps that they had followed the Rotrou family for several generations acquiring interests in each of the areas where the counts extended their influence.⁴⁴ Ivo's son Geoffrey and his descendants continued to witness acts given by the Rotrous, though it is apparent that they had acquired other interests, particularly in the city of Chartres, and were not therefore totally dependent on the Rotrou counts.⁴⁵ (Lineage III)

Another lineage, which can be shown to have had a long lasting association with the Rotrous and to have served the dynasty well was that of the Capreoli, whose links with the counts date from the time of the very earliest comital acts. (Lineage II) The Capreoli were a well-established kin-group within the area which would become the Perche and had, even during the time of the earliest counts, divided their interests between at least two branches. Gerald Capreolus' attestation of an act dating from the late 1060s or 1070s is the earliest evidence of the existence of the family, but another Capreolus, Hubert, also appears in the time of Count Geoffrey II (d. c. 1100).⁴⁶ The family seems to have originated from the very northern fringes of the Perche, near

⁴¹ E. Lefèvre, 'Notice sur la seigneurie d'Illiers', *MSAEL*, v (1872), 396-409.

⁴² Fulbert, *Letters*, nos. 59, 98, 99, 100.

⁴³ *CMD*, no. XXVI, *SPC*, 407-8, *CMM*, 117 for the Gouet acts; *NLR*, nos. XIX (twice), XLIX for Geoffrey's court and *SPC* 313-4, 407-8 for the Chartres acts.

⁴⁴ For Réno, AD Orne H702: *Guillelmo de Illiers qui hec omnia supradicti concessit quantum ad se pertinebat*, AD Orne H5438. In 1247 Geoffrey of Illiers of *Ventrosa* claimed that he had been deprived of his rights in the wood of Réno some twelve years previously by the king's agent, *Querimoniae*, no. 205. In 1200 the *medietaria* of Beauvais in the parish of Villiers was given to the Maison-Dieu at Mortagne with the approval of Geoffrey of Illiers, knight, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 158. For Bellêmois, *LT*, 296, *Perseigne*, no. CCXXXIII.

⁴⁵ By the mid 1160s Ivo of Illiers had married Ledgardis, daughter of Gerald Boel, hereditary standard bearer of the cathedral of Chartres and acquired her family's interests, *NDC*, i, 174, *SJV* nos. 80, 82.

⁴⁶ *NLR*, nos. XIX, XXIII for Gerald. *NLR*, no. XXIV for Hubert.

Planches (Orne, ct. Le Merlerault), where in 1077 Gerald Caper, with the approval of his mother, Emmelina and brothers Warin and Hubert, had granted land to the abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres.⁴⁷

Later references to the family suggest that the family name was modified from Caper (the goat) to Capreolus (the roebuck) and that two distinct branches developed. When Count Rotrou II returned from the Holy Land in 1099/1100 to find his father Count Geoffrey dead and buried, two Capreoli, Hubert and Gerald, were on hand to witness his confirmation of grants made to Saint-Denis on behalf of his late father.⁴⁸ No indication of the relationship between Gerald and Hubert is given, so they might be brothers, uncle/nephew or cousins, but acts dating from the twelfth century suggest that Gerald retained the family property to the north of the Rotrous' territory, while the Hubertine line was given additional holdings, particularly around *Brimont* (?Brémont, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Combres), where there seems to have been considerable comital demesne.⁴⁹ As a result of these new holdings the Hubertine line was brought into contact with the Gouet family from the second half of the eleventh century and can be found among the attestors of their acts.⁵⁰ For two generations at least the Capreoli provided the Rotrous' stewards and in this respect they most resemble the honorial baronage of the great Norman magnates. Hubert Capreolus was described as Count Rotrou's *dapifer* by Bishop Hildebert of Le Mans, and that office was probably also held by Gerald's son, Gervase.⁵¹ Gervase's son, Gerald, was seneschal of Mortagne in the 1180s, while another Hubert Capreolus appears as seneschal of the Perche in 1195.⁵²

While the support of these five lineages for the comital dynasty can be inferred, there is evidence that the Rotrous did not win every battle for recognition and that some families, even those with longstanding links with the dynasty, might still slip away. This seems to be particularly true of the area to the east of the county, where the influence of the lords of the Chartrain was at its strongest. The case of the Illiers family and their multiplicity of holdings has already been discussed, but equally interesting is that of the Courville family. Ivo of Courville had been a member of Rotrou I's entourage as it is described in an act in favour of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou given before 1071 and he was clearly a man of substance as is indicated by his presentation of the church of SS. Gervase and Prothaise at Chuisnes (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Courville-sur-Eure) to Marmoutier, which was witnessed by Rotrou I.⁵³ In the late 1090s an Ivo of Courville was present at a lawsuit in Chartres and attested on behalf of Count Geoffrey II, but

⁴⁷ SPC, 147. The original of this act survives as AD Eure-et-Loir H533.

⁴⁸ NLR, no. LL.

⁴⁹ For comital property at *Brimont*, AN S4983, no.2 and the interests of other members of the comital entourage there, AD Eure-et-Loir H1579. For the Hubertine Capreoli at *Brimont*, *Tiron*, no. LXVII, *SJV*, no. 200. For the Geraldine Capreoli in the north of the Perche, *LT*, 583, 584, 402, *Bart*, *Antiquitéz*, 133, *NLR*, no. LXI.

⁵⁰ *NLR*, nos. XXX, LXXXIII.

⁵¹ Hildebert, *RHF*, xv, 317-8. *NLR*, nos. XI, LXI, *Tiron*, nos. XXII, CVI, *CMPerche*, no. 22 for Gervase.

⁵² *LT*, 401-2 for Gerald. *NLR*, nos. XXX, LXXXIII for Hubert.

⁵³ *NLR*, no. XXXVIII; *CMD*, no. CIX.

this is the last occasion on which the Courville and Rotrou families appear to cooperate for the best part of a hundred years.⁵⁴

Courville lies on the river Eure at the very edge of the Chartrain, almost exactly halfway between Nogent-le-Rotrou and Chartres, and alternative lordship was available to its lords. The Rotrous' rival is indicated in Ivo's own grant to Marmoutier, for he acknowledged that he held his property at Chuisnes, not from the Rotrous, but from the *vicecomes* Gilduin of Chartres, an agent of the counts of Blois.⁵⁵ Although Rotrou I had attracted the lord of Courville to his entourage, any attempt by the Rotrou dynasty to establish an exclusive lordship over the magnates of this region was likely to encounter resistance. This is made apparent by a lawsuit in which Count Rotrou II was to become embroiled in the early years of the twelfth century, during the course of which he expressly accused Ivo of Courville of having thrown off his lordship in favour of that of the lord of Le Puiset.

Our knowledge of this incident is confined to the information given in four letters from Bishop Ivo of Chartres.⁵⁶ It involved a dispute over land which Rotrou had purchased and the fortification he was erecting there, presumably to consolidate his authority. The location of the property is not given, but it probably lay near Courville, since the *vicecomes* of Chartres, Hugh of Le Puiset, took exception to Rotrou's actions, alleging that the land was in his jurisdiction and he had given it to the lord of Courville. Rotrou II denied the claim and asserted that, on the contrary, the property lay in his jurisdiction. Hugh then took the case to an ecclesiastical court on the grounds that he was about to depart for the Holy Land and his property ought to be protected by the church. Bishop Ivo referred the case to the court of the countess Adela of Blois as the secular authority and after the arguments had been aired, the *vicecomes* withdrew from the action. It is not clear whether his withdrawal was voluntary or the result of persuasion by the countess, but Count Rotrou was to assert later that the property had been judged to be his.

At this point Hugh du Puiset set off for the Holy Land, leaving Rotrou and Ivo of Courville to sort out the problem by resorting to arms, during the course of which Ivo was captured by Rotrou and incarcerated. Meanwhile, en route for Jerusalem Hugh took the opportunity to enlist papal aid and the pope was persuaded to direct the archbishop of Sens and the bishops of Chartres, Paris and Orléans to do justice in the matter on behalf of Hugh's brother and agent, Guy and of Ivo of Courville. Various complex pleadings followed, but Ivo of Chartres exerted himself to make sure that Rotrou got a fair hearing even in the face of an express papal instruction to excommunicate the count. By the time of Ivo's final letter on the subject the case had proved beyond the competence of the court, owing to the novel concept that the church should protect

⁵⁴ *SPC*, 314.

⁵⁵ For further links between the Courville and the counts of Blois, J.F. Lemarignier, *Le domaine de Villeberfol et le patrimoine de Marmoutier (XI^e siècle)*, *Études d'Histoire du Droit Privé Offertes à Pierre Petot* (Paris, 1959), 347-62.

⁵⁶ Ivo of Chartres, *Epistolae* clxviii-clxx, clxxiii. Chédeville discusses the affair in the context of comital control of castle-building, *Chartres*, 278.

crusaders' property, and was referred for papal judgement. Its outcome is unknown, but we must surmise that Rotrou's effort to exercise control in the locality was ultimately unsuccessful, since the *coutume* of the Perche never extended as far as Courville.

Consolidation and Standstill (1113-1180)

As might be expected those acts which can be dated to the early years of Count Rotrou II's rule are attested by the same men as attested his father's acts: Giroie of Orme⁵⁷, Pagan of Rémalard⁵⁸, Gerald Capreolus⁵⁹, Hubert Capreolus⁶⁰, Robert of Mortagne⁶¹, Hugh of Courcerault,⁶² William Anatonis;⁶³ but gradually the personnel begins to change. Members of the significant lineages continue to attest comital acts, but a number of new men enter the comital entourage.

Most interesting of the new men is one Ivo of Rémalard who first appears in the comital entourage as a witness in a lawsuit in the late 1120s, but who was using the toponymic "of Rémalard" probably as early as the 1100s.⁶⁴ In the time of Count Geoffrey II the toponymic "of Rémalard" had been used by one Pagan and he had witnessed the return of the young Rotrou II, before his own disappearance.⁶⁵ The new lineage which replaced him had its origins in the lands of Perche-Gouet, where property given by Ivo to the canons of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée in Chartres was located.⁶⁶ Rémalard was an important castle site in the valley of the River Huisne which Orderic says belonged to Hugh of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais and Ivo's descendants were indeed associated with members of the Châteauneuf dynasty in the later twelfth century.⁶⁷ It therefore seems that the Châteauneufs had entrusted the site to Ivo and it was to remain with his descendants, but Ivo immediately acknowledged the importance of the Rotrou counts, in whose fee, as Orderic says, the castle lay.⁶⁸ That acknowledgement is significant, for it indicates that, by the time of Rotrou II, the pretensions of the Rotrou family to comital rank and authority were unquestioned.

The toponymics of the men who witness in the presence of Rotrou II give some idea of the range of his jurisdiction and hint at the influx of new men which must have followed the family's acquisition of the Bellêmois by grant of King Henry I in 1113.(Map 5:1 *Toponymics of*

⁵⁷ *NLR*, no. LXXXI c. 1100, no. LVIII 1099/1100.

⁵⁸ *NLR*, no. LXXXI c. 1100.

⁵⁹ *NLR*, no. LI 1099/1100, no. LVIII 1099/1100.

⁶⁰ *NLR*, no. LI 1099/1100.

⁶¹ *NLR*, no. LVIII 1099/1100.

⁶² *NLR*, no. LVIII 1099/1100.

⁶³ *NLR*, nos. X, LXXXVIII

⁶⁴ *NLR*, no. LIII for the lawsuit, *SJV*, nos. 8, 4.

⁶⁵ *NLR*, nos. LXXXIV, LXXXI, *SPC*, 313-4, AD Loiret D668, f. 3 for Pagan and his father Engenulph. R. Merlet suggests that Pagan's daughter Fulcrade married Ivo's father Gastho, but I have been unable to trace his primary source, *Tiron*, no. XCIV, fn. 1.

⁶⁶ *SJV*, no. 8.

⁶⁷ Louise, 'Bellême', 270. *OV*, ii, 358. For later acts, *Beaulieu*, nos. 106, 126.

⁶⁸ *OV*, ii, 358.

attestors of comital acts) Geoffrey of Courthioust, Hugh of Nocé, Hugh of Cissé, Robert of Clinchamps, William of Le Pin and William of Préaux indicate the extension of the family's authority into their areas. Others such as the Fortin family had had long associations with the Montgommerys and their predecessors as lords of the Bellêmois. A Giroie Fortin had witnessed an act of Ivo lord of Bellême before 1050 and the same name occurs in witness lists with that of Bishop Ivo of Sées, who succeeded his uncle at Bellême.⁶⁹ The Fortin family is prominent in the records of the priories of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux Bellême and Sainte-Gauburge and Baldwin Fortin witnessed Rotrou II's confirmation charter to the Montgommery foundation of Saint-Léonard of Bellême.⁷⁰ In Robert of Clinchamps the Rotrous clearly recognised a magnate of some standing for when he attended Rotrou's court his name appears at the head of the witness list.⁷¹ Men from Clinchamps had been regular attestors of the acts of the lords of Bellême in the eleventh century and some members of the family continued to support William Talvas as the records of his Cistercian foundation at Perseigne in his Manceau lands to the west of the Perche indicate.⁷²

Finally while it is possible to see Rotrou II attracting the local landholders to his court, there is just a hint of different groups within the comital entourage. An account of an action in the comital court around the mid 1120s concerns the profits of a fair held by the priory of Saint-Léonard of Bellême, judgement on which was given by the nobles and townsmen of Bellême.⁷³ The act was attested by Hervey the townsman: *Herveus Burgensis* and Robert the Goldsmith: *Robertus Abbafer*. A further act by Rotrou was attested by Ralph Bovet from a dynasty of burghers of Nogent-le-Rotrou, so it would appear that there was a social group within the Perche which was sufficiently significant to find its way into comital acts given by Rotrou where it had not done so under his father and grandfather.⁷⁴ Similarly during the lifetime of Rotrou II comital agents, *prepositi*, foresters, a *camerarius* and some cooks attest in larger numbers than under his father and grandfather.⁷⁵

Under Rotrou II's son Rotrou III these changes in the composition of the comital entourage become more marked. There is a drift away from the comital court on the part of the great magnates and their attestations are replaced by those of domestic chaplains, household officers and townsmen. Nearly 150 names make up the list of lay attestations to Rotrou III's acts of whom a surprisingly small proportion attest more than once and a large number remain unidentifiable. The toponymics of the witnesses are spread evenly throughout the Perche, but

⁶⁹ *VLM*, nos. 834, 545.

⁷⁰ *CMPerche*, nos. 5, 7, AN LL1158, ii, p. 402, *CMPerche*, no. 21.

⁷¹ *NLR*, no. LVII.

⁷² *VLM*, nos. 834, 545, 605, 610, 624, 629, 836, 584; *CMPerche*, no. 5 (1054), 13 (1092); *Perseigne*, nos. I, III, V, VI, XIX, CCIX, CCXII, CCCVII.

⁷³ *CMPerche*, no. 21: *judicio procerum et burgensium Belismensium*.

⁷⁴ *Tiron*, no. XXXIII. Other Bovets include Baldwin a burgher at Nogent-le-Rotrou, *Perseigne*, no. CCCLXV; Herbert, *NLR*, no. XIII, Albert, *NLR*, no. XXXV, Odo, *NLR*, no. LXIX and Thomas, *Tiron*, no. CCCLVIII.

⁷⁵ *CMPerche*, no. 63; *NLR*, no. LVIII; *CMPerche*, no. 22, *Tiron*, nos. LXII, XXXIII, CCLVI, *NLR*, nos. XXXII, LIII, XII, *Beaulieu*, no. 58.

those who most frequently attest the comital acts have, with a few exceptions, the common characteristic that they held some sort of office from the count.⁷⁶

The great families who appeared in the early comital acts are much more patchily represented, however. The Villeray family continue to attest, but by no means regularly and the six attestations of Aylmer of Villeray were probably made by father and son. (Lineage IV) The Capreoli, too, are less in evidence. Although they continued to make benefactions to comital foundations, such as La Trappe, there are only single attestations by Hubert Capreolus in 1186, by Warin in 1182 and by Capreolus of *Busse* (probably Boissy-lès-Perche) in 1185, while Gerald Capreolus was seneschal of Mortagne for an unknown period. Members of the Beaumont family do not appear at all, however, while the Illiers family may be represented only by the Ivo *signifer* who attests an act by Rotrou's stepfather in c. 1145.⁷⁷

The exceptions to this apparent preponderance of comital agents are few, but most significant is Enguerrand of Nocé, who witnessed five comital acts in the mid twelfth century. The family were not newcomers to the Perche, having been established at Nocé in the Bellêmeois since the middle of the eleventh century, they seem to have preferred their association with the Thibaudian counts. Ingelrannus of *Noiciaco* witnessed an act of Countess Adela of Blois given at Chartres in 1104, together with other acts in favour of Saint-Père and the canons of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée.⁷⁸ By the 1120s, when the lord of Nocé was called Hugh, the continuing connection with Chartres is illustrated by his attestation of Bishop Geoffrey of Chartres' grant of the church at Marolles to the abbey of Tiron, and it was not until late in the lifetime of Count Rotrou II that Hugh and his sons, Geoffrey and Ogier can be found at the court of the count of the Perche.⁷⁹

When two lawsuits involving Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou were judged in the 1150s, however, the acts were witnessed by an Enguerrand of Nocé and he then witnessed a major confirmation made by the count to Saint-Denis in 1165. Benefactions to Saint-Léonard of Bellême and the priory of La Chaise, confirmed by the count at much the same time, were also witnessed by Enguerrand, so it may be that Enguerrand welcomed the close relations with the Thibaudian counts brought about by the marriage of Rotrou III and the daughter of the count of Blois.⁸⁰ In 1169 he witnessed an act of Ivo of Illiers in favour of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée in

⁷⁶ Warin of *Lonreio*, the seneschal of Bellême, attested six acts of the count and Robert the *prepositus* of Mortagne was among the comital entourage when two and possibly three acts were given. Clement the count's marshal may well have been a semi-permanent member of the comital entourage, thus accounting for his four attestations. Simon *Viarius* witnessed three acts, while Hugh *Viarius* witnessed two and possibly more. Other *viarii* attest the count's acts, including Nicholas, Ralph and a Matthew. Henry the tollgatherer, Reginald the cook and the two servants Odo and Helias also attested.

⁷⁷ AD Loiret D668, f. 9v. This act has been printed and is discussed in some detail in J.M. Bouvris, 'Une notice inédite du XII^e siècle relative à l'église de Frétigny', *MSAEL*, ns. iv (1985), 29-40.

⁷⁸ *SPC*, 195, 408, 202, *SJV*, no. 14.

⁷⁹ *Tiron*, no. LXI, *CMPerche*, no. 63. *Tiron*, no. CXCVI is witnessed by Hugh and his son Ogier. Less than a kilometre to the north of Nocé itself lies the *manoir* of Courboyer and this may represent the residence of Ogier, while the main branch of the family remained at Nocé.

⁸⁰ *NLR*, nos. LIX, XLVI, XIII (1165), *CMPerche*, nos. 227 (1167), 175, AD Loiret H22, no. 288.

Chartres, but by 1182 he had disappeared and a comital act in favour of Jumièges was witnessed by Geoffrey of Nocé.⁸¹

Energetic lordship: the initiatives of Geoffrey III

The circle which Count Geoffrey III assembled around him upon his return from the Holy Land in 1192 formed a remarkable contrast to that which had surrounded his father, and this dramatic change in the composition of the comital entourage reflects a new approach to the running of the Perche. More than twice the number of acts survive from the slightly more than ten years that Geoffrey ruled the Perche and some 137 names appear in the witness lists as opposed to the 149 names from nearly fifty years of Rotrou's rule. Under the rule of the energetic new count, the entourage of the count of Perche seems to have offered genuine opportunities for active, go-ahead and probably young men, anxious to make their mark.

At the very head of Geoffrey's entourage was his own brother Stephen, who attests seven of his brother's acts, adds his approval to another three and left survivals of some ten acts of his own. He seems to have been responsible for routine work during the absence of his elder brother in 1191/2 and to have accompanied his brother to England on at least one occasion.⁸² Geoffrey's other brothers were ecclesiastics, but it is possible that Geoffrey made an effort to involve at least the youngest William in the running of the county, for William attests three of Geoffrey's acts, two of them of English provenance, including Geoffrey's foundation of a new Augustinian house at Sandeford.⁸³ Geoffrey was fortunate too in his wife Richenza-Matilda of Saxony, who was clearly a capable and active participant in the running of family affairs.

Beyond his immediate family Geoffrey could rely on the support of a group of lively and enthusiastic associates, who form an inner circle which probably accompanied the count at all times. Sometimes it is impossible to know no more about these men than their names and the fact that they attested a number of comital acts. Odo of Lormarin, for example, witnessed seven and possibly eight acts of the count, but even his toponymic is hard to identify with certainty. It could refer to the manor of L'Ormarin on the River Erre, near Nocé, or it might refer to Lormarin in the Eure. He might be the Odo of Lormarin who attests an act of Richer III of Laigle in the 1180s, but by the turn of the thirteenth century he was firmly established in Geoffrey's retinue and remained with him as he lay on his deathbed at Le Theil in March 1202.⁸⁴ Roger of Longpont is equally obscure. He attested six of the count's acts, but appears to have had no connection with

⁸¹ *SJV*, no. 82, *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII.

⁸² *NLR*, no. XC, Duchesne 54, p. 454. For Stephen as guarantor, *Monasticon*, vi, 565, *CMD*, no. CCIII, *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV.

⁸³ Canterbury D & C R62, *Monasticon*, vi, 565, AD Eure-et-Loir H5211 (1201).

⁸⁴ BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303. The same witnesses attend Geoffrey at Le Theil in March 1202, *Clairnets*, no. II, though Odo's toponymic is illegible.

the family which took their name from Longpont.⁸⁵ The counts had a dwelling and a *prepositura* at Longpont and it may be that Roger was a local man who had attracted the attention of the count and by the turn of the twelfth century he was the husband of an important heiress.⁸⁶ His presence and that of other men like him suggest that there was a substantial body of men who remained close to the count, owing their advancement to his favour.

A clear example of such a man is Reginald Pessat, who appeared in eight of Count Geoffrey's acts. Nothing is known of his origins and there are no other bearers of his surname in the comital acts.⁸⁷ He travelled with the count to England witnessing his grant to Bradenstoke and the foundation of the priory of Sandford outside Newbury. He too was with the count at Le Theil in 1202 as the count prepared himself for death.⁸⁸ In 1195 he was sufficiently important to have witnessed an act on behalf of the seneschal of the Perche, Hubert Capreolus. His usefulness to the count was finally recognised by the award of a fee and marriage to a wealthy wife.⁸⁹

The best illustration of the opportunities on offer in the entourage of Geoffrey III, however, is the career of Gervase of Prulay. Gervase took his toponymic from Prulay, which lies between Bellême and Mortagne, but the placename is not recorded before the mid eleventh century.⁹⁰ Gervase first comes to prominence when he accompanied Count Geoffrey to the Holy Land in 1190/2 and he appears seldom to have left his side thereafter. In 1193 he witnessed the count's grant to the Grandmontine priory at Chêne Galon and in 1196 a confirmation to the Maison Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou. He accompanied the count to Le Mans in the 1190s and to England on probably more than one occasion.⁹¹ In the 1190s he was seneschal of Mortagne and a benefactor of the Maison Dieu there. Then in the difficult months which must have followed the sudden death of Count Geoffrey in 1202 he can be found attesting the acts of Countess Richenza-Matilda.⁹²

During this time the fortunes of the family had been assiduously advanced. Philip of Prulay, his uncle, acquired the revenues of the cell which the abbey of La Couture in Le Mans possessed at

⁸⁵ BL Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105; Canterbury D & C R62; PRO E210/1532; BL ms. Harley charter 54.g.26; AD Eure-et-Loir H5211 (1199); Southwick, I, f. 28v. In the mid eleventh century a Cecilia of Longpont had granted an arpent of meadow with the agreement of Hugh, her first born, Ralph, Gervase and William and her act was witnessed by Simon of Longpont, *Tiron*, no. CCCIII, but there is no trace of a Roger in this family.

⁸⁶ Roger and his wife Matilda of Saint-Mard confirmed the grants of her father to Saint Evroul in 1206, BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 45v.

⁸⁷ It is just possible that Reginald was related to the Durand Peisson who appears in *Doc. Ebro*, nos. 161, 177. M. Defourneaux, *Les français en Espagne aux xi^e et xii^e siècles* (Paris, 1949), 216 suggests that Durand went to Spain with Rotrou II.

⁸⁸ BL Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105, *Monasticon*, vi, 565, *Clairêts*, no II, *NLR*, XCIII, also *CMPerche*, no. 64 and BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303.

⁸⁹ *NLR*, no. XCIII. Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 21: *f. Reginald Pesar quod tenet a comite et maritagium quod cepit cum prima uxore sua* (1230). For similar rewards, S. Church, 'The rewards of service in the household of King John: a dissenting opinion', *English Historical Review*, cx (1995), 287-92.

⁹⁰ AD Loiret H22, no. 288. RCVD, f. 1v.

⁹¹ Duchesne 54, p. 454 (1193), Murs, *Comtes*, 494 (1196), *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV, Canterbury D & C R62, *Rot. Chart.*, 96.

⁹² RCVD, f. 9v., Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 158. For the countess's acts, Duchesne 54, p. 454, AD Loiret H22, no. 290.

Parfondeval (Orne, ct. Pervençères) and laid the foundations of a successful ecclesiastical career which would make him a canon of the countess's new foundation of All Saints at Mortagne and an important ecclesiastic in the 1220s.⁹³ Gervase himself purchased a vineyard at Nogent-le-Rotrou, strengthening his family's interests in the south of the county, and seems to have acquired the extensive fee of Champs by marriage to its heiress Mabel.⁹⁴

While these men represent the count's closest associates and, together with his clerks and chaplains, travelled with him at all times, the comital officers who had formed such a prominent part of the entourage of his father had not deserted Geoffrey. The *Lonreio* family, for example, which had provided a seneschal for Rotrou III, continued in service under Geoffrey and by 1194 Warin had been succeeded by his son William, who witnessed several of the count's acts.⁹⁵ William may not have remained in this role for long, however, for he is described as such in only two acts, though he continued to attest comital acts, one of which is of English provenance, and it may be that William was more useful to the count as a member of the immediate entourage.⁹⁶ Hubert Capreolus, the so-called seneschal of the Perche, also witnesses a number of acts, though not always being described as seneschal.⁹⁷

Under Count Geoffrey III the great landed magnates of the Perche are in evidence at the comital court. The Aylmer of Villeray of this generation, for example, attested four of Geoffrey's acts, including one of English provenance, while William of Villeray appears twice in the witness lists and Gouffier of Villeray, who was in England at the time of the foundation of Sandleford, was appointed commander of the castle of Bellême. (Lineage IV) The count's acts also suggest that members of certain families who had absented themselves from the court of his father made a reappearance at that of Geoffrey. Geoffrey of Beaumont, a descendant of the Beaumonts of his grandfather's day, attests first among the witnesses of Count Geoffrey's act given at Le Mans cathedral and Villehardouin specifically mentions him among Geoffrey's followers who prepared for the fourth crusade.⁹⁸ (Lineage I) Similarly the Illiers lineage, which had been preoccupied in the Chartrain during the time of Rotrou III, turned its attention again to its responsibilities in the

⁹³ *La Couture*, no. CLXXX, CLXXX, *LT*, 139, *CMPerche*, nos. 140, 212 for Philip's career in the 1220s.

⁹⁴ *Clairets*, no. XXVIII (1229) an act by Gervase's son gives details of the purchase of the vineyard by Gervase and his wife Lucy. *LT*, 401 shows Gervase approving a grant from the fee of Champs: *concedente Gervasio de Prulai et Mabilia heredi et domina feodi de Campis*. Mabel later appears as the wife of Matthew of Montgoubert, *LT*, 459 (<1208) and mother of the subsequent lords of Champs, *LT*, 117, 455. The implication is that Mabel had married Gervase as his second wife, so that Gervase's name and property descended to the children of his first wife Lucy. Mabel had no children by Gervase and was subsequently remarried to Matthew of Montgoubert, to whose descendants the fee of Champs then passed. In the 1230s after the death of Hugh of La Ferté-Bernard the legitimacy of his children was challenged by their *consanguinei*, Gervase, Andrew and Joanna of Pruille in the diocese of Sées, Charles, *La Ferté-Bernard*, 51-2. Since the names Gervase and Andrew had already occurred in the Prulay family and Prulay does indeed lie in that diocese, it seems likely that the Prulay family were involved and this raises the question of their relationship with the lords of La Ferté-Bernard. The most plausible explanation seems to be that Lucy was a member of that family, since the name Lucy recurs in the dynasty. This would imply that Gervase's first marriage was as advantageous as his second.

⁹⁵ *NLR*, no. XCIII, *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV, *CMPerche*, no. 64, AD Orne 5441, Duchesne 54, p. 454, AD Orne 721, CSJ A/6.

⁹⁶ William of *Lumyei*, Canterbury D & C R62.

⁹⁷ *NLR*, no. XCIII, *CMPerche*, no. 66, CSJ A/6.

⁹⁸ *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV, Villehardouin, 434.

Perche. William of Illiers was among the witnesses to an act given by the countess Richenza-Matilda in 1191/2, during the absence of her husband and he also approved Count Geoffrey's arrangements concerning the holdings of the monastery of Saint-Evroul in the forest of Réno.⁹⁹(Lineage I)

It is, however, the return of the lords of Courville, whose predecessor had thrown off the lordship of Count Rotrou II with such acrimony in the opening years of the twelfth century, which is most revealing. Robert of Vieuxpont, whose family had acquired the lordship of Courville, can be found among the witnesses of an act issued by Geoffrey in 1196, which concerns property at Chuisnes, near Courville. In the act Geoffrey gives up his right to a *procuratio* from the residents of Chuisnes in return for a lump sum and an annual payment. The transaction provided Geoffrey with ready cash rather than a right to food and lodging, but it was more than a convenient commutation for the count. It was in effect an acknowledgement of his lordship in an area, where in the past the family had found it difficult to assert themselves. Geoffrey's father, Count Rotrou, had certainly enjoyed the right to lodging, but in ceding the right to the monks of Marmoutier established at Chuisnes Geoffrey secured the recognition of his lordship. Robert of Vieuxpont, lord of Courville attested the act and accepted that Geoffrey would in the words of the act "hold in his hand all the inhabitants of Chuisnes and all its property, whether belonging to the monks or the men of the settlement, and would defend them as his own property".¹⁰⁰

Geoffrey's links with the Courville lineage were not his only initiative in this area, however. In fact Geoffrey seems to have been particularly anxious to renew contacts there and he had cultivated his links with the families of the locality in the years before he became count. In 1182, for example, he had already witnessed a grant by his uncle Count Theobald of Blois in company with Ivo of Vieuxpont and his acceptance by the Vieuxpont lords of Courville in 1196 may have been made easier because he had fought alongside them at the siege of Acre.¹⁰¹ Before they left for the Holy Land Ivo of Vieuxpont and his brother Robert had joined Geoffrey in 1189 to witness a grant to the convent of Belhomert made by Erembourg of Friaize, a member of another lineage cultivated by Geoffrey.¹⁰² Friaize (Eure-et-Loir, ct. La Loupe) lies just off the road from Courville to Nogent-le-Rotrou and in 1198 Erembourg's brother Warin was to be associated with Geoffrey's brother, Stephen, in the fighting between Richard I and Philip Augustus. Stephen received a money fee of £360 from the Norman exchequer and Warin £220.¹⁰³ The success of Geoffrey's attempt to increase his standing in the area can be further judged from two later acts by Erembourg's other brother, John. In 1202 during his preparation for embarkation on the

⁹⁹ AD Orne, H1846, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 205-7.

¹⁰⁰ CMD, no. CCIII: *Ego autem in vita mea post mortem meam heredes mei habitatores Chonie et omnes res tam ad eos quam ad monachos ejusdem loci pertinentes manu tenebimus et defendemus tanquam nostras proprias, et omnimodam garantiam.*

¹⁰¹ For Geoffrey at Acre, Duchesne 54, p. 454. *Les Templiers en Eure-et-Loir: histoire et cartulaire*, ed. C. Métais (Chartres, 1902), no. XVIII.

¹⁰² BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 307.

¹⁰³ *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, ii, 386.

fourth Crusade John granted jurisdictional rights at Mittainvilliers to the cathedral of Chartres and to the abbey of Saint-Père to Chartres and in so doing acknowledged the overlordship of the counts of Perche by seeking the approval of Stephen of Perche, the brother of the recently deceased Geoffrey.¹⁰⁴

Similar efforts to extend the family's authority can be detected around all the margins of the county. A particularly prominent member of the comital entourage, Geoffrey Trichart, held property in the south west of the county where Bellou-le-Trichard (Orne, ct. Le Theil) still bears his name. Before 1190 he had been more closely associated with the lords of La Ferté-Bernard and had granted 12d. in rent to the abbey that lineage had founded at La Pellice.¹⁰⁵ His family's connections with the Rotrous went well back into the eleventh century, but had been neglected in the twelfth until Geoffrey reappeared at the comital court in 1185 and again more frequently under Geoffrey III.¹⁰⁶ At some point in the 1190s too Count Geoffrey acknowledged responsibility for the territory at Courgenard (Sarthe, ct. Montmirail), owned by the canons of the cathedral at Le Mans. His father Count Rotrou III had guaranteed a mortgage of rights of jurisdiction there, but Geoffrey's act defines precisely the nature of comital authority and the obligations it imposes.¹⁰⁷ He undertakes to defend the canons and their tenants and not to exact unjust payments for his protection.¹⁰⁸ To the north west of the county he had regained the fortresses of Moulins and Bonsmoulins which had been secured by his grandfather, then lost in 1159, and the closer relationship with the authorities in Normandy that this involved is indicated by the attestation of his act in favour of Saint-Evroul's priory at Moulins by Warin of Glapion, who had been the king of England's agent in Moulins and Bonsmoulins and whose accounts for those two places survive in the Norman pipe roll of 1195.¹⁰⁹

It is to the north east of the county, however, that the advance of comital lordship can most clearly be seen. Assertions of comital authority east of the forest of Réno cannot be found before Count Geoffrey's time and Count Rotrou III's grant of land and jurisdiction to the priory of

¹⁰⁴ NDC, no. CLX, SPC, 670.

¹⁰⁵ *CMPerche*, no. 64 (1194), BN ms 10089, p 391. RCVD, f. 8 (1185).

¹⁰⁶ Around 1127 Walter Trichart and his wife Hersendis had an interest in property at Thivars (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Chartres sud-ouest, cme. Fontenay-sur-Eure), NDC, no. XXV. In the closing years of the tenth century one Rotrou had also owned property at Thivars, SPC, 87. Duchesne 54, p. 454

¹⁰⁷ For Rotrou's act, *Chart. Cenom.*, no. DXXXV (abbreviated version, with corrections and longer witness list of *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXVIII): *Predictus autem comes Perticensis pactionem istam ratam habens et manu capiens eam litteris annotari et sigillo suo fecit communiri concedensque quod eam firmiter observaret et fideliter faceret conservari.*

¹⁰⁸ *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV: *concessi, quod homines prefate terre et canonici cum rebus suis in omni tempore, in pace scilicet et in guerra, habebunt refugium et securitatem in terra mea, tanquam homines me proprii, contra omnes homines, et non permittam de cetero quod aliquis de terra mea vel de alia terra eis gravamen vel violentiam inferat, quamdiu de hominibus prefate terre possit justiciam habere per canonicos. Juravi etiam quod, propter hanc defensionem ab hominibus prefate terre vel a canonicis pecuniam vi non exigam: sed bona fide custodiam et defendam eos, sicut proprios homines meos.*

¹⁰⁹ AD Orne H721. For Warin as a ducal official, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 245 (1195) and *LT*, 225. Glapion (Orne, cme. Sainte-Scholasse) lies on the upper reaches of the Sarthe, just outside the Perche. His subsequent career in royal service and his role as seneschal of Normandy is outlined in Powicke, *Loss*, 173-4. Warin gave property to the monastery of La Trappe from his holding of Val de Maheru in 1208, *LT*, 389 and the patronage of the church of Montchevrel (Orne, ct. Courtomer) to Tiron, *Tiron*, ii, p. 270.

Moutiers in 1159 is in fact the only surviving family act which indicates comital authority in the lands east of the River Huisne before the end of the twelfth century. The appearance, therefore, in the acts of Count Geoffrey III of a number of lords whose toponymics link them with the area between the Huisne and the forest of Senonches is significant. Geoffrey himself had made moves in this direction in acquiring property at Marchainville from the monks of Saint-Evroul and his establishment of a chapel at La Loupe indicates influence much further east than can be detected for his predecessors.¹¹⁰ Much of the credit, however, for attracting the magnates of this uncertain area between the territories of the counts of the Perche and the lords of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais must go to Rotrou III's foundation of the Charterhouse at Val Dieu, which attracted benefactions from the lords of these forested uplands. A number of unfamiliar toponymics appear in Geoffrey's acts of confirmation for Val Dieu among them Miles of La Charmue (Eure-et-Loir, ct. La Loupe, cme. Manou) and Vivian of Feillet (Orne, ct. Longny, cme. Le Mage).¹¹¹

By far the most significant act however is the guarantee from Count Geoffrey sought by Gerald of *Boceio* for the grant of 60s. from his *prepositura* at Longny which he proposed to give to the convent of Belhomert.¹¹² This act acknowledges that the borders of Geoffrey's jurisdiction had been pushed much further north east and the extension of authority was again acknowledged in 1201 when Gerald sought confirmation of the commutation he had made of his father-in-law, Gastho of Rémalard's grant to the same house.¹¹³ Gerald's origins are uncertain; some historians have suggested he may have come from Boissy-Maugis, but he is as likely to have taken his toponymic from Boissy-lès-Perche, due north of the Perche and only 14 kilometres from Verneuil in Normandy. All his acts and the toponymics of the men who attest them, including those of his two seneschals, Robert of Monceaux (Orne, ct. Longny) and William of La Lande (La Lande-sur-Eure, Orne, ct. Longny) link Gerald with the area to the north east of the Perche, where Count Geoffrey sought to extend his power.¹¹⁴ Subsequently both Robert of Monceaux and William of La Lande were themselves to appear in comital acts.¹¹⁵

Extension of comital influence in this region inevitably meant that their neighbours were obliged to redefine their relationships with the counts. In the lifetime of Rotrou III, for example, the lords of La Ferté-Ernaud (now La Ferté-Vidame, Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) seem to have had little contact with the count of Perche. They were benefactors of Tiron, patrons of the order of the Temple and counted an archbishop of Tours among their younger sons.¹¹⁶ The 100s. paid from

¹¹⁰ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 205-7. For Geoffrey's foundation of a cell of the Augustinian abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois and a grant of rents there, BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 264.

¹¹¹ RCVD, fos. 10v., 13.

¹¹² AD Eure-et-Loir H5211.

¹¹³ AD Eure-et-Loir H5211.

¹¹⁴ For Robert of Monceaux, AD Eure-et-Loir H5211. For William of La Lande, *SJV*, no. 183.

¹¹⁵ For Robert AD Orne H721 and for William, *Clairnets*, no. XIV.

¹¹⁶ Little has been written on the lords of La-Ferté-Vidame and their genealogy has proved impossible to untangle, but a marriage into the hereditary *vicedomini* of Chartres brought about the name change from La Ferté-Ernaud to La Ferté-Vidame. Around 1135 Ernard of La Ferté approved a grant by his follower Gilbert of *Curia Episcopi*, Tiron, no. CCVI and he was probably the Ernard whose wife Alice was the maternal aunt of Gilbert of Mignéres, Beaulieu, no. 5. An Ernard of La Ferté granted the monks of La Trappe freedom to buy, sell and transport their

the comital *prepositura* at Mortagne to the lord of La Ferté must have been something of a retainer and implies an acknowledged relationship of patron/client, but the original date of this grant is not known and by the closing years of the twelfth century it had been transferred by Ernaud of La Ferté to Hugh of Vaunoise, who subsequently gave it to La Trappe.¹¹⁷ By the 1190s closer relations had been established for William of La Ferté witnessed a grant by Count Geoffrey to the monastery of Saint-Euverte in Orléans,¹¹⁸ but the lords of La Ferté must have viewed the rise of the county of Perche with some anxiety in case they should lose their independence of action.

Similarly the lords of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais ought perhaps to have viewed the Rotrous with some suspicion. For, not only did the new lord of Rémalard, Gerald of *Boceio*, whose predecessors had held the castle from the lords of Châteauneuf, accept the lordship of the count of the Perche, but even the Châteauneufs themselves seem to have been drawn into some sort of acknowledgment of subordination. In 1185 Gervase of Châteauneuf had given his rights over the forest of Réno to the charterhouse of Val Dieu and in his act of confirmation Rotrou III refers to Gervase as *fidelis meus*.¹¹⁹

The English following

The Rotrou family had held lands in England from the early years of the twelfth century when Rotrou II had acquired two large manors in Wiltshire as the dowry of his first wife, Matilda. His second wife Hawise also brought him English property and Rotrou III's brother Geoffrey was to make a successful career for himself at the court of King Henry II. The real English opportunity came however in 1189 with Geoffrey III's marriage to Richenza-Matilda, the niece of King Richard I, who brought as her *maritagium* extensive interests in Suffolk, Essex and Kent. As a result by the closing years of the twelfth century the Rotrou family was in possession of significantly greater resources which might be used to enhance their lordship. Some 58 laymen attest the acts English acts of Geoffrey III Count of Perche, among them several who can be traced to the Perche and others whose interests lay in England, but who saw Geoffrey as an attractive and potentially important English magnate.

goods over his lands, with the approval of his wife Alice and sons Ernald and William, *LT*, 447. Before 1149 Hugh archbishop of Tours confirmed the benefactions of his brother William of La Ferté who was about to depart for Jerusalem with the approval of his nephew another Ernald, but Ernald the younger was killed in the defence of his father's honour and Hugh was obliged to return to perform the funeral, *SPC*, 610-11. By 1165 another Ernald was lord of La Ferté, *Templiers Eure-et-Loir*, no. II and he was presumably the Hernaustus who witnessed an act of Theobald of Blois in 1176, *Beaulieu*, no. 102. In the 1190s the lord of La Ferté was William who witnessed the act of Geoffrey III for Saint-Euverte, BN ms lat 10089, p.391 and probably lived long enough to be the *Willelmus dominus Fertatis Ernaldi* who gave 10s from the revenues of his mills at Mortagne in 1214, *LT*, 66, but he was dead by April 1226 when his grant of £6 from the *pedagium* of La Ferté was confirmed, *LT*, 17-18. In the 1230s a Hugh of La Ferté-Ernaud became bishop of Chartres in the 1230s, *Obits*, ii, 118. The lordship was inherited in the 1220s by Alice, daughter of William of La Ferté who married Hervey of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, but she may also have had a sister, Juliana, the wife of William of Tilly, *LT*, 17-18.

¹¹⁷ *LT*, 9-10.

¹¹⁸ BN ms lat 10089, p. 391.

¹¹⁹ RCVD, f. 8v.

Among those whom Geoffrey brought to England by far the most important was Hugh of *Tabarie*. He attested no less than ten of the English acts of Count Geoffrey, usually in a prominent position at the head of the witness list, and is described in 1200 as the seneschal of the count.¹²⁰ In 1186 and 1190 he had witnessed acts of Count Rotrou III, so it seems likely that he was sent to England by Count Geoffrey and that the Gervase of Tabarie who witnessed two English acts was his brother.¹²¹ *Tabarie* remains to be identified, but probably lies near Préaux, a short distance from Nogent-le-Rotrou itself, for Hugh and his wife granted half the advowson there to the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou.¹²² He seems to have settled in Wiltshire and was probably responsible for the donation of land there to the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou.¹²³ When the house of Rotrou lost its English lands under King John Hugh must have remained in England, for he can be found as a tenant-in-chief in 1210/12 in the Red Book of the Exchequer.¹²⁴

Herbert of Mortagne and Walter of Saint-Ouen [de Secherouvre] are other attestors of English acts, whose origins lie in the Perche,¹²⁵ but most interesting of all is one Robert Quadrel. Robert attested three acts by Count Geoffrey and one by the countess immediately after her husband's death. He also held land in Wanborough in Wiltshire, half a virgate of which he granted to one Adam of the Moor.¹²⁶ Quadrel came from a family which was well-established in the Perche. A Bernard Quadrel had attested acts of Ivo bishop of Sées in the 1050s and by the late eleventh century Fulcher Quadrel had made benefactions to the monastery of Saint Vincent of Le Mans which indicate that he held property around Contilly and Pervençères and he appears to have been a man of some substance with his own seneschal.¹²⁷ A namesake of Robert Quadrel had been Robert of Bellême's commander at the siege of Saint-Cenéri in 1088 and was blinded by Duke Robert Curthose of Normandy, though he remained in Robert of Bellême's entourage during the 1090s.¹²⁸

The lineage divided into two branches, one based in the Pervençères region, whose benefactions to religious houses in the Perche can be traced, and the other at Lignières-la-Carelle on the edge of the forest of Perseigne, from where they continued to support the house of Montgomery-Bellême and William Talvas, the son of Robert of Bellême.¹²⁹ The family fail, however, to

¹²⁰ *CRR*, i, 124.

¹²¹ For Hugh in France, *Chart. Cenom.*, no. DXXXV (1186), *NLR*, p. 130.

¹²² S. Proust, *Inventaire sommaire des archives des hospices de Nogent-le-Rotrou depuis leur fondation jusqu'à 1790* (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1869), 8; PRO DL 25/3394.

¹²³ PRO DL 25/3394.

¹²⁴ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. H. Hall (RS 99, London, 1897), ii, 482.

¹²⁵ Southwick, I, f. 28v and BL ms. Harley charter 54.g.26 for Herbert, for Walter, Canterbury D & C carta antiq. R62.

¹²⁶ AD Eure-et-Loir H5211 (1201), Canterbury D & C carta antiq. R62 (two pieces), BL ms. Stowe 666, f. 79, Duchesne 54, p. 454.

¹²⁷ *VLM*, nos. 605, 573, 584, 635.

¹²⁸ OV, iv, 154, *CMPerche*, no. 15.

¹²⁹ For the Percheron Quadrels, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 134 (benefaction to Chartrage), 157 (benefaction to Maison-Dieu at Mortagne); *Liber controversiarum sancti Vincentii Cenomannensis ou second cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-*

appear in the acts of the Rotrou family before the time of Count Geoffrey, apart from the attestation of an Odo Carrell to an act of Rotrou III.¹³⁰ Odo may be the Odo Carrell, canon of Chartres, who accompanied Rotrou's brother, Stephen of Perche to Palermo in the 1160s and lost his life there.¹³¹ The genealogy of the family is obscure, but it appears that the English lands represented an adequate inducement to the Quadrels to offer active support where in the past they had remained uncommitted to the Rotrou family, and by the turn of the twelfth century Count Geoffrey's authority was acknowledged by William Quadrel, the donor of property at Barville (Orne, ct. Pervençères) on the very fringes of the Perche.¹³²

Many of the men who witnessed Count Geoffrey's English acts were not followers of longstanding, but had their origins in England, so it is possible in examining these acts to see the English circle of Count Geoffrey in the process of formation. The toponymics of Hugh of Upham, John of Rochford and Lawrence of Plumberow indicate that the tenants of Geoffrey's estates in Wiltshire and Essex were an important element in his English circle. Men such as these and others, like Henry of Taidern, Nicholas son of Solomon and Reginald son of Serlo were sufficiently important to appear in the pipe rolls and sometimes hold several knights' fees.¹³³ Some attestors were more than tenants and were men of substance in their own right. The importance of Walter Waleran, for example, was recognised by Count Rotrou III, whose only English act he had witnessed, attesting first among a witness list of eight men and he holds the same position in Geoffrey III's act confirming the property of Adam of Kennet.¹³⁴ Reginald of Cornhill, who despite his origins in the City of London, was to become sheriff of Kent and an important royal agent, was another Englishman who found it worth his while to wait on the count of the Perche.¹³⁵

The Mechanisms of Lordship

With the accession of Count Thomas the nature of comital acts changes and the composition of the comital entourage becomes far more difficult to establish. With only one exception, which is of English provenance, all the count's surviving acts take the form of letters patent and so lack witness lists to provide information. The last real glimpse therefore of the *proceres Perticenses*

Vincent du Mans, ed. A. Chédeville (Paris, c. 1968), no. 16 for the foundation of the priory of Erables (Orne, ct./cme. Pervençères). For the Manceau Quadrels, *La Couture*, no. CI where a Robert Quadrel is described as seneschal of John, son of William Talvas count of Ponthieu, *Perseigne*, nos. V, CCIX, CCCXLVIII and AD Calvados H6511/4, H6511/6, H6511/8.

¹³⁰ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131.

¹³¹ *Obits*, ii, 55: *Odo cognomine Carellus hujus sante ecclesie canonicus et subdiaconus, cum de Sicilia ad partes istas reverti cepisset a quibusdam Sathane filiis atrociter est interemptus...*

¹³² LBSMS, f. 75v.

¹³³ For Henry, *Red book*, ii, 595 where he is shown holding three knights of the honour of Rayleigh in 1212; for Nicholas fitz Salomon and Reginald son of Serlo, *Red book*, ii, 596.

¹³⁴ BL ms Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105v., PRO E326/B7482. Walter's scutage returns indicate the importance of his holdings, *Red book*, i, 73 (£10), 89 (£25), 114 (£20), 120 (50 marks). He may have been related to the Walerans of Melksham, Crouch, *William Marshal*, 196.

¹³⁵ PRO E210/1532. W.L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1961), 141, 267.

under the comital house is given by the great act of confirmation which the count-bishop William gave to Les Clairets in 1218.¹³⁶ In it many of the familiar names from witness lists of the previous one hundred and fifty years make donations to the new comital foundation at Clairets and in so doing express their loyalty and support for the Rotrou dynasty. It is in effect the end product of the hundred and fifty years of lordship exercised by the Rotrous over their county, but, while the patterns of that lordship can be discerned, the precise mechanisms by which the Rotrou dynasty tied both the magnates and the humbler landed proprietors to them in ties of lordship are seldom visible. Nonetheless, the "two-way flow of allegiance and patronage" mentioned by David Crouch in the context of Norman magnates and their honorial baronage must also have existed between the Rotrou family and the other lineages of the Perche, and, although the details can only be recovered with difficulty, some general remarks about the process can be made.¹³⁷

The most obvious means of exercising patronage was the grant of land, but, as we have seen in our consideration of the demesne resources of the Rotrou dynasty, the family seem to have made little use of that option and seldom alienated landed property. Only one comital act relates to the specific grant of a fee, that which Rotrou III gave to Guy of Vaugrigneuse.¹³⁸ In 1192 Geoffrey III granted a *medietaria* to Lawrence of Champfaye and it is rights in such share cropping arrangements which make up the bulk of comital land grants.¹³⁹ In 1204, for example, the countess Richenza-Matilda gave the *medietaria* of Ponte (probably Pont Malbroue, Orne, ct. Le Theil, cme. Mâle) to the nunnery of Les Clairets, but as subsequent benefactions suggest it was burdened with many existing charges.¹⁴⁰ These grants and others like them, which find their way into the records of the religious houses to which the property was eventually given, are essentially those to less important individuals, and there is no evidence for the assignment of major blocs of territory, nor indeed of castles, whose custody was to form such an important part of the patronage of other territorial princes.¹⁴¹

For some of the nobles of the Perche the profits of office under the counts may have been a sufficient inducement to accept and remain within the lordship of the Rotrous. The Capreoli dynasty, whose benefactions to religious houses remained quite small-scale and who never made a foundation of their own, probably benefitted from their tenure of the office of *dapifer*/seneschal, as the *Lonreio* family may also have done, though their failure to continue in office after the

¹³⁶ *Clairets*, no. XIV.

¹³⁷ Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 104.

¹³⁸ *Clairets*, no. XXXIV: *quod felicitis memoriae comes Rotrodus Perticensis, defuncto Guidoni de Valle-grinosa militi olim dicitur contulisse*

¹³⁹ Duchesne 54, p. 454.

¹⁴⁰ For the countess's grant, *Clairets*, no. IV. For charges on it subsequently given to the nunnery, *Clairets*, no. XIV: *Gofer de Bruieira unam minam bladi ad mensuram Belismensi in medietaria de Ponte, Heloys vidua Rodulphi Viarii unam minam bladi Nogentini in molendino de Ponte.*

¹⁴¹ For castle custody as an item of comital patronage, B. Bachrach, 'Enforcement of the *forma fidelitatis*: the techniques used by Fulk Nerra, count of the Angevins (987-1040)', *Speculum*, lix (1984), 796-819. Examples of small grants, *Clairets*, no. XXI: *quicquid habemus et habere poteramus in fundo terrae ipsorum molendinorum...quae praedicta Gaufridus comes Pertic nobis contulit*; Querimoniae, no. 215: *quoddam pratum situm in parrochia de....valens vi libras annui redditus, quod dedit Thomas comes bonae memoriae Ranulpho, coco suo.*

1190s suggests that the seneschalcy lost its attraction for them.¹⁴² Perhaps the best example of the importance of a grant of office is that given by the career of Gervase of Prulay in the 1190s, which is discussed above. He took advantage of all the opportunities available under the energetic rule of Geoffrey III and was seneschal of Mortagne around the turn of the twelfth century. Even the little men valued their offices, however, as is indicated by the later legal pleading that Count Thomas had unjustly deprived one Odo Hervey of the custody of the count's meadows in the parish of Saint-Jean at Mauves, which was worth the annual sum of 20s.¹⁴³

Many lords profited from access to comital revenues. Often these might be payments in kind from comital mills or a share in the produce of a comital *medietaria*, but equally they might be payments of small sums of ready cash from a particular source of comital revenue.¹⁴⁴ Occasionally too the counts might alienate an entire source of comital revenue, such as the grant of salt sales at Nogent, which was made to the clerk Warin, or the profits from certain stalls in the market at Mortagne, which were the subject of an exchange between Rotrou III and Andrew of Prulay.¹⁴⁵ Rights of access to the comital forest were clearly a prized privilege and might form a useful means of rewarding service to the counts.¹⁴⁶

The religious houses founded by the comital family also had a role to play in the exercise of their lordship. The most senior Rotrou foundation of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou for example attracted benefactions from lords throughout the Perche, often after appropriate encouragement from the count. The property, which was spread around the Perche acted as a link with the focus of comital power at Nogent and even disputes concerning its holdings could enhance comital authority when they were settled in the comital court. Rotrou II clearly accepted the importance of good relations with the religious orders within his territory, for he was punctilious in taking

¹⁴² Gervase Capreolus gave unspecified property for La Trappe's grange at *Valle Hermerii*, *LT*, 583, but most of the family's grants in the north of the Perche consist of portions of tithes or rents: grain at Soligni and Mesnil Chevrol, *LT* 584; 5s. from the mill of Réveillon, *LT*, 15; 5s. tournois from the land of La Galopinère (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne, cme. Sainte-Céronne), *LT*, 64; half measure and two *sextaria* of barley and oats, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 133; a *sextarium* of *annonna* in the mill of Chalo at *Pigeium*, probably Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne, *LT*, 401. The Hubertine Capreoli were only slightly more generous: the *tenementum* of Robert Canis was given to the priory at Bellême, *CMPerche*, no. 66; two parts of the tithe of a vineyard at La Bretèche (Orne, ct. Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe, cme. Bursard) to Nogent, *NLR*, no. XCVI.

¹⁴³ *Querimoniae*, no. 217.

¹⁴⁴ Random examples: a payment from a mill, *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 155: *unum modium annone et ii sextarios in molendino quod dicitur Magnum justa Rivere, annuatim, in Natale Domini, ab Ivone juniore de Remalart. Hoc confirmat G comes Pertici*; a share of a *medietaria*, *Clairêts*, no. XIV: *Lancelinus de Fai unum sextarium frumenti in decima de Pererrie*; a payment of cash, *Clairêts*, no. II: *dedisse Osannae domicillae nostrae pro servitio suo decem libras annui redditus sibi et haeredibus suis perpetuo possidendas in censibus meis de Ferreria*.

¹⁴⁵ *Obits*, ii, 389, *Querimoniae*, no. 208: *costuma stall[orum mercati Mauri]taniae, in quibus panis venditur in eadem villa omnibus diebus ebdomadae, exceptis duobus diebus, videlicet die Mercurii et Sabbati, quam costumam [omnes anteces]sors sui tenuerunt et possederunt ratione cujusdam excanbii quod antecessoribus suis fecit Rotroudus, condam comes Perticensis...*

¹⁴⁶ The Illiers family had rights over the forest of Réno, AD Orne H721 and more than twenty years after the extinction of the comital line individuals were asserting their rights within the forest, *Querimoniae*, no. 139: *Gaufridus Petronillae et mater sua de Ferreria conqueruntur quod Berruerus de Borron dissaisiavit patrem dicti Gaufridi maritum dictae matris de usagio quod percipiebat in foresta de Belismi de bosco mortuo ad calefaciendum se quod datum sibi et heredibus suis fuerat de dono comitis Gaufridi*.

over patronage of the priory at Bellême, which had formerly been supported by the Montgomery-Bellême family and he made foundations himself at strategically important points.

Both La Trappe and Tiron, which owe their foundations to Rotrou, were located at the very fringes of his lordship and acted as centres of comital influence. Tiron was a conscious foundation by the count in an area whose lordship had been disputed between the Rotrous and the Gouet family, and the house formed an alternative focus to the Gouet family foundation of Vieuvicq (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Brou), less than 20 km away. In the 1070s Vieuvicq, a priory of Marmoutier, had been patronised by men who were later to be staunch supporters of the counts of the Perche, but a generation later the more ascetic monasticism practised at Tiron attracted far greater attention and with it additional property from the lords of the surrounding area.¹⁴⁷ La Trappe was a Savignac house and its origins lay with a local family, but by assuming patronage of the house the Rotrou family asserted themselves on the northwestern edges of their territory and local families sought comital protection and confirmation for their benefactions.¹⁴⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that Count Rotrou III's foundation of the charterhouse at Val Dieu should have a similar effect, encouraging benefactions from nearby lords, many of whom may not previously have acknowledged the lordship of the Rotrou counts.

All these devices from the possibility of material gain to the enhancement of status by religious benefaction were exploited by the counts to assert their power, and they seem to have worked well in the attraction of the middling families such as the Illiers or the Capreoli, but in other cases the Rotrous were dealing with significant proprietors in their own right. The lords of Beaumont and Villeray stand at the head of important local networks of power, and, although our sources do not permit us to identify all such networks within the Perche, there was clearly a localism at work. Certain groups of magnates can be founding attesting together, so that it is possible to discern a south western grouping,¹⁴⁹ a Bellêmois connection,¹⁵⁰ and a Blavou interest¹⁵¹ and

¹⁴⁷ *CMD*, no. CXIII dated 1050 x 61.

¹⁴⁸ AD Orne H725 describes how Gerburgis mother of William Goidus of Les Apres and her sons gave Abbot Vivian of Aunay land which they had formerly given to the priest of Crulai. Property and revenues were also given by the *dapifer* of Laigle and approved by Richer of Laigle, who gave exemptions from his exactions. The act appears in the cartulary of La Trappe, *LT*, 476-7.

¹⁴⁹ This is most visible in acts of the early twelfth century and is clearly to be seen in the account of the litigation over Robert Metsasella's donation, *NLR*, no. XIX. Here a group of oath-helpers support Walter of La Motte in his allegations against the knight Salierus. The group was made up of Bernard of La Ferté-Bernard, Walter Chesnel of Ceton, Hugh Niger of Bonnetable, Gerald Capreolus and William Anatonus.

¹⁵⁰ The Bellêmois connection gathers around the Villeray family. It is first seen in Aylmer's act, dating probably from the 1050s, in which he asserts that Fulk of Colonard (Orne, ct. ct. Nocé) and Gunter son of Ribald should hold the church of Vieuvicq from him, *CMD*, no. CXIII. Subsequent donations at Colonard by Fulk and Gunter son of Berald were made before Aylmer's son Gouffier, *CMPerche*, no. 169 and Fulk of Colonard's grant of the church of Saint-Sulpice of Mellaray to Sainte-Gauburge was confirmed in the presence of Hugh of Villeray in 1133, AN LL1158, ii, p. 402. Also prominent among Villeray followers with Bellêmois toponymics were the Dancé family, whose grants were confirmed by Gouffier, *CMPerche*, nos. 206, 209. Hervey of Dancé (Orne, ct. Nocé) appears among Gouffier's witnesses in *NLR*, no. XIX. Also among Gouffier's witnesses are William and Pagan of La Bruyère (Orne, ct. Nocé), and the daughter of William of La Bruyère married Hervey Malfetus, *NLR*, no. LIII, whose family are prominent in acts by the Villeray. Walter *Malum Fide prenomine* was with Gouffier in the early 1080s, *SPC*, 337-8 and again when Gouffier confirmed Marmoutier's possessions at Colonard, *CMPerche*, no. 170. They probably took their name from La Maufaisse, about a kilometre from Villeray.

other similar magnate interests on the scale of the Villeray and the Beaumont may have existed in the north of the county perhaps represented by the Champs and Brénard families.¹⁵²

It is by the attraction and the retention of the loyalty of these major lineages that the success of the Rotrou dynasty must be measured. In the words of Susan Reynolds "they had to work hard to get accepted, especially by those who had the wealth and power to provide the military support every ruler needed..."¹⁵³ Such families could not be won over by small grants of land or the profits of an office, for they held significant property of their own. Although a small annual pension from a comital *prepositura* would always be welcome to a lord like Geoffrey of Beaumont, the Rotrous had to offer something greater in order to secure the acceptance of these men.¹⁵⁴ "What rulers at any level had to do" as Dr. Reynolds observes "was to make their subjects pay dues and accept controls on the land they already held - acknowledge in effect that their property was held under government."¹⁵⁵ In this the Rotrou dynasty seem to have excelled, for what they offered was good lordship, precisely the quality identified by Orderic in his description of Geoffrey II.¹⁵⁶

This ability to keep 'valiant barons and warlike castellans in firm subjection to his government', that is to keep the peace and to maintain order was the most valued aspect of the dynasty's lordship and it is implicit both in Geoffrey II's capacity before 1100 to force contending parties to settle their differences in his court and in his willingness to accept responsibility for the lawless conduct of his men who murdered Gilbert of Laigle.¹⁵⁷ It is explicit in the time honoured formula which appears in comital acts: *that this deed/act/sale/concession may remain solid and*

¹⁵¹ This group's interests lay to the north of the forest of Bellême in the area which had been occupied by the forest of Blavou. It centres around the Le Pin and Courcerault families. Walter of Le Pin (Orne, ct. Pervençères) had been a benefactor of the priory of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême in the 1060s, *CMPerche*, no. 7. His nephew was Giroie Fortin, *CMPerche*, no. 7. In the 1120s the lord of Le Pin was called William, *CMPerche*, no. 22, *LT*, 583 and the links with the Fortin family were maintained when he attested a settlement by the monks of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou with the sons of Fortin, *NLR*, no. XLVI. He held property from William of Courcerault, *NLR*, no. LIX, the witness list of which covers much of the Blavou interest: Fulk of *Blandeio*, Pagan Baldwin (Fortin), William Tacum, Pagan of Saint-Quentin (de Blavou) and Hugh Fortin. William and his son Waleran of Le Pin were benefactors of La Trappe, *LT*, 588. Waleran continues to appear in acts of the later twelfth century, *CMPerche*, no. 234, 175, *RCVD*, f. 1v., Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 134 and witnessed an grant by Hugh of Courcerault to the abbey of Josaphat, *Cartulaire de Notre Dame de Josaphat*, ed. C. Métais (Chartres, 1911/2), no. CCLXXIV. Waleran is described as the brother[-in-law?] of Hugh of Courcerault, *RCVD*, f. 16v.

¹⁵² The loss of the records from the Augustinian priory at Chartrage and the Maison Dieu at Mortagne make work on the northern areas of the Perche difficult, but there are references in the cartulary of La Trappe to the fees of Champs and Brénard. In the early thirteenth century the Champs property descended to an heiress Mabel, *LT*, 401: *Mabilia heredi et domina feodi de Campis*. Two Walters of Brénard, two Hughs, an Iva and an Odelina of Brénard are recorded in the necrology of Pontlevoy, *Obits*, ii, 208-215.

¹⁵³ S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals* (Oxford, 1994), 153.

¹⁵⁴ *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 160: *III libras redditus in eadem prefectura a Gaufrido de Bello-Monte, in festo sancti Remigii recipiendas. Hoc confirmat Stephanus de Pertico et M Pertici comitissa.*

¹⁵⁵ Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals*, 131.

¹⁵⁶ *OV*, iv, 160.

¹⁵⁷ *NLR*, no. XIX: *...calumpniantes supradictam terram, invaserunt eam et monachis injuste abstulerunt. Inde a domino Gaufrido comite ad iudicium venire compulsi, coram multis qui aderant recognoscentes se injuste egisse revestierunt ecclesiam, emendantes supradicto comiti de le septem solidos et dimidii atque calumpniam...dimiserunt.* *OV*, iv, 160, 200-2.

*unshakeable I have strengthened this charter with the impression of my seal.*¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the best indication of the workings of the relationship, however, comes from the pleadings in the case between Rotrou II and Ivo of Courville.¹⁵⁹ For in his description of the wrongs committed against him by his former *fidelis*, Ivo, Rotrou II outlines neatly the dynamic of the relationship. Ivo has abused the ties between lord and man by seizing his lord's property, holding Rotrou's men against their will and by riding out to do harm to his lord. In this he has challenged all the aspects of Rotrou's lordship: he has laid hands upon the wealth which permits Rotrou to exercise lordship, he has challenged Rotrou's ability to guarantee the safety of the men under his lordship and he has committed an offence against public order by offering violence to his own lord. In the terms of Bishop Fulbert of Chartres' letter he is perfidious and perjured.¹⁶⁰

Our examination of comital rights in the Perche revealed the nature of the power exercised by the Rotrou family in a border region where power structures had ceased to be effective. In the absence of any other authority the Rotrous had seized the rights associated with public power. They may have had the advantage of holding an office under the Thibaudian counts, which permitted them to secure former royal rights over, for example, the forest and the collection of taxes, but the continued exercise of those rights depended upon the acknowledgement and support of other lineages in the region. A consideration of the family's relationships with those lineages indicates the importance of good and energetic lordship to preserve that support. Unlike for example, the situation in Anjou where the descendant of the king's official succeeded in controlling the lords of the localities, arresting the descent of public power before it reached the level of bannal lordship, in the Perche one indigenous lineage, the Rotrous, came to dominate the others. The magnates of the Perche chose to acknowledge the Rotrou lineage and acquired the security of good lordship. When examining the emergence of comital power in the Perche therefore we are not so much looking at authority imposed or reimposed from above, but rather, in the words of Guy Fourquin, government was "reconstructed from the bottom" as one family asserted its lordship over its fellows.¹⁶¹

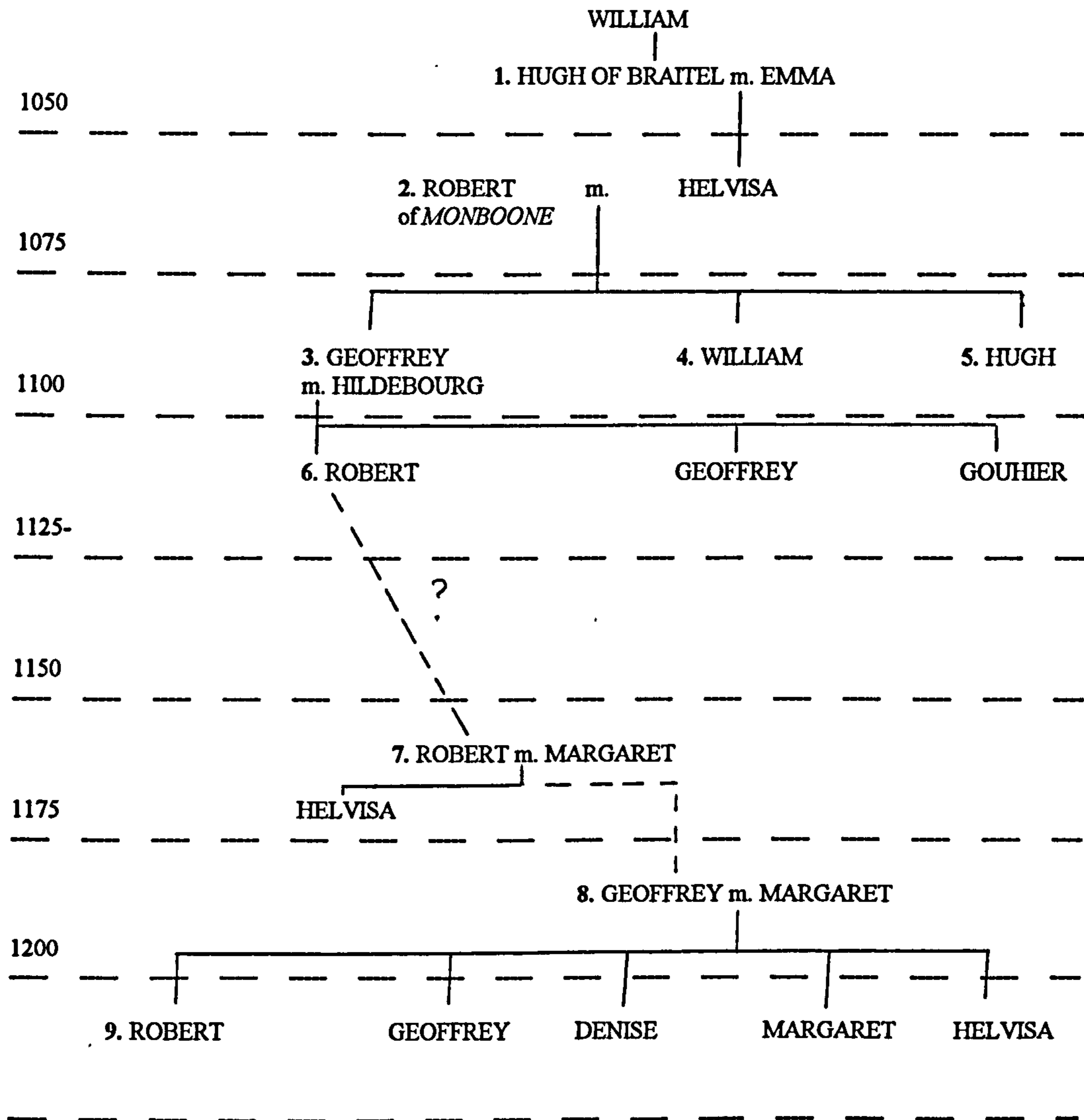
¹⁵⁸ This example from AN S2238, no. 11: *Ut autem predictam uenditio firma et inconcussa permaneat in posterum ego R comes Pertici petitionem sepe dicti H presentem cartam sigilli mei munimine roboravi.*

¹⁵⁹ Ivo of Chartres, *Epistolae* clxviii-clxx, clxxiii.

¹⁶⁰ Fulbert, *Letters*, letter 90.

¹⁶¹ G. Fourquin, *Lordship and feudalism in the middle ages*, trans. I. and A. Lytton Sells (London, 1976), cp.3: *Re-establishment of authority from below upwards.*

Lineage I: The Beaumonts



1. HUGH OF BRAITEL

Hugh of Braitel founded a priory of Marmoutier at La Chapelle-Guillaume (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon-du-Perche), mentioning his father William, after whom La Chapelle-Guillaume had been named, his wife Emma, daughter Helvisa and grandsons Geoffrey and William, the sons of Robert of *Monboone*.¹⁶²

2. ROBERT OF *MONBOONE*

Robert is known from his father-in-law's act and is the first known member of a lineage using Beaumont as a toponymic.

¹⁶² *CMD*, no. XXXVII.

3. GEOFFREY OF *SUMBOON*

Geoffrey possessed an interest in the church of Coudreceau which was given to Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou by Giroie of Orme.¹⁶³ Geoffrey's own grant of the church of Happonvilliers to Nogent, made with consent of wife Heldeburgis, brother Hugh and son Robert, was later challenged in a lawsuit which mentions his sons Robert, Geoffrey and Gouhier and wife Hildebourg.¹⁶⁴ Geoffrey witnessed a sale to Saint-Pierre of Ceton and gave one carrucate of land at *Brimont* to Tiron with the approval of his wife Hyldebourg and sons, Robert, Geoffrey and Gouhier.¹⁶⁵

4. WILLIAM

Known only from his grandfather's act, unless he is the William of *Bellomonte* who attests an act relating to the Cluniac priory of Saint-Ulphace with his wife Adelaide.¹⁶⁶

5. HUGH OF *SOMBOONIS*

Hugh is described as brother of Geoffrey of *Somboonis*.¹⁶⁷

6. ROBERT OF BEAUMONT

In the 1120s Robert of *Sumboon* witnessed an act by William Gouet II and he was probably the same Robert of *Sumboon* with whom Robert son of Aldric of Montdoucet sent back instructions from the Holy Land concerning the disposition of his property. Robert of *Bellomonte* leased property from Tiron, c. 1125, and gave a measure of wheat in exchange for the property his father had given to Bernard of Tiron.¹⁶⁸ Robert was a *procer* at the court of Rotrou II in the 1120s.¹⁶⁹

7. ROBERT OF BEAUMONT

The Robert of *Bellomonte*, who attested the settlement of a dispute concerning the church of Frétigny (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) with his wife Margaret and daughter Helvisa may be the same Robert as figure 6 in this genealogy. The editor dates the act to c. 1165, but it could be earlier and the attestations of Goherius de Morville and Gaufredus de *Gaudena* may be those of Robert's brothers.¹⁷⁰

8. GEOFFREY OF BEAUMONT

Geoffrey of *Bellomonte* witnessed an act of Count Geoffrey III probably dating from after 1195. In 1192 he witnessed grants to the Templar house at Sours made by Adelaide countess of Blois and confirmed by Louis of Blois.¹⁷¹ In 1202 he gave property to Tiron in memory of his father Robert, with his wife Margaret, sons Robert and Geoffrey and daughter Dionysia.¹⁷² In May of the same year he gave 5s. from the *census* of Beaumont to the monastery of Josaphat with the approval of his wife Margaret and daughters, Denise, Margaret, Alice and Helvisa, and later set out on the fourth crusade.¹⁷³

9. ROBERT OF BEAUMONT

The fee of Robert of Beaumont mentioned 1230 and a Robert of Beaumont approved a grant from the *prepositura* of Beaumont by Heloys lady of Roseria.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶³ *NLR*, nos VII, LII.

¹⁶⁴ *NLR*, nos. LV, LXXXVIII.

¹⁶⁵ *NLR*, no. LXVIII, *Tiron*, no. CXXV.

¹⁶⁶ *NLR*, no. LXXXVII.

¹⁶⁷ *NLR*, no. LII.

¹⁶⁸ *Tiron*, nos. LXII, LXIII.

¹⁶⁹ *NLR*, no. LIII.

¹⁷⁰ *NLR*, no. XXXVI.

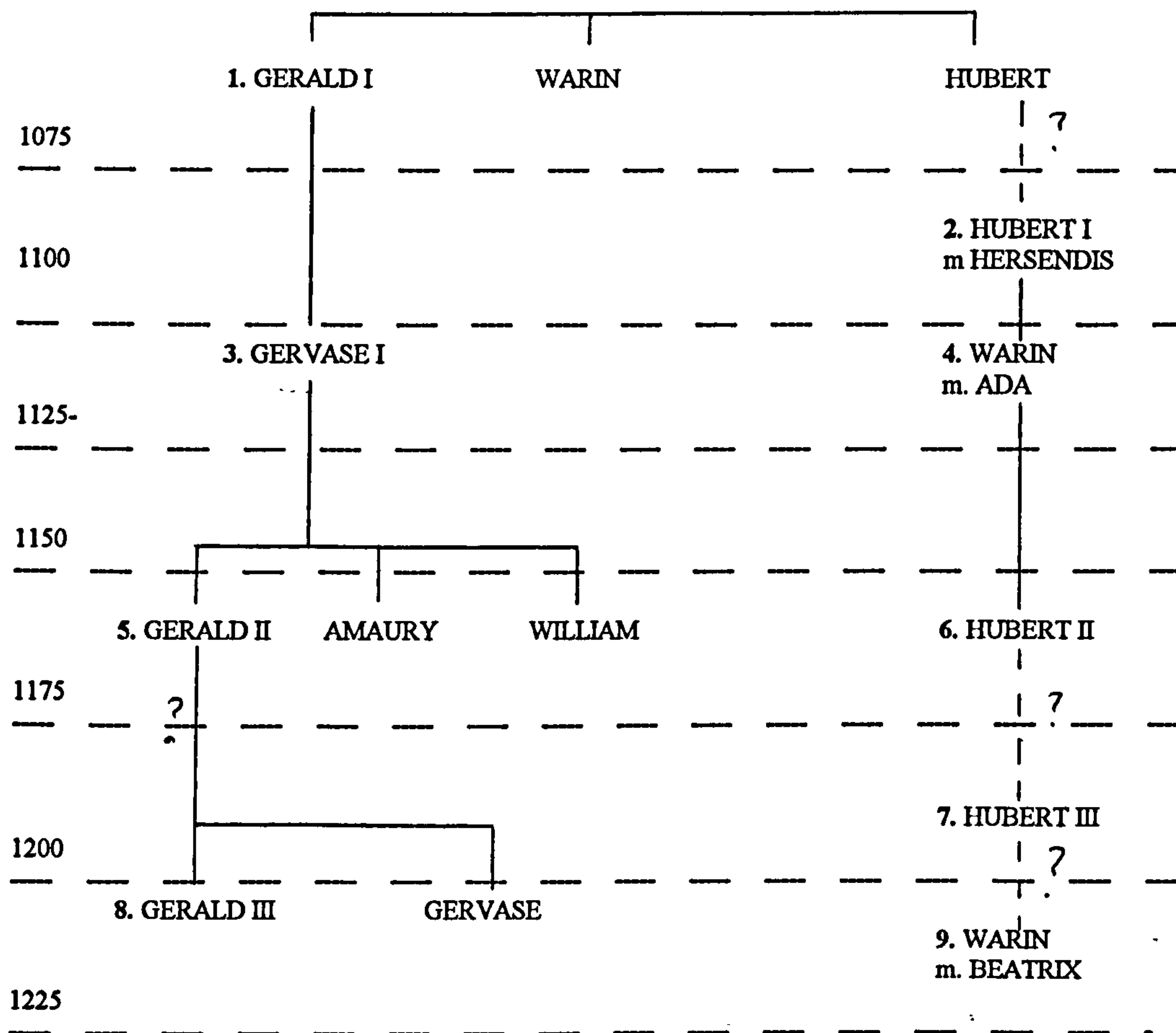
¹⁷¹ *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV; AN S4999A, nos. 25, 26.

¹⁷² *Tiron*, no. CCCXLII.

¹⁷³ *Josaphat*, no. CCCXIII; Villehardouin, 434.

¹⁷⁴ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 21, *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 158.

Lineage II: The Capreolus Family
(simplified)



1. GERALD CAPER

Three Caper brothers are mentioned with their mother Emmelina in the cartulary of Saint-Père of Chartres.¹⁷⁵ A Gerald Capreolus appears in comital acts from c. 1070 - 1118.¹⁷⁶ His brother Warin may be the founder of a subsidiary lineage whose interests lay outside the Rotrou territory.¹⁷⁷ Gerald's son Gervase attests with his father.¹⁷⁸

2. HUBERT CAPREOLUS

Hubert witnessed a number of acts of southern provenance in favour of Saint-Denis in the 1090s.¹⁷⁹ His attestations continue under Rotrou II, but his relation to the other Capreoli is not specified even when he witnesses the same act, but it seems reasonable to suggest he was a nephew.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ *SPC*, 147.

¹⁷⁶ *NLR*, nos. XIX, XXIII, BN ms. lat. 17139, p. 56.

¹⁷⁷ *NLR*, nos. LVIII, XXIII, LXXII, *SPC*, 567, 522.

¹⁷⁸ *NLR*, no. XI.

¹⁷⁹ *NLR*, nos. XXIV, XXX, XXXI, LXXXII and *Chart. Cenom.*, no. CLXXV.

¹⁸⁰ *NLR*, nos. LI, XI, LXII, LXXII.

3. GERVASE CAPREOLUS

Before 1120 Gervase approved the donation of a tithes at Corbon, which was held from his tenant, Restald. In the 1120s he attested comital acts and was probably the Gervase *dapifer* who attested Rotrou II's act for the priory of Bellême. In the mid 1140s he witnessed Robert Capet's act as count of Perche.¹⁸¹ Gervase was a major benefactor of the new house at La Trappe, giving property for the grange at *Valle Hermerii* and, together with his son Gerald, rights for La Trappe to take grain at Soligni and Mesnil Chevrol. He may also be the Gervase Capreolus who gave 5s. from the mill of Réveillon to La Trappe. Gervase was buried at La Trappe in the time of Bishop Gerald of Sées (1143-57).¹⁸²

4. WARIN CAPREOLUS

Warin was the son of Hubert Capreolus and Hersendis and gave property at *Brimont* with the approval of his wife Ada and son Hubert.¹⁸³ He attested an act of Juliana of Perche, while she was acting on behalf of her absent brother, (1120s?) and was associated with Juliana in two other attestations. A sale of property by Ernald of Dancé approved by *Guarinus senscalcus* suggests that Warin held this office.¹⁸⁴

5. GERALD II CAPREOLUS

Gerald was seneschal of Mortagne, acknowledged his father's grant of wheat at Soligni and Mesnil Chevrol, and gave the mill of Rialin to the canons of Chartrage on his father's death.¹⁸⁵

6. HUBERT II CAPREOLUS and 7. HUBERT III CAPREOLUS

Presumably the son of Warin and Ada, Hubert attested an act in the 1160s and between 1173 and 1189 gave woodland to La Trappe.¹⁸⁶ A comital act of 1186 was witnessed by a Hubert Capreolus and on chronological grounds it seems wise to insert another Hubert into the pedigree at this point. Between 1191 and 1202 Hubert gave the *tenementum* of Robert Canis to the priory at Bellême and witnessed a further comital act in 1196.¹⁸⁷ In 1195 *Hubertus Capreoli seneschallus Pertici* witnessed a judgement in the comital court and between 1197 and 1201 notified the settlement of a dispute concerning property at Brou.¹⁸⁸

8. GERALD III

Gerald Capreolus had interests in the south west of the Perche and acts dating from the early thirteenth century mention Gerald Capreolus as the lord of Ceton.¹⁸⁹ An act from 1255 was confirmed by William Chevrel who was both lord of Ceton and *dominus capitalis* of Soligni, implying that the two lordships had at some point come into the same branch of the Capreolus family.¹⁹⁰ Gerald confirmed property grants at Saint Mard de Réno and Soligni in 1207 with his brother, Gervase.¹⁹¹

9. WARIN CAPREOLUS

By 1208 Warin was Seneschal of the Perche and before 1218 granted a burgher in Nogent-le-Rotrou to the nunnery at Les Clairets.¹⁹² He continued to be described as seneschal of the Perche until the 1230s.¹⁹³ In 1234 Warin, seneschal of the Perche, his wife Beatrix and their sons, Geoffrey and Hubert, gave up their right to a palfrey which their ancestors had had when a new abbot was installed.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸¹ *NLR*, no. LXI; *Tiron*, nos. XXII, CVI, *CMPerche*, no. 22; AD Loiret D668, f. 9v.

¹⁸² *LT*, 583, 584, 15; Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 133.

¹⁸³ *Tiron*, no. LXVII

¹⁸⁴ *NLR*, no. XXVII, *Tiron*, nos. XXXIII, CXX; *CMPerche*, no. 208.

¹⁸⁵ *LT*, 401, 402, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 133.

¹⁸⁶ *NLR*, no. XXXVI, *LT*, 590.

¹⁸⁷ *Chart. Cenom.*, no. DXXXV, *CMPerche*, no. 66, CSJ A/6.

¹⁸⁸ *NLR*, no. XCIII, *SJV*, no. 132.

¹⁸⁹ *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV, *Clairets*, nos. XIV, XXIX, *Obits*, ii, 282.

¹⁹⁰ *LT*, 468-9. For Amaury, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 133. For William, *LT*, 401.

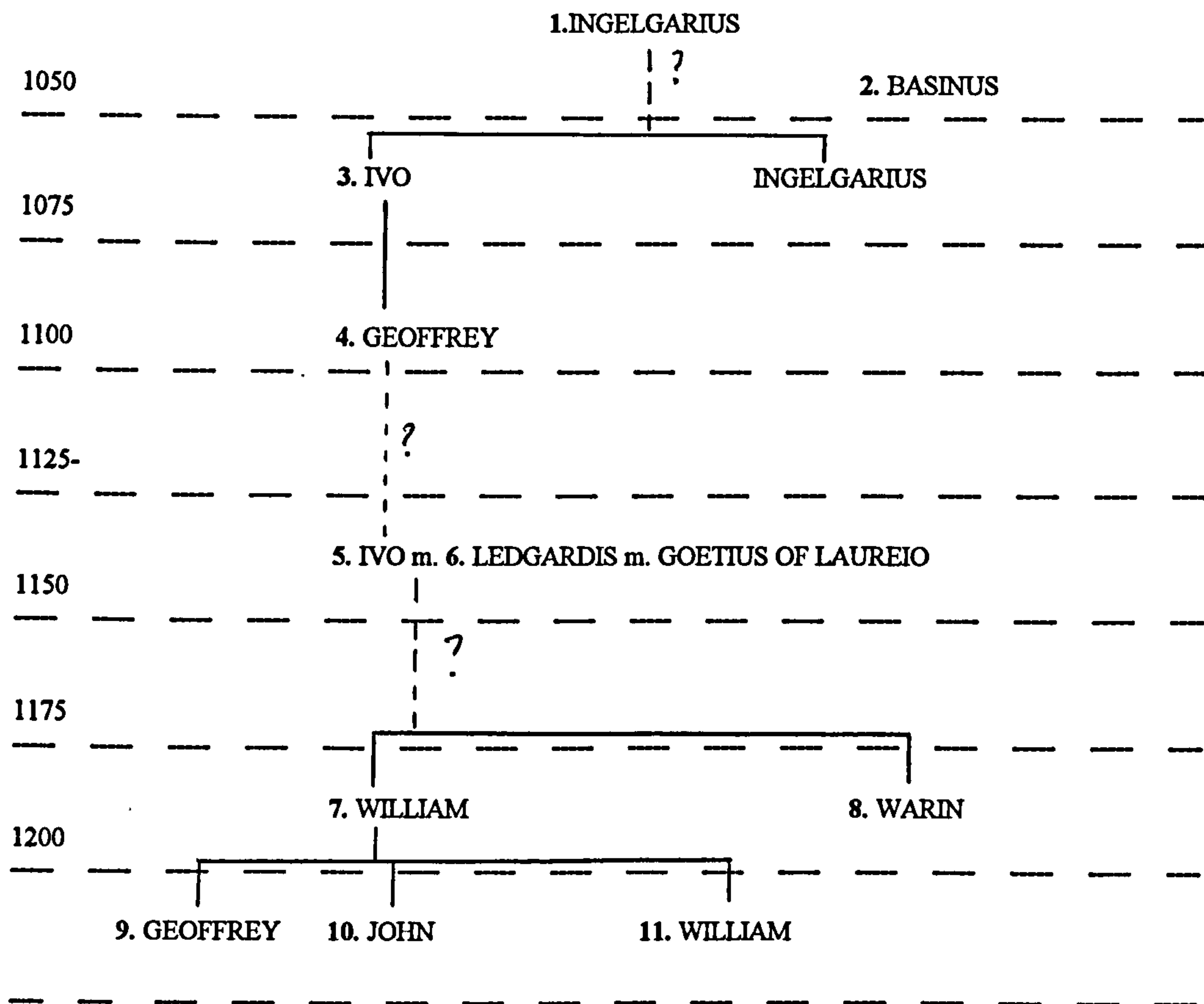
¹⁹¹ BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 49.

¹⁹² *Tiron*, no. CCCL, *Clairets*, no. XIV.

¹⁹³ *Clairets*, no. XIII, XXVII, *SJV*, no. 200.

¹⁹⁴ *Tiron*, no. CCCLXIII. This act might be rather dubious because it is not taken from the cartulary, but is an individual survival and may be a later medieval forgery.

Lineage III The lords of Illiers



1. INGELGARIUS

Ingelgarius *de Islariis* before 1038.¹⁹⁵

2. BASINUS

Basuinus *de Hislariis* attested Aylmer of Condeau's act concerning the church of Vieuvicq.¹⁹⁶

3. IVO I OF ILLIERS

Ivo witnessed two acts in company with the Gouet family, three acts in company with Count Geoffrey II, and an act of the countess Adela of Blois.¹⁹⁷

4. GEOFFREY

As Geoffrey son of Ivo of Illiers Geoffrey witnessed the return of Count Rotrou II from the Holy Land. He attended the count's court and attested an act of Geoffrey bishop of Chartres in 1141.¹⁹⁸ Robert Gruel gave 100s. for the soul of the distinguished knight, Geoffrey of Illiers, to the canons of Chartrage.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ *SPC*, 125.

¹⁹⁶ *CMD*, no. CXIII.

¹⁹⁷ *CMD*, no. XXVI, *CMM*, p. 117 (with his brother Ingelgarius); *NLR*, nos. XIX, XLIX, *SPC*, 313-4; *SPC*, 407-8.

¹⁹⁸ *NLR*, nos. X, LIII, *Beaulieu*, no. 16.

¹⁹⁹ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 135.

5. IVO II OF ILLIERS

In the mid 1160s Ivo of Illiers disputed three measures from a vineyard given to the cathedral at Chartres by Gerald Boel and at about the same time challenged Gerald Boel's grant of an oven at Saint-Maurice to the canons of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée.²⁰⁰ The number of claims he raised against the canons at that time suggests that he was fund-raising for an expedition to Jerusalem. These claims were made against his wife's inheritance, for he apparently married Ledgardis, daughter of Gerald Boel, hereditary standard bearer of the cathedral of Chartres. He may therefore be the Ivo *signifer* who appears in the act of Robert Capet as count of the Perche, which dates from the mid 1140s.²⁰¹

6. LEDGARDIS

After the departure of her husband Ledgardis gave up her claims against the canons and by 1174 she had remarried.²⁰²

7. WILLIAM OF ILLIERS

In 1191 William witnessed act of the countess Richenza-Matilda and later Geoffrey III's grant to Saint-Evroul. He himself gave a vineyard at Origni-le-Butin (Orne, ct. Bellême) to the monks of La Trappe with approval of his wife A. and sons Geoffrey and John.²⁰³

8. WARIN OF ILLIERS

Before 1221 Warin uncle of Geoffrey of Illiers granted property at *Biart* (?Biard, Orne, ct. Bellême, cme. Montgaudry) to Perseigne.²⁰⁴

9. GEOFFREY OF ILLIERS

In 1200 the *medietaria* of Beauvais in the parish of Villiers was given to the Maison-Dieu at Mortagne with the approval of Geoffrey of Illiers.²⁰⁵ In 1210 Geoffrey and his brothers, John and William, gave 5s. rent to La Trappe and Geoffrey approved a sale made by his father William. In 1229 he made an agreement concerning meadows at Thivars with the approval of his mother A, wife A, and sons William and Geoffrey and brother G.²⁰⁶ In 1247 Geoffrey of Illiers of *Ventrosa* claimed that he had been deprived of his rights in the wood of Réno some twelve years previously by the king's agent.²⁰⁷

10. JOHN OF ILLIERS

John of Illiers was lord of Réno and granted property there to Saint-Evroul.²⁰⁸

11. WILLIAM OF ILLIERS

Occurs in his brother Geoffrey's act.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁰ *NDC*, i, 174, *SJV*, no. 80.

²⁰¹ *SJV*, no. 82, AD Loiret D668, f. 10.

²⁰² *SJV*, no. 83. BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 307: *Lejardis filia Gerardi Boelei pro salute animae sue et antecessorum suorum...recognovit se dedisse...hoc donum Goetius de Laureio maritus eius qui presens erat laudavit.*

²⁰³ AD Orne H1846, AD Orne H702: *Guillelmo de Illiers qui hec omnia supradicti concessit quantum ad se pertinebat; LT*, 296.

²⁰⁴ *Perseigne*, no. CCXXXIII.

²⁰⁵ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 158.

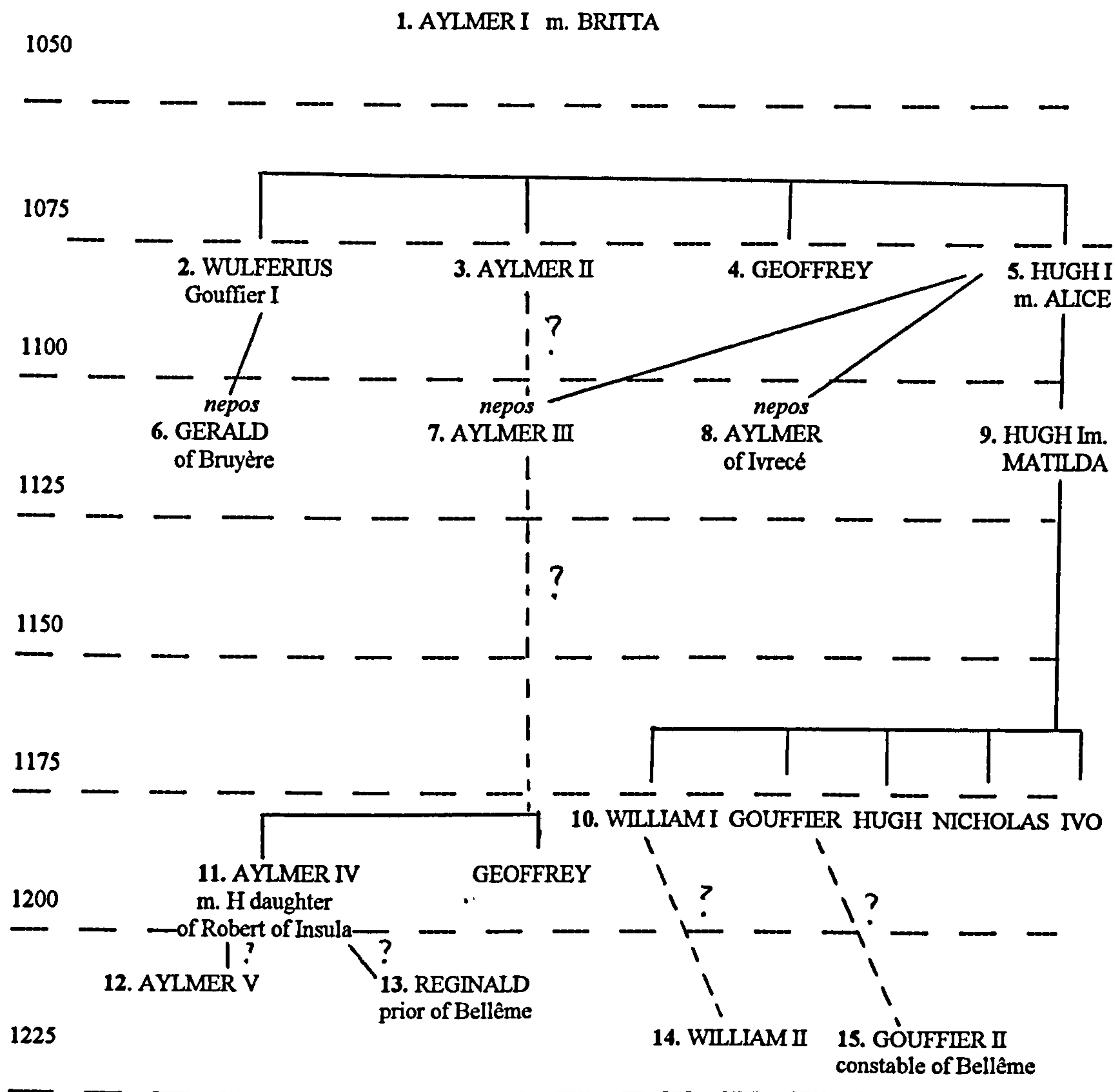
²⁰⁶ *LT*, 27, *NDC*, no. CXCIX, *SPC*, 685.

²⁰⁷ *Querimoniae*, no. 205.

²⁰⁸ A grant to Saint-Evroul by John of Illiers, lord of Réno was approved by his brother Geoffrey, AD Orne H5438.

²⁰⁹ *LT*, 27.

Lineage IV: The lords of Villeray



1. AYLMER I OF CONDEAU/VILLERAY d. 1077/8

Between 1050 and 1061 Aylmer of *Condatello* received 17s. chartrain for his consent to the grant of the church of Vieuvicq to Marmoutier with the approval of his wife Britta and he was present at the foundation of the priory of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême in 1054. He was present with Rotrou II at the dedication of the priory of Chuisnes (1058-61) and witnessed a grant to Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou in the presence of Bishop Ivo of Sées, d. 1071.²¹⁰

Haimericus de Virello [rubric gives *Vilereto*] approved the gift of the woods of Monceaux made by Walter Trapezeta, and Aylmer's son, *Vulferius*, also approved (1071). A dispute over this property which took place in 1086 gives the information that the woods had been in the monks' possession for fifteen years.²¹¹

He was killed outside his own castle of Villeray.²¹²

²¹⁰ *CMD* no. CXIII; *CMPerche*, no. 5; *CMD*, no. CIX; *NLR*, no. XXXVIII.

²¹¹ *SPC*, 206, 337.

²¹² *OV*, ii, 360:...*Haimericus de Vilerio dapiferum regis Francorum qui ad eum diverterat deduxisset, et cum tribus militibus ad castrum suum ubi hostes regis tutabantur remearet forte de regia phalange quatuor equites exierunt eique obuiantes aditum iam proximae munitionis suae opturauerunt ipsumque percutientes ilico peremerunt. Deinde cadauer infausti praedonis uelut occisum suem super equum sustulerunt, et delatum ante mappalia Rogerii comitis contra quem diu hostiliter seuierat proiecerunt.*

2. GOUFFIER I OF VILLERAY d. c. 1126

Orderic comments that after the death of his father, Gouffier lived in peace with the Montgomery family for fifty years, and he witnessed William the Conqueror's charter for Saint-Evroul together with Roger of Montgomery. Before 1094 he was present with Roger and his sons Robert and Hugh at the foundation of Saint-Pierre of Ceton, and in 1092 he witnessed Robert of Bellême's grant to Marmoutier of the church of Saint-Léonard at Bellême, together with Robert of Bellême's confirmation to Saint-Etienne of Caen.²¹³

He was present at the court of Geoffrey II of Mortagne when his knight Salierus claimed to have an interest in the lands of Robert Metsasella, and he made a benefaction to Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou for the soul of his lord, Count Geoffrey II, from whom he used to hold the property he gave.²¹⁴

In 1097 he granted three *agripennos* of vineyard at Vaunoise to the Montgomery foundation of Saint-Martin of Sées by the agency of his nephew Gerald of Bruyère, using his brother Aylmer's knife, which was symbolically placed on the altar.²¹⁵

Gulferus filius Americi de Condehel approved the restoration to the priory of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême of the church of Colonard (Orne, ct. Nocé) which had been lost to the monks *propter guerram*. The act is witnessed by his brothers, Hugh and Geoffrey, Norman Boslenus and Walter Malfedus (1092/1117) and he acknowledges retaining land at Dancé (Orne, ct. Nocé) which had been granted to Saint-Martin of Bellême.²¹⁶

On his deathbed Gouffier was attended by Prior Guicher of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, who was prevented from leaving Villeray by Gouffier's brother Hugh until a cup worth 300s. or more *et amplius* was restored to the family. Hugh then conceded what had been granted by his brothers Gouffier and Aylmer. Adeliza wife of Gohier *qui dedit duo monilia aurea* to Chartres might be the wife of Gouffier II figure 15 in this genealogy.²¹⁷

3. AYLMER II OF VILLERAY

In 1113 Aylmer of Villeray defended Bellême for William Talvas. A benefactor of Nogent-le-Rotrou, he probably died before Gouffier.²¹⁸

4. GEOFFREY I

Attested brother Gouffier's act.²¹⁹

5. HUGH I OF VILLERAY

Attested an act of his brother Gouffier and acted as head of the family on the death of Gouffier (late 1120s), whom he succeeded.²²⁰

Hugh witnessed the grant of the church of Verrières (Orne, ct. Rémalard) by Hervey *Malfetus* to Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and conceded to Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême a grant at Dancé, which he had been detaining (1124-37). He was a benefactor of Tiron and witnessed a grant to Sainte-Gauburge with his wife Alice.²²¹

6. GERALD OF BRUYÈRE

His uncle Gouffier's agent in transferring property to Saint-Martin of Sées, Gerald could be the Gerald *milite de Brueria* mentioned in the cartulary of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, where the Bruyère family appear frequently, but it has proved impossible to construct a plausible genealogy for the family. The presence of names such as Aylmer in the family suggest links with the Villeray line.²²²

²¹³ *NLR*, no. XVIII, *CMPerche*, no. 13, *Actes caennaises*, no. 3.

²¹⁴ *NLR*, no. XIX, *NLR*, no. XXXVIII.

²¹⁵ *LBSMS*, f. 68.

²¹⁶ *CMPerche*, no. 170, 209.

²¹⁷ *NLR*, no. LIV, *Obits*, ii, 102.

²¹⁸ *OV*, vi, 182, *NLR*, no. LIV.

²¹⁹ *CMPerche*, no. 170.

²²⁰ *CMPerche*, no. 170, *NLR*, no. LIV.

²²¹ *NLR*, no. LIII, *CMPerche*, no. 206, *Tiron*, no. LXI, AN LL1158, ii, 402.

²²² *LBSMS*, f. 68; for Gerald *milite de Brueria*, *NLR*, no. LXXXII; for the Bruyère family, *NLR*, no. XCIII.

7. AYLMEER III OF VILLERAY

Aylmer was the nephew of Hugh of Villeray and in 1159 witnessed Rotrou III's grant to the priory of Moutiers. He attested another comital act in the 1160/70s and acted in a lawsuit with the count's *dapifer*. Further attestations of comital acts were made, but it is difficult to disentangle this Aylmer from the Aylmer of the 1190 acts (figure no.11 in this genealogy).²²³

8. AYLMEER OF IVRECEÉ

Ivrecé lies in the parish of Saint-Maurice-sur-Huisne (Orne, ct. Nocé). Aylmer attests two acts of his uncle, Hugh, in the late 1120s and in 1133. He was the first lay witness of a concession of property at Colonard (Orne, ct. Nocé) made about 1117.²²⁴ Aylmer could be identical with Aylmer III of Villeray (figure 7 in this genealogy) and had perhaps used a different toponymic in earlier life as he had not been expected to inherit Villeray, but it is more likely that he was a member of a separate branch of the family since there was a lineage established at Ivrecé at the end of the twelfth century in which the name Aylmer recurs.²²⁵

9. HUGH II OF VILLERAY d. <1170

Son of Hugh of Villeray and Alice, he attested the grant of the advowson of church at La Chapelle-Souef (1167).²²⁶

10. WILLIAM I OF VILLERAY

William was present at the foundation of Val-Dieu (1170) and contested the advowson of the church of Chapelle-Gastinel, acting with his mother Matilda and brothers Gouffier, Hugh, Nicholas and Ivo. He attests several comital acts in the 1190s and was a benefactor of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, granting property at Lomme and La Bruyère (Orne, ct. Nocé).²²⁷

11. AYLMEER IV OF VILLERAY

In 1190 Aylmer of Villeray made two major sales to raise money to participate in the Third Crusade and his brother Geoffrey approved both. Geoffrey later made a grant to Tiron for his brother. Aylmer of Villeray witnessed a number of Geoffrey III's acts, together with one by Robert count of Sées in company with Reginald of Villeray, the prior of Saint Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême (1200). He also gave 20s. from an oven at Nogent-le-Rotrou to Fontevraud. The Aylmer of the 1190s could be Aylmer IV's son, but it seems unlikely that such a son could have failed to attest the 1190 acts which receive only Aylmer IV's brother's assent.²²⁸

In 1201 Aylmer of Villeray took the cross for the Fourth crusade, and sent gifts to Chartres from Constantinople.²²⁹ His wife H. the daughter of Robert of *Insula* later challenged his sale to Sainte-Gauburge. Her family had extensive interests in the Vendômois and were later to be *vicecomites* of Blois. Her paternal grandfather was called Reginald.²³⁰

12. AYLMEER V OF VILLERAY

In 1224 A lawsuit concerning property of Maison-Dieu of Nogent-le-Rotrou was held before Aylmer of Villeray and in 1247 the abbey of Saint-Laumer in Blois alleged that the king had accepted homage from the lord of Villeray in 1235 after the siege of Bellême when Aylmer ought to have held his castle at Villeray from the abbey.²³¹

²²³ NLR, no. LIII: *Haymericus de Villereyo nepos domini Hugonis*; *CMPerche*, no. 175; NLR, no. XCII; AD Eure-et-Loir H619 and <1180 *Henricus of Villeray, Clairats*, no. I.

²²⁴ NLR, no. LIV, AN LL1158, ii, 402, *CMPerche*, no. 174.

²²⁵ BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 46.

²²⁶ *Tiron*, no. LXI, *CMPerche*, no. 227.

²²⁷ RCVD, f. 1; AN LL1158, ii, 402. For attestations, *CMPerche*, no.34; AN LL1158, ii, p. 403; *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV; BN ms. lat. 10089, p. 391. His grant, NLR, no. LX.

²²⁸ *CMPerche*, no. 34, AN LL1158, ii, 402-3. *Tiron*, ii, p.157. For Aylmer in the 1190s, *CMD*, no. CCIII (1196), *CSJ A/6* (1196), Cant. D & C carta antiqua R 62, *Rot. Chart.*, 96 (1200). For his attestation of Count Robert's act, *CMPerche*, no. 292 (1200). BN ms.lat. 5480, p. 352.

²²⁹ *Obits*, ii, 156: *Hemerius de Virelaio miles...de civitate Constantinopolitana ad decorum hujus...basilice duo pallia serica preciosa gemmis et auro artificiose distincta transmisit.*

²³⁰ AN LL1158, ii, 411, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Madeleine de Châteaudun*, ed. L. Merlet and L. Jarry (Châteaudun, 1896), nos XXXVIII, XLV. For the family, Barthélemy, *Vendôme*, 773-5.

²³¹ Proust, *Inventaire*, 9; *Querimoniae*, no. 116.

13. REGINALD OF VILLERAY

Reginald ruled the priory of Bellême for over thirty years and it seems reasonable to make him the son of Aylmer IV and H of *Insula*, whose grandfather was Reginald of *Insula*.²³²

14. WILLIAM II OF VILLERAY

In 1225 William of Villeray approved grant by William of *Brueria* of rent *in censiva de Brimont* (1225). He could be identical with figure 10 in genealogy, but date makes this unlikely. In 1243 a William of Villeray seems to have been the agent of the lords of La Ferté-Bernard, for a joint notice of Isabelle of La Ferté and William of Villeray deals with the estate of Agatha, a nun of Clairets.²³³

15. GOUFFIER II OF VILLERAY

Between 1205 and 1218 Gouffier of Villeray granted two *sextaria* of wheat at La Chapelle-Gastinel to nunnery of Clairets and this links him with the descendants of Hugh of Villeray who had influence in that area. Between 1194 and 1199 he was present when the foundation charter of Sandford was given and between 1217 and 1226 he was constable of the castle at Bellême, and office to which he had been appointed by Geoffrey III. He could be identical with the brother of William I of Villeray or might be a son or nephew.²³⁴

²³² *CMPerche*, nos.292 (1200), 75 (1238).

²³³ *Tiron*, no. CCLX, *Clairets*, no. XLVII.

²³⁴ *Clairets* no. XIV, *Monasticon*, vi, 565, *CMPerche*, no. 45.

Part III - The Perche and its neighbours

Chapter 6

The Perche in the making: c. 1031 - 1113

In the years immediately after the millennium the region between the Seine and Loire, which had been known since Merovingian times as Neustria, was undergoing profound changes.¹ Within this area new political structures were in the process of formation and the major power blocs which were to compete for influence and to dominate the politics of western France for nearly two hundred years were emerging from the wreckage of earlier political communities.² On the northern seaboard the Norman count-dukes would seek to expand their influence south and west from the area originally settled by their Scandinavian ancestors and would eventually find an outlet for their energy in the conquest of the offshore kingdom of the English.³ Further south in the Loire valley the *vicecomites* of Angers assumed the title of counts of Anjou and, under the vigorous dynasty which became known as the Plantagenets, extended their power in all directions.⁴ Their greatest rivals were the Thibaudian family, who exercised authority from Blois and Chartres. The Theobalds and Odos of Blois/Chartres had succeeded to much of the influence of the dukes of France when Hugh Capet assumed the title of king in 987, and their power was enhanced by their tenure after 1019 of other property to the east of Paris.⁵

This localisation of public power has been the subject of much attention by French historians in the twentieth century and it is clear that it did not stop at the level of the great territorial princes, such as the counts of Blois and Anjou. Within those great power blocs local lords also asserted their independence, often attempting to carve out their own niches from the basis of a group of fortifications or even a single castle.⁶ It was around the extremities of the greater principalities, however, that such local lords had the greatest chances of success, for here they were able to use

1 For Neustria before 1000, *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650-850*, ed. H. Atsma (Beihefte der *Francia*, 16, Sigmaringen, 1989).

2 J. Boussard, 'Les destinées de la Neustrie du IX^e au XI^e siècle', *CCM*, xi (1968), 25-26. J.-P. Brunterch, 'Le duché du Maine et la marche de Bretagne', *La Neustrie*, i, 29-127. J.M.H. Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge, 1992).

3 Bates, *Normandy*.

4 Guillot, *Comte*, 2-101. B. Bachrach, 'Some observations on the origins of the Angevin dynasty', *Medieval Prosopography*, x (2) (1989), 1-23, and 'A study in feudal politics: relations between Fulk Nerra and William the Great 995-1030', *Viator*, vii (1976), 111-22.

5 There is no adequate modern study of the counts of Blois, whose history is overshadowed by the later importance of their lands to the east of Paris. Sections of Bur, *Champagne*, deal with the early history of the counts of Blois and there is much useful material in Chédeville, *Chartres*, but it is still necessary to use H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Histoire des ducs et des comtes de Champagne*, (Paris, 1859-66). Important work by K.F. Werner appeared in 'Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit des französischen Fürstentums (9.-10. Jahrhundert)', *Welt als Geschichte*, xviii (1958), 256-89, xix (1959), 146-93, xx (1960), 87-119 and 'L'acquisition par la maison de Blois des comtes de Chartres et de Châteaudun', *Mélanges de numismatique, d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Jean Lafaurie* (Paris, 1980), 265-74. Recent contributions include K. Lo Prete 'The Anglo-Norman card of Adela of Blois', *Albion*, xxii (1990), 569-89 and 'Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres: piety, politics and the peace in the diocese of Chartres', *ANS*, xiv (1991), 131-53, J. Dunbabin, 'Geoffrey of Chaumont, Thibaud of Blois and William the Conqueror', *ANS*, xvi (1993), 101-16. For a summary J. Dunbabin, *France in the making 843-1180* (Oxford, 1985), 190-5, 310-12.

6 Lemarignier, 'Dislocation'.

both their own remoteness and the proximity of other powerful neighbours to achieve an influence far beyond that justified by their landed resources or effective power. The emergence of the county of the Perche is a perfect example of this process at work.

The question of how these local lords acquired their power is one of the most intriguing problems of French history. Were they indigenous wielders of power or were they agents of the counts imposed from above with specific tasks to perform? Jacques Boussard sees the lineage established at Bellême as agents of the dukes of France established on the southern March of Normandy to resist further Scandinavian expansion southwards. Other French scholars have seen the lords of Nogent as agents of the Thibaudian counts of Blois entrusted with precisely the same task.⁷ On the other hand André Chédeville describes the Gouet family as indigenous (*autochtone*) to their lands.⁸ The debate on the origins of this new order which the French historian Dominique Barthélemy has characterised as 'seigneurial' and the related question of the origin of the aristocracy still continues.⁹ The history of the Rotrou family begins effectively with precisely such a local seigneur, Geoffrey the lord of Nogent-le-Rotrou.

The contemporary documentation relating to Geoffrey is slight. Our best source of information is his act of foundation, dated 1031, for the monastery of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, which gives us a picture of the local lord with lands in the valley of the River Huisne and the hills to the south, who had interests in Chartres and Châteaudun.¹⁰ The act is drafted with punctilious reference to his lord, Theobald of Blois/Chartres and the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities, the bishops of Chartres and Le Mans, but it has been preserved in a fifteenth century cartulary and there is no knowing if the act is genuine or a later conflation describing events at a period when written documentation was not common. The impression that Geoffrey was the faithful subordinate of the count of Blois and acted with his full knowledge and approval is somewhat at odds with the picture of *vicecomes* Geoffrey derived from the letters of Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, which suggest that he was capable of vigorous and independent action.¹¹

Modern authorities have seen Geoffrey as a descendant of a powerful and important line of *vicecomites* of Châteaudun and if Geoffrey did indeed come from such a background, then he might well be pursuing his own policies with little reference to the counts of Blois.¹² Certainly his violent death as the victim of an assassination carried out within the shadow of the cathedral

7 Chédeville, *Chartres*, 39, Romanet, *Géographie*, 67-8, Louise, 'Bellême,' i, 135.

8 Chédeville, *Chartres*, 257.

9 Barthélemy, *L'ordre seigneurial*.

10 *NLR*, no. V.

11 Fulbert, *Letters*, nos. 59, 98; *Malefactor enim ille Gausfridus quem pro multis facinoribus excommunicaueram incerto utrum desperatus an uersus in amenciam collecta multitudine militum quo ducendi essent ignorancium uillas nostras improuiso invendio concremauit nobisque quantas potest machinatur insidias*, 99 (to the king of France): *Refecit enim ante natale Domini castellum de Galardone quod olim destruxistis et ecce tercia die post Epiphaniam Domini coepit facere alterum castellum apud Isleras intra uillas sanctae Mariae*, 100.

12 On the *vicecomites* of Châteaudun, J. Boussard, 'L'origine', 311-14, concerning which K.F. Werner expresses some doubts, 'L'acquisition', 270, n. 33. The most accessible study on the *vicecomites* of Châteaudun is Cuissard, 'Chronologie'.

at Chartres implies that he was a force to be reckoned with and one whom it was worthwhile removing. His son Hugh can be shown to have succeeded him as *vicecomes* of Châteaudun, but must have disappeared fairly quickly.¹³ The activities of the first generation of the house of Rotrou therefore remain largely speculative. All that can be said for certain is that Geoffrey was the lord of Nogent and that he played an important role in the politics of region between the Loir and the Sarthe in the early eleventh century, but it is unwise to associate him too closely with any power grouping since he clearly pursued his own ends. His power base appears to have collapsed shortly after his death and his activities therefore form what might be described as the prehistory of the Perche. It is with his second son, Count Rotrou I, therefore, that the history of the Perche proper can begin.

Rotrou's great charter of endowment for the monastery of Saint-Denis at Nogent, given towards the end of his life, says that he succeeded as a very young man after his father's assassination but it gives limited information about the property which Rotrou inherited.¹⁴ Since a Hugh appears as *vicecomes* of Châteaudun in the 1040s, however, it seems that a division of family lands occurred with Hugh taking the more southerly interests centred on Châteaudun and Rotrou taking Nogent. In 1058 Rotrou witnessed two charters given by King Henry I of France, being described in both as count, a title to which his father had never apparently aspired.¹⁵ Again his attestations do not provide a location for his comital power, but the historian Orderic Vitalis and a charter given to the abbey of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans by Rotrou himself describe him as count of Mortagne (Orne), which lies some 38 kilometres north of Nogent.¹⁶ Thus it is clear that, although his family lost influence around Châteaudun when his brother Hugh disappeared in the 1040s, Rotrou had made some gains by extending his power northwards in the direction of the duchy of Normandy.

It is uncertain how Rotrou established himself in this second centre of power. His father was never associated with the area, so it is unlikely that Rotrou inherited his authority there, and it is possible that he simply imposed his authority on the area by force of arms. Most of the sparse references to Rotrou show him engaged in warfare. One of his attestations of the French king Henry I's charters was made at the siege of *Thimert* for example, and two other charters are dated by reference to his military expeditions.¹⁷ It may equally well be the case that his wife Adeliza was its heiress. Rotrou's act in favour of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans is a key document in unravelling the complex politics of this period and he was careful to associate Adeliza in that important act of religious patronage which involved property outside the historic core of his own

13 *NLR*, no. VI: *apud urbem Carnotensem, eum, ab ecclesia matris Domini reudentem, furtivis gladiis invasit*. For Hugh's succession, *CMD*, no. I: *Post mortem vero vicecomitis Gausfredi cum filius eius Hugo patris successisset in honorem*.

14 *NLR*, no. VI

15 *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^{er}*, nos. 112, 114.

16 *OV*, ii, 360, *VLM*, no. 609.

17 *NLR*, no. XIX: *...cum domino suo Rotroco Mauritanensi comite ad bellum pergens ad Domionem castrum* and *LBSMS*, f. 28: *In anno quo Rogerius vicecomes de Montegomerici et Rotrocos comes de Mortania assalierunt Braiou...* for his military expeditions.

family's holdings at Nogent.¹⁸ Adeliza was a member of the powerful Bellême clan who had held extensive property stretching from Domfront in the west through Alençon and Sées to Bellême itself, and it is quite possible that Mortagne had originally formed part of that territory.¹⁹

The extension of Rotrou's power northwards was a vital step in the formation of the county of the Perche, but it was not his only achievement, for at some stage probably late in the 1050s he repossessed Châteaudun.²⁰ We have no means of knowing whether this was achieved through inheritance from his brother, Hugh, or as a result of military activity. References to Rotrou fighting at Dangeau and also at Brou suggest, however, that he undertook several military expeditions to the south and it is not difficult to discern his likely enemy.²¹ The lands of the Gouet family which were centred on the valley of the river Ozanne lay like a barrier between Rotrou's lands around Nogent and the former territory of his family at Châteaudun.²² The Gouet were substantial magnates, who first appear in contemporary sources with the marriage which laid the foundations of their power, that between William Gouet I of Montmirail and Matilda, the heiress of Alluyes.²³ Very little is known about the career of William Gouet I, but when he died in the late 1050s he left a widow and three young children and it is significant that it is at precisely this time that Rotrou reasserted his family's authority in Châteaudun.²⁴

Rotrou's push southwards towards Châteaudun would have brought him into conflict with the Gouet family, though it seems to have improved relations with another potential rival. For he

18 *VLM*, no. 609.

19 On Adeliza's family, Boussard, 'Bellême'. The area around Mortagne, the Corbonnais, lies within the diocese of Sées and, because *pagi* and dioceses were often coterminous, it has been suggested that the Corbonnais represents a detached part of the ancient *pagus* of the Hiémois (*Oximensis*). Theories of an independent lordship of Mortagne have been elaborated on the strength of this suggestion and the occurrence of an attestation by Hervey count of Mortagne in the cartulary of Saint-Père of Chartres, *SPC*, 199. Olivier de Romanet even suggested that *vicecomes* Geoffrey's wife, Helviza, was descended from such a count of Mortagne, *Géographie*, i, 41. The question is reviewed by G. Louise, 'Bellême', i, 118-136.

20 Rotrou refers to himself as *vicecomes* of Châteaudun only in *NLR*, no. VII (c. 1078) and documents relating to Châteaudun in the 1040s and 1050s make no mention of the *vicecomes*, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye cardinale de la Trinité de Vendôme*, ed. C. Métais (Paris, 1893), nos. XXII, CCXXIX, *CMD*, no. XXXV. A record of a plea in the court of the Countess Adela of Blois/Chartres dating from 1097/8 describes property at Châtenay (Eure-et-Loir, ct./cme. Châteaudun) being in the hands of the Rotrou family for the previous forty years, twenty years *tempore Rotrochi* and twenty years in the time of the next *vicecomes* of Châteaudun, *CMD*, no. CLVI. This would place Rotrou's resumption of the title of *vicecomes* in 1057/8.

21 *NLR*, no. XIX, LBSMS, f. 28.

22 T. Thibault, 'Étude sur les seigneurs de la Bazoches-Gouet', *Bulletin de la Société Dunoise*, iv (1885), 373-8; C. Cuissard, 'Les seigneurs d'Alluyes (973-1793)', *Bulletin de la Société Dunoise*, vi (1891-3), 285-331; M. Marquis, 'Brou et son passé', *Bulletin de la Société Dunoise*, x (1901/4), 171-88; E. Lefevre, 'Notice sur la baronnie d'Alluyes', *MSAEL*, v (1872), 42-88, and the more recent P. Siguret, 'Le Perche-Gouet'. Gouet lands are conventionally described as the five baronies of Alluyes, Authon, Bazoches-Gouet, Brou and Montmirail, but some caution needs to be exercised in case thirteenth century conditions are read back into the eleventh together with inappropriate terminology, such as baronies. Gouet family acts dating from before the year 1100 show the family with authority at Alluyes (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Bonneval), *SPC*, 403-4, Brou (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.), *SPC*, 148-151, 504-5, Chapelle Guillaume (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon-du-Perche), *CMM*, 124, Dangeau (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Brou), *CMD*, no. XLV and Montmirail (Sarthe, ch. 1. du ct.), *VLM*, no. 753.

23 *SPC*, 193, 403-4.

24 William Gouet I was dead by 1059 when his widow and son approved *SPC*, 163 and shortly thereafter she married Geoffrey of Mayenne, *SPC*, 192-3. Details of her marital history are given in *CMM*, 126:..*dominee mee Mahildis filie Galterii de Aloia, filiorumque ac filiarum ejusdem quibus patres fuere Guillelmus cognomento Gugetus et Gauffredus de Meduana, hoc est Willelmi, Hildeburgis et Richildis, item Hamelini, Galterii et Hersendis.*

was probably assisted in his ambitious campaigns to the south by an alliance with Roger of Montgomery, the husband of his wife's cousin Mabel, who joined him in an assault on Brou.²⁵ Roger, who was *vicecomes* of the Hiémois in Normandy and a close associate of the Norman duke, William the Bastard, had married Mabel in the late 1040s, when her father, William Talvas, the lord of Alençon had been evicted from his lordship.²⁶ The marriage was made on the understanding that Mabel's dowry was a claim to her father's share of the Bellême inheritance. Roger had simply to enforce that claim, which he seems to have done with some success, taking control of Alençon and attempting to impose his authority beyond the River Sarthe in northern Maine.²⁷ During the 1050s, however, Rotrou would have regarded Roger as a potential rival for the large portion of the Bellême inheritance, centred around the town of Bellême itself, which remained in the hands of Ivo, bishop of Sées, uncle of both Adeliza and Mabel.²⁸ The alliance of Rotrou and Roger against the Gouet therefore not only allowed Rotrou to recover his father's influence in Châteaudun, but also presented a distraction from the problems of the Bellême inheritance and it assisted Roger in his pursuit of Mabel's inheritance. For Roger had his own reasons for hostility against the Gouet, who, acting from their castle at Montmirail, were his potential rivals in northern Maine and the extent of that rivalry is indicated by Matilda of Alluyes' second marriage to Geoffrey of Mayenne, the lifelong opponent of the Normans in northern Maine.²⁹ Relations between Roger and Rotrou, however, seem to have remained cordial for the rest of Rotrou's life, even though it was Roger who secured the remainder of the Bellême inheritance after the death of Bishop Ivo of Sées in 1071.³⁰

When Rotrou I died around the year 1080 his lands were partitioned with the more southerly interests around Châteaudun again being separated from Nogent and the new Mortagne extension. No contemporary description of this partition has survived and it has to be inferred from charter material, so it is impossible to discern any reasoning behind it beyond an attachment

25 LBSMS, f. 28: *In anno quo Rogerius vicecomes de Montgomerici et Rotrocius comes de Moritania assalierunt Braiou.*

26 William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, ed. J. Marx (Rouen, 1914), 163-6.

27 Roger's control of the Talvas lands in the Sées/Alençon region is demonstrated by his restoration of the abbey of Saint-Martin of Sées in the late 1050s, LBSMS, f. 2. For exercises of power in northern Maine by Roger of Montgomery, *VLM*, nos. 587, 589, 765.

28 For bishop Ivo's secular lordship and the history of the Bellême family in the first half of the eleventh century, K. Thompson, Family and influence to the south of Normandy in the eleventh century: the lordship of Bellême, *Journal of Medieval History*, xi (1985), 215-26, esp. 220-22.

29 *VLM*, no. 753 for an act where Montgomery-Bellême and Gouet interests were in conflict. There does not seem to be a modern study on the career of Geoffrey of Mayenne. His family had been settled at Mayenne under the auspices of Fulk Nerra, count of Anjou, *VLM*, no. 245 and he remained a close supporter of the Angevin counts, L. Halphen, *Le comté d'Anjou au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1906), catalogue des actes, nos. 231, 240, 257, 262, 267, 271, 272 bis, 282. His nephew Geoffrey was to hold the see of Angers from 1095, *Recueil d'annales angevines et vendômoises*, ed. L. Halphen (Paris, 1903), 47; Guillot, *Comte*, i, 256-7. He was forceful opponent of William of Normandy's invasion of Maine in 1063 (Halphen, *Anjou*, 178-9) and became closely associated with the last surviving member of the old Manceau comital house, the countess Gersendis, even to the point of being described as her lover, *Gaufridus de Meduana tutor et quasi maritus effectus, Actus Pontificum Cenomannis*, 377. In the 1090s at the end of his very long career he was still encouraging opposition to Roger of Montgomery's son, Robert of Bellême, *OV*, iv, 154.

30 The date of Bishop Ivo's death has been established by J.-M. Bouvris, 'La date de la restauration de l'abbaye d'Almenêches', *BSHAO*, xcvi (1980), 124, n. 52.

to partible inheritance.³¹ It certainly left both Rotrou's sons with seriously depleted resources. Rotrou's successor at Nogent, Geoffrey II, held only his twin centres of power at Nogent and Mortagne and some claims to influence along the River Huisne. Despite the newly acquired grandeur of the comital title, he could hardly seek to deal on an equal footing with his mighty neighbours in Normandy and Blois and for the rest of his career seems to have spent his time trying to extend his power without much success. Any ambitions he might have towards the north had to be curtailed when Geoffrey was obliged to make a peace pact with Gilbert of Laigle, by giving him his daughter Juliana as his wife.³² The alliance averted a potential conflict over the murder of Gilbert's uncle by Geoffrey's men, but also severely limited opportunities for expansion in the region. Geoffrey therefore seems to have turned his attention to attacking his neighbours and cousins, the lords of Bellême.

In contrast with the harmonious relations which prevailed between Rotrou I and Roger of Montgomery Orderic Vitalis describes the protracted struggle between their sons, Geoffrey and the great magnate Robert of Bellême. Orderic maintains that Geoffrey was asserting claims inherited from his mother to a share of the Bellême inheritance.³³ It is impossible to arbitrate on the justice of this claim, but it does seem significant that Geoffrey left the active pursuit of the inheritance until the chronic instability of Robert Curthose's rule in Normandy in the 1090s when it could have been argued rather earlier in the courts of William the Conqueror. Nonetheless the conflict is important for it reveals how neighbouring magnates, like Geoffrey and Robert, sought to impose control on an area and is reflected in the records of the priory at Bellême, for the monks were unable to take effective possession of property they had been given less than 10 kilometres away at Colonard (Orne, ct. Nocé) *propter guerram nimiam*.³⁴ The fighting, which consisted in the main of plundering raids and the taking of captives and booty, indicates not a one-off battle for control of the area, but a continuing exercise of terror tactics to persuade the inhabitants of the area to acknowledge the lordship of Geoffrey in preference to that of Robert. It is easy to see why Count Geoffrey might desire the Bellêmois, for it lies in the loop of the River Huisne with Bellême commanding the main road between his two power centres of Nogent and Mortagne. It was the natural extension to his nascent county. Local seigneurs, such as Aylmer and Gouffier of

31 The partition had taken place by 1080 when Hugh Capellus *vicecomes* of Châteaudun's act in favour of Marmoutier was confirmed by his brother Geoffrey, and it is implicit in Hugh's approval of the grant of Saint-Léonard of Bellême to Marmoutier in 1092, *CMD*, no. CXL=*CMPerche*, no. 16. It is difficult to reconcile the division with any pattern of inheritance by which the eldest son received the patrimony and the younger the acquisitions, since it is almost impossible to determine whether Châteaudun or Nogent-le-Rotrou was the original family holding. It is quite possible that Hugh Capellus was the eldest surviving brother, though this idea seems never to have been countenanced by modern authorities. He approved with his father a grant to Saint-Vincent of Le Mans, *VLM*, no. 589 and he appears the senior family figure in the approbation of the grant of Saint-Léonard of Bellême to Marmoutier, *CMPerche*, no. 16: *...Hugo vicecomes de Castroduno auctorisavit ecclesiam sancti Leonardi sancto Martino Majoris Monasterii cum omnibus possessionibus seu rebus ad eandem ecclesiam pertinentibus..annuentibus istis: Gausfredo comite fratre ejus.....Isti sunt fidejussores quod Hugo vicecomes dedit monachis Sancti Martini pro fratribus suis Gausfredo et Rotroco.*

32 *OV*, iv, 202.

33 *OV*, vi, 398.

34 *CMPerche*, no. 170.

Villeray, had to take sides in the conflict, and it is clear that for many years Robert retained the upper hand, persuading them to support him.³⁵

Geoffrey's attempts to extend his authority met with little success and by the time of his death in 1099/1100, the inheritance acquired by his son Rotrou II was no greater than that which Geoffrey himself had taken up some twenty years before. Orderic Vitalis says that he continued his father's policy of warfare against Robert of Bellême, describing the serious quarrels between them and how 'as a result they fought each other ferociously, looting and burning in each other's territories'.³⁶ In Robert however Rotrou was matched against one of the foremost soldiers of his day and a man who specialised in the arts of fortification and he was unable to make much headway.³⁷ It was not therefore through sheer force of arms that Rotrou was to add the final component to the county of the Perche, but through diligent exploitation of his position as a border magnate.

Although Rotrou had served in the first crusade as had Duke Robert Curthose of Normandy and had helped the duke in his attempts to maintain law and order in the duchy after their return from the Holy Land, the new count formed a closer association with the duke's younger brother, King Henry I of England.³⁸ In the opening years of the twelfth century Henry was developing the strategy which would allow him to depose his elder brother and reunite the Anglo-Norman realm of their father, William the Conqueror. He sought supporters among the Norman baronage and cultivated his brother's neighbours, marrying his illegitimate daughters to several of them.³⁹ In 1104 when Henry visited his only continental possession at Domfront Rotrou attended his court there and around the same time married Henry's illegitimate daughter, Matilda.⁴⁰ Henry thus secured another well-placed supporter and Rotrou a consort, but the alliance is something of a tribute to the political judgement of the young Rotrou. He had had an opportunity to observe Robert Curthose both in the scene of his greatest triumphs in the Holy Land and at home where he was less successful and Rotrou's decision was to throw in his lot with Henry. Admittedly this gave him *carte blanche* to continue his father's attacks against Curthose's most prominent supporter, Robert of Bellême, but it was still a gamble and might have committed Rotrou to a lifetime of conflict with the Norman duke and Robert of Bellême if Henry had been unsuccessful.

The value of this alliance was not fully proved until 1113. Rotrou himself had not been slow to press his claims to the Bellêmeis, but the fighting presumably stopped when Robert recognised

35 For Aylmer's hostility towards Roger of Montgomery, OV, ii, 360, and association with Rotrou I of Mortagne, CMD no. CIX, NLR, no. XXXVIII. Orderic says that Aylmer's son Gouffier lived in peace with the Montgommerys, but he appeared sometimes with the Rotrou counts of Perche, NLR, nos. XIX, XI.

36 OV, vi, 396.

37 K. Thompson, 'Robert of Bellême reconsidered', ANS, xiii (1990), 283.

38 OV, vi, 34 for Rotrou, William of Evreux and Gilbert of Laigle in alliance with Robert Curthose against Robert of Bellême.

39 On Henry's marriage policy, C.W. Hollister and T. Keefe, 'The making of the Angevin empire,' in *Monarchy, magnates and institutions in the Anglo-Norman world* (London, 1986), 251.

40 OV, vi, 56 for Rotrou at Domfront; OV, vi, 40, 398 for the marriage.

Henry as the new ruler of Normandy at the November court of 1106.⁴¹ It probably did not resume again until the early 1110s when it was justified by the wider conflict on the southern Norman borders brought about when the count of Anjou entered into alliance with a number of Norman malcontents including Robert of Bellême.⁴² But there was clearly a personal edge to the conflict in the Bellêmois. Rotrou was captured by the count of Anjou and incarcerated at Le Mans. In normal twelfth century circumstances he would have been ransomed and released, but Robert of Bellême personally sought him as a prisoner. Rotrou obviously despaired for his life, for he sent the bishop of Le Mans back to his mother Beatrix with details of his last will and testament.⁴³ It was only the timely intervention of King Henry who imprisoned Robert which saved Rotrou. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Rotrou in 1113 in the very forefront of King Henry's forces in the capture of Bellême which had held out on behalf of Robert's son.⁴⁴ Henry rewarded his son-in-law by granting him Bellême, though not its castle, shortly thereafter.⁴⁵ The Bellêmois formed the final component of the new county of the Perche and complemented the arc of territory from Mortagne to Nogent-le-Rotrou which had been in the hands of the Rotrou family for two generations. From this date onwards Rotrou II begins to style himself count of Perche and lord of Bellême.⁴⁶

Although the details are not always available, the steps by which the Rotrou family succeeded in creating an independent polity in the disturbed and much fought over territory between the three great power blocs of Anjou, Blois and Normandy are then relatively easy to follow. The subtleties of their relationships with their mightier neighbours over the three generations that the Perche was in the making are sometimes rather harder to determine, but when they are examined in their context shed much light on the politics of western France in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

The achievements of Count Rotrou I as the founder of the Perche, for example, need to be seen against the background of Angevin success.⁴⁷ In 1044 Geoffrey Martel, count of Anjou had

41 *RRAN*, ii, no. 792.

42 *OV*, vi, 162-4; C. W. Hollister, 'War and diplomacy in the Anglo-Norman world: the reign of Henry I, in *Monarchy, magnates and institutions in the Anglo-Norman world* (London, 1986), 280-2. This was probably the warfare referred to by Geoffrey Grossus, *Vita*, col. 1407: *erat enim tunc temporis non mediocris guerra inter Belismenses atque Mauritanenses*.

43 The incident has to be reconstructed from three sources: Geoffrey Grossus, *Vita*, col. 1414, the *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis*, 406-7 and the letters of Hildebert of Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans, *PL*, vol. 171, cols. 225-8. Geoffrey Grossus recounts the capture and the *Actus* indicates that the count was being held at Le Mans, where he sought the help of Bishop Hildebert, who travelled to Nogent on Rotrou's behalf.

44 *OV*, vi, 180-2.

45 Robert of Torigni describes the grant of the town of Bellême to Count Rotrou II in 1113 in his Interpolations in William of Jumièges, *Gesta*, ed. Marx, 320: *rex Henricus nobilissimum oppidum ejusdem, nomine Belisum, cepit et illud Rotroco, comiti Perticensi, genero suo dedit...* and the 1159 grant of the castle in his own chronicle, Torigni, i, 315: *Rex autem Henricus concessit eidem Rotroco Bellisum castrum...*

46 *CMPerche*, no. 21.

47 Dunbabin, *France*, 184-90; Guillot, *Comte*, 2-101, J. Brunterc'h, 'Maine ou Anjou? Histoire d'un canton entre Loir et Sarthe (VII e-XIe siècle)', in *Media in Francia...recueil de mélanges offert à Karl Ferdinand Werner à l'occasion de son 65^e anniversaire...* (Paris, 1989), 61-84.

taken the city of Tours from the Thibaudian family, after capturing Count Theobald III.⁴⁸ Geoffrey retained the upper hand in the great rivalry between the two houses for the rest of his life, and in 1051 when the count of Maine died leaving a young son, Herbert II, Geoffrey was able to assert his authority there too, even though Herbert's mother was a member of the house of Blois.⁴⁹ No matter how significant the achievements of Count Rotrou I in the middle years of the eleventh century they could only have been effected if Geoffrey Martel were amenable. Thus when Rotrou made his own grant to Saint-Vincent of Le Mans he did so explicitly with Geoffrey's approval.⁵⁰ This important act even raises the possibility that Rotrou and his father Geoffrey before him were clients of the Angevin counts, for it was made to fund the *anniversarium* of Rotrou's grandfather an otherwise unknown Count Fulcuich. At the point when Rotrou's charter was given (1050s/1060s) in the area in which it was given (Maine) the only count Fulk who needed no further identification would have been count Fulk Nerra of Anjou, father of Geoffrey Martel, who had dominated the western parts of Neustria for the first forty years of the eleventh century.⁵¹ It is not inconceivable that Helvisa was the daughter of Count Fulk either by his first marriage to Helvisa of Vendôme or by an unknown partner, so it is possible that the *vicecomes* Geoffrey, whose office and property appear to tie him closely from the count of Blois/Chartres had also maintained friendly relations with the count of Anjou, even to the extent of making a marriage alliance. It is impossible to do more than speculate on these matters, but it is unwise to see the Rotrou family as faithful and unswerving adherents of the Thibaudians. The crucial point is that when the counts of Anjou were in the ascendancy the Rotrou family prospered, while the evidence for their links with the Thibaudians is less than compelling.⁵²

Count Geoffrey II of Mortagne, for example, found means to assert the independence of the family. His grant made at some time in the early 1080s of the monastery of Saint-Denis at Nogent to the abbey of Cluny is indicative of growing self-confidence and comital initiative. When his father Count Rotrou I had sought an abbot for the house he had looked to the ancient monastery of Saint-Père in Chartres, but Geoffrey required higher monastic standards and, probably under the influence of his wife, Beatrix, gave the family foundation to Cluny.⁵³

48 *Chronica Rainaldi archidiaconi andegavensis*, in *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou*, ed. P. Marchegay and E. Mabilley (Paris, 1869), 11; Bur, *Champagne*, 197; J. Boussard, 'L'éviction des tenants de Thibaud de Blois par Geoffroy Martel comte d'Anjou en 1044', *Le Moyen Âge*, lxxix (1963), 141-9.

49 Guillot, *Comte*, 86-7.

50 *VLM*, no. 609: *Dedimus enim, favente comite Gaufrido et omnibus amicis nostris, Sancto Vincentio et ejus abbati suprascripto Avesgaudo, cum monachis suis in usus Deo servientium in oratorio scilicet Beati Vincentii, qui est civitate Cenomannis extra muros, tali tenore ut anniversarium avi mei Fulcuich comiti et avunculi mei Hugonis et patris mei vicecomitis Gaufridi faciant...*

51 Halphen, *Anjou*, 17-46; Bachrach, 'Enforcement of the *forma fidelitatis*'.

52 In his apologia for the counts of Anjou as royal seneschals, Hugh of Cleeris mentions a David count of Maine and a Geoffrey count of Corbon, which may reflect of memory of this period when the counts of Perche were clients of the counts of Anjou, *Scriptum Huonis de Cleeris de majoratu et senescalcia franciae comitibus andegavorum collatis*, *Chroniques d'Anjou*, ed. Marchegay and Salmon, i, 389: *David comes Cenomannicus et Gaufridus comes Corbonensis dedignabantur recipere feodum suum a praedicto rege...comes vero Gaufridus [Grisegonelle] ...Gaufridum comitem et oppidanos suos minus timentes cepit et domino suo regi tradidit vel reddidit.*

53 *NLR*, no. VII.

Patronage of the more rigorous Cluniac order was at the time fashionable, but it had the added advantage that Cluniac priories were becoming increasingly independent of the diocesan bishops.⁵⁴ The subjection of Geoffrey's family foundation to Cluny, therefore, loosened its, and by association his, ties with Chartres, a city controlled by Geoffrey's mighty southern neighbours, the Thibaudian counts of Blois. Similarly while Geoffrey made an appearance in a case heard in the court of Bishop Ivo, he seems to have had few contacts with the counts of Blois and his only attestation was made at Dreux to a royal charter.⁵⁵ If the *vicecomes* Geoffrey I had ever been an agent of the Thibaudian counts, his grandson Geoffrey II could hardly be described as such.

In the next generation the relations of Count Rotrou II and the Thibaudian family are equally remote, despite frequent assertions by modern authorities to the contrary. Although Rotrou may have served with Stephen-Henry of Blois on the first crusade and have attended his court shortly after his return from the Holy Land, there are few contacts between the two comital houses.⁵⁶ In the 1100s Rotrou's dispute with the lords of Le Puiset was referred to the court of the Countess Adela by Bishop Ivo of Chartres⁵⁷ and he also presumably fought with the young Count Theobald IV at Bellême in 1113, for both men are known to have taken part in the campaign,⁵⁸ but his only other known attendance at the court of the counts of Blois took place in 1118.⁵⁹ None of Rotrou's acts were confirmed by the counts of Blois. He is not mentioned among the *optimates* who gave Count Theobald counsel in 1114 nor did he play any part in the Thibaudians' struggle against the lords of Le Puiset or the Capetian kings.⁶⁰

It was not that the rulers of Blois/Chartres were ill-disposed towards the Rotrou family. The Countess Adela had, for example, found in Rotrou's favour in his dispute with the lords of Le Puiset and Ivo of Courville, and Rotrou may well have had a personal respect for the countess since he gave English property to the Cluniac house at Marcigny to which she was eventually to retire in 1122.⁶¹ The Thibaudian family, however, had little to offer the young Rotrou in the

⁵⁴ Cowdrey, *Cluniacs*, 105-6.

⁵⁵ SPC, 314; *Actes de Philippe I^{er}*, no. CXVIII.

⁵⁶ NDC, no. XXIV. There is some doubt about Rotrou's attendance on this occasion, since Chédeville points out that the attestations on this act appear only on copies, *Chartres*, 285, n. 229. Dr. Lo Prete dates the act to 1099, 'The Anglo-Norman card of Adela of Blois', 582 and if Rotrou did attend Stephen's court at that date then he must have returned with Stephen from Antioch, J.A. Brundage, 'An errant crusader: Stephen of Blois', *Traditio*, xvi (1960), 380-95. There is reliable evidence, however, that Rotrou was involved in the sortie from Antioch in 1198 which took place after the departure of Stephen, Albert of Aachen, *Historia*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, iv (Paris, 1879), 422.

⁵⁷ Ivo of Chartres, *Epistolae* clxviii-clxx, clxxiii. For a full discussion, see chapter 5.

⁵⁸ For Rotrou at the fall of Bellême, OV, vi, 182. Theobald came into conflict with the monks of Marmoutier over troops for the siege, *CMD*, no. XCIV: *Post paucum vero temporis comes deprecatus est monachos ut homines suos post eum mitterent ad obsidionem Beleismi ad quam festinabat in auxilium videlicet Hainrici regis Anglorum avunculi sui...*

⁵⁹ BN ms. lat. 17139, p.56.

⁶⁰ *CMD*, no. XCIV. Chédeville comments on the difficulty of identifying the families who were *grands vassaux* of the counts of Blois, *Chartres*, 285.

⁶¹ *Book of Fees*, 738 provides the information that the abbess of Marcigny held the vill of *Brome* by the gift of Rotrou, a gift which must have been made by 1120 when it was confirmed by Pope Calixtus II, *Le cartulaire de Marcigny-sur-Loire (1045-1144): essai de reconstruction d'un manuscrit disparu*, ed. J. Richard (Dijon, 1957), no. 270.

early years of the twelfth century. There had been the transient glory of the Blésois contribution to the first crusade, but this was followed by a minority and for the best part of a quarter of a century the power of Thibaudian counts was in eclipse. The counts were to be preoccupied in the first quarter of the twelfth century with their relations with the king of France, while the Countess Adela was to consistently support her brother, Henry I of England. Her son, Theobald IV, found it convenient to continue the close association with his maternal uncle and his younger brother, Stephen was to make a very satisfactory career at the court of his uncle.⁶²

In many respects the Thibaudian counts had been drawn into the same Anglo-Norman alignment as Rotrou, and Adela's judicial finding in favour of her brother's son-in-law may well be a reflection of Rotrou's alliance with Henry. Rotrou's case received a sympathetic hearing from Bishop Ivo of Chartres, who worked closely with Countess Adela, and she certainly had no incentive to cultivate the Le Puiset, who had presented serious difficulties for the Thibaudians, which were to come to a head in the 1111 campaign against Le Puiset itself.⁶³ Thus while Rotrou made material gains from his marriage alliance with the ruler of Normandy; he also benefitted in that, as Henry's ally, he was unlikely to be threatened by the Thibaudian counts. In October 1118 Rotrou was with King Henry I at Arganchy and in the same year at Chartres he had witnessed an act of Count Theobald of Blois,⁶⁴ but it is his relations with the ruler of Normandy rather than that of Blois which determine Rotrou's policy and in doing so indicate the solidity of the ascendancy which Henry I succeeded in establishing in the first twenty years of the twelfth century.

In the early years of their rise the Rotrou family had had little to do with the dukes of Normandy, for the dukes had never found it easy to make their presence felt so far south.⁶⁵ While there is some evidence of conflict in the Bellêmeois in the 1030s and 1040s, Rotrou I and Roger of Montgomery seem to have resolved any potential conflict about the Bellême inheritance by coming to a working arrangement which may have relied on each having their own sphere of influence.⁶⁶ By the 1070s however the duke of Normandy, who was also now the king of England, was well-aware of the lordship Count Rotrou I was building up just beyond the southern frontiers of the duchy and the risks it presented. Orderic Vitalis gives important

62 The countess' role is discussed in Hollister, 'War and diplomacy', 276-7 and Lo Prete, 'The Anglo-Norman card of Adela of Blois'. Bur, *Champagne*, 281-3 for Theobald's position.

63 Lo Prete, 'Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres'. Suger, *Vita Ludovici Grossi regis*, ed. and trans. R. C. Cusimano and J. Moorhead (Washington, D.C., 1991, 84-5.

64 BN ms. lat. 17139, p.56.

65 On the dealings of the Norman dukes with their southern neighbours, Bates, *Normandy*, 78-80. For the Bellême family in conflict with the dukes of Normandy, Jumièges, *Gesta*, ed. Marx, 101-2.

66 Endemic disorder in the Bellêmeois prevented the foundation of a priory at Sainte-Gauburge by the abbey of Bonneval, *SPC*, 156: *hic locus praememoratus primum a comite Willelmo datus cuidam monacho Bonaevallensi, Beringario nomine, dinoscitur esse; set abbas consecratus, bellorum frequentiam atque loci paupertatem cotidie crescentem diu ferre non valens, sponte ad suum coenobium est reversus...* Since William lord of Bellême died in the late 1020s, the incident cannot have taken place much later than the 1030s. Count Rotrou I appears to anticipate a challenge to his right to make property grants to Saint-Vincent of Le Mans, which may indicate some hostility in the late 1040s or 1050s, *VLM*, no. 609: *Quod si quis consanguineus noster aliquis aut extraneus quod absit, calumpniari sancto Vincentio et ejus abbati sue monachis presumpserit...*

indications of the nature of that threat. He describes how in the 1050s and early 1060s the Norman rebel Arnold of Échauffour had assembled men from Rotrou's lands of Mortagne and the Corbonnais to attack the duchy after his exile from Normandy.⁶⁷ By 1077 when Robert Curthose, the Conqueror's eldest son, entered upon the first of his rebellions, William was immediately careful to acquire the cooperation of Rotrou. It is quite possible that he was just about to embark upon an expedition against Rotrou, but he quickly made a formal truce with the count so that the young Robert would not have a convenient base from which to attack Normandy.⁶⁸ Then William went on to secure Rotrou's participation in the subsequent campaign against Robert. Although in this instance William dealt with the risk presented by Rotrou, the incident illustrates perfectly the potential danger to the duchy from a small neighbouring principality under a bellicose or even simply less than friendly ruler. It was the first known occasion upon which the ruler of Normandy was obliged to take account of the Rotrou family and it is a useful object lesson in how the relationship worked.

Under Count Geoffrey II the Rotrous began to look to Normandy more frequently. While Geoffrey II's wife, Beatrix, was the daughter of the count of Montdidier and Roucy, from a distinguished Frankish pedigree, Geoffrey looked for Norman marriage partners for two of his daughters.⁶⁹ Admittedly the alliance with Gilbert of Laigle may in some measure have been forced upon Geoffrey as a means of averting potential conflict north of Mortagne, nonetheless the marriage of his other daughter, Margaret to Henry, second son of Roger of Beaumont may indicate a wish to cultivate links with the highest levels of the Norman nobility.⁷⁰ This policy of co-operation rather than confrontation with the Norman neighbours was at its most successful under Rotrou II, where it is symbolised by the fact that the count took both his wives from the Anglo-Norman world and gained much from his alliance. Nevertheless his conduct on a number of occasions indicates that Rotrou was never completely overawed by the Norman rulers and remained an independent ruler capable of pursuing his own policies where family or personal interest dictated.

An incident in 1118/9 involving his nephew Richer of Laigle, for example, shows that, despite Rotrou's marriage to Henry's daughter, his county still represented a threat to the Normans. The chronology of the episode is far from certain, for Orderic deals with it twice. In his first account Richer secured the English lands of his family from the king shortly after asking for them in late August/early September 1118, when his uncle Rotrou intervened with Henry, but in a second reference to the reconciliation between Richer and the king made at Rotrou's instigation Orderic

⁶⁷ OV, ii, 124.

⁶⁸ OV, ii, 356: *Quondam dum rex contra Corbonienses expeditionem facere praepararet...;* ii, 360: *Bellis itaque passim insurgentibus cordatus rex exercitum aggregavit, et in hostes pergens cum Rotrone Mauritianiensi comite pacem fecit.*

⁶⁹ On Beatrix's family, B. Guenée, 'La généalogies entre l'histoire et la politique: la fierté d'être Capetien en France au moyen âge', *Annales*, xxxiii (1978), 450-77.

⁷⁰ OV, iv, 200-2 for the Norman marriages of Geoffrey's daughters.

places it in late September 1119.⁷¹ This second version is perhaps more satisfactory. It would imply that the visit which Rotrou made to his father-in-law in October 1118, when he attested a royal charter at Arganchy, discussed the problem of young Richer, but a settlement was not made until the following autumn.⁷² Rotrou no doubt pointed to Henry the risks of allowing the vital marcher lordship of Laigle to fall into hostile hands and probably hinted that those risks would be increased if he were himself to withdraw his support for Henry. At the time the Norman border lords were in rebellion, encouraged by Louis VI, and within a year those risks had become all too clear to Henry. C.W. Hollister calls it 'the great military crisis of Henry's reign' and it would have been vital for the king to retain Rotrou's support.⁷³

The risk presented by a border magnate to the south of Normandy still remained a potent threat twenty years later. In 1137 King Stephen was faced with the problem of consolidating his hold on the dual realm of Henry I, which he had seized by his dash to England in December 1135. Although the Norman lords had declared their support for his tenure of the duchy, the king had delayed in England for more than a year. The absence of active ducal authority had resulted in outbreaks of lawlessness in several areas and the situation was made worse by the likelihood of a second campaign to assert the claims of the Empress Matilda's husband, which her husband Geoffrey of Anjou was preparing to undertake from Matilda's southern stronghold of Argentan.⁷⁴ In the spring of 1137 when Stephen finally made an appearance in Normandy as its ruler it was essential that he should secure immediate support. Rotrou and his nephew Richer of Laigle represented a major threat, for if they were to join the Angevin forces much of the south of the duchy would have been instantly lost. Since Rotrou's daughter Philippa had been married to Geoffrey's younger brother, Helias, it was not unlikely that the earlier Rotrou/Angevin alliance might be revived. Such a possibility therefore goes some way to explaining the magnitude of the inducement which Stephen used to conciliate Rotrou and Richer. Although Henry I and his father the Conqueror before him had insisted on ducal tenure of certain important castles, Stephen departed from this policy by assigning the ducal castles of Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins respectively to Rotrou and Richer.⁷⁵ The grant of the castles, whose clear purpose was the defence of southern Normandy, was something of a gamble on Stephen's part, for if they were lost then so was much of the south of the duchy, but if Rotrou and Richer had chosen to support

71 OV, vi, 196, 248-50.

72 *RRAN*, ii, no. 1183.

73 C.W. Hollister, 'The Anglo-Norman succession debate of 1126' in *Monarchy, magnates and institutions in the Anglo-Norman world* (London, 1986), 149.

74 R. Helmerichs, 'King Stephen's Norman Itinerary, 1137', *Haskins Society Journal*, v (1993), 89-97.

75 OV, vi, 484. Lemaignier, *Recherches*, 62-3. The history of Moulins-la-Marche in the eleventh century is that of a struggle to find a reliable castellan. In the 1040s the castle was held by Guidmund, *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1964), no. 117. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, William son of Walter of Falaise, *RADN*, no. 225 and his sons, Robert and Simon, OV, iii, 132. For a clear exposition, E.Z. Tabuteau, 'The family of Moulins-la-Marche in the eleventh century', *Medieval Prosopography*, xiii (1992), 29-65. Henry I had probably constructed the first castle at Bonsmoulins around 1130, *RHF*, xii, 580.

the Angevins then a similar outcome would have been inevitable and with it possibly the loss of the whole duchy.⁷⁶

There is every indication, however, that the Anglo-Norman alliance suited Rotrou. The stability it brought plainly gave him the confidence to spend a large proportion of his time in Spain, for example, and the bargains he made with the rulers of Normandy were always kept. He supported Henry consistently against Robert Curthose in the disorders immediately before Tinchebrai, again in the serious conflict of 1111/2, when he was captured by Robert of Bellême and may have come close to losing his life, and also, probably, at the battle of Alençon.⁷⁷ When Henry sought the oath of his baronage to support the Empress's claim to be his heir Rotrou made his way from Navarre to England and as Henry lay on his deathbed Rotrou was there too, summoned probably to assist the king in what he thought was the forthcoming campaign against his own daughter and her Norman ally, William Talvas.⁷⁸ With the old king dead in the late 1130s Rotrou was prepared to enter a similar arrangement with his successor Stephen and his support was manifested in his capture of Pont Échanfray (Eure, ct. Broglie) in November 1139.⁷⁹ It was only when it became clear that Stephen had lost all control in Normandy that Rotrou was forced to rethink his policy, withdraw his support from one ruler of Normandy and effectively to establish another one!

The final years of Rotrou's life, after his return to the Perche, are the culmination of his ancestors' designs for independence. The Perche was clearly an independent polity and gained much from the personal prestige of Rotrou. He had a distinguished record both as a crusader and as a patron of the new monastic orders, in particular Tiron, and his personal standing was acknowledged by his inclusion in the party which accompanied Louis VII to Bordeaux in 1137 for his marriage to the heiress Eleanor of Aquitaine.⁸⁰ There was no indication of subordination to the count of Blois who also accompanied the king, nor indeed to the dukes of Normandy or counts of Anjou whose titles Rotrou came to arbitrate shortly thereafter.

76 Rotrou imposed himself quickly on his new property. He was probably the Count Rotrou who gave the church of Saint-Nicholas at Moulins to the abbey of Saint-Evroul, BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 127: *...Rotrodum comitem Pertici divinae pietatis intuitu dilectis filiis nostris abbati et monachis sancti Ebrulfi presentationem parochialis ecclesiae de Molendinis donavisse...* An attestor with a toponymic originating near Moulins, Ivo of Falandres (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche, cme. Maheru), witnesses Rotrou's grant to Tiron made in 1141, *Tiron*, no. CCLVI.

77 Rotrou is mentioned among Henry's troops at the battle of Alençon, *Chronica de gestis consulum Andegavorum*, in *Chroniques d'Anjou*, ed. Marchegay and Salmon, i, 145, but as this source also includes among the combatants Robert of Bellême, who had been in prison since 1112, it is unwise to put too much emphasis on this testimony. On the battle, see J. Bradbury, 'Battles in England and Normandy, 1066-1154', in *Anglo-Norman warfare: studies in late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman military organization and warfare*, ed. M. Strickland (Woodbridge, 1992), 188-9.

78 For Rotrou in England in 1126, *RRAN*, ii, no. 1466. Rotrou had designated his daughter Philippa as his heir and he may have provided valuable counsel to Henry on the matter. For the events of late 1135, K. Thompson, 'William Talvas, count of Ponthieu, and the politics of the Anglo-Norman realm', *England and Normandy in the middle ages*, ed. D. Bates and A. Curry (London, 1994), 174-7.

79 OV, vi, 534.

80 Chronicle of Morigny, in *RHF*, xii, 84.

In the confused conditions of the early 1140s while Geoffrey of Anjou sought to make good the Empress's claims and Rotrou had undertaken to support of King Stephen, Rotrou's nephew Richer came into conflict with another supporter of the king, Robert of Leicester, or at least his agent, Robert Poard. In September 1140 en route for England with fifty knights, presumably reinforcements for Stephen's forces, Richer was set upon by Poard and ended up in Leicester's gaol at Breteuil. Poard then took the opportunity to pillage Richer's lands until Rotrou intervened on his nephew's behalf, capturing Poard and his brother Maurice at the end of October 1140.⁸¹ The incident shows how conditions had deteriorated in Normandy by the end of the 1130s. Agents of a major baron such as the earl of Leicester were effectively little more than brigands and, in the absence of ducal control, the only remedy available was that of family solidarity. The treaty negotiated between Leicester and Rotrou after the events of October 1140 and what amounted to an exchange of prisoners, when Richer was later released, are hardly to be expected when Rotrou and Leicester were both adherents of King Stephen. While both had indeed pledged their support to Stephen, the virtual collapse of public order in Normandy had left each magnate to fend for himself. Rotrou's policy of support for the Norman ruler, which had served him well for the best part of forty years, now stood in need of drastic overhaul because there was, to all intents and purposes, no duke of Normandy for him to support.

It is no surprise, therefore, that after the battle of Lincoln in February 1141 Rotrou decided to cut his losses and, in effect, establish a new duke of Normandy.⁸² At some point during the season of Lent Rotrou made his peace with Geoffrey of Anjou and then a conference was arranged to meet beyond the Norman borders in Rotrou's town of Mortagne. There both the duchy of Normandy and the kingdom of England were offered to Count Theobald of Blois, Stephen's brother.⁸³ It may be that the assembled nobles felt Theobald would make a suitable ruler in the mould of his uncle Henry I, with whom he had been closely associated, but it may equally have been a thinly veiled attempt to come to terms with Geoffrey of Anjou. The conference has a stage managed quality to it, for Theobald immediately declined the offer that had been made and renounced his claims in favour of his hereditary enemy, Geoffrey. Dr. Chibnall points out that Theobald was far too preoccupied in his conflict with King Louis VII in Champagne to take on the complex problems presented by unruly Norman baronage and the continued pressure of Geoffrey of Anjou.⁸⁴ Instead he made his renunciation on the understanding that Geoffrey would return to him the city of Tours, which had been seized by the Angevins in 1044, and this left the Norman nobles free to offer their allegiance to Geoffrey. In the event that return was never made, but Rotrou remained committed to the new duke of Normandy and it was fighting in Geoffrey's service at the siege of Rouen in 1144 that Rotrou lost his life.⁸⁵

81 OV, vi, 548.

82 There is just a hint that Rotrou was indeed an ageing man in 1141, for a doctor Baldwin appears in his acts, *Tiron*, no. CCLVI.

83 OV, vi, 548.

84 M. Chibnall, 'Normandy', *The anarchy of King Stephen's reign*, ed. E.J. King (Oxford, 1994), 102-3.

85 Torigni, i, 234.

At the end of his long career, then, Rotrou II could look back on a job well-done and a polity established. His own personal prestige was high. He had been the faithful friend and counsellor of Henry I, the most successful ruler of his day. He had served with distinction and apparent success in the wars in the Holy Land and Spain. He was associated with one of the most prestigious of the new orders which had taken root in his territory at Thiron and he himself moved in the highest circles. Finally in 1141 he had effectively performed the role of king maker, convening the conference at Mortagne, which arbitrated the Norman succession. Rotrou, his father and grandfather had successively asserted their independence with a greater and greater degree of success, but it was Rotrou's exploitation of his position as a border magnate and whole-hearted espousal of the Norman alliance which set the seal on the family fortunes. In choosing to support Henry I Rotrou had selected the most successful ruler of the early twelfth century and the examination of the workings of their relationship reveals still further the solidity of the ascendancy which Henry established.

Chapter 7

The Perche in the balance

1144-1200

The 1140s was a decade of crucial importance in the politics of northern France. During its course the duchy of Normandy lost its independence, when Rouen fell in 1144 to Geoffrey le bel, count of Anjou. While Geoffrey's wife the Empress Matilda pursued her claims to her father's realm in England, Geoffrey enforced her rights in Normandy and extended his own influence to the Channel coast, laying the foundations for his son Henry II's great empire of the second half of the twelfth century. The king of France, Louis VII, despite the great increase in his personal wealth brought about by his marriage to the heiress of Aquitaine in 1137, dissipated his energies in a series of pointless disputes with the church and came into conflict with his neighbour, Theobald of Blois, who after 1125 also controlled Champagne.¹ The departure to the Holy Land of the king and many major figures from the nobility during the second crusade did little to resolve immediate political problems, but marks in many ways a turning point in contemporary perception of the Capetian monarchy.² Louis was recognised as the leader of the French contingent and many Anglo-Norman nobles and those outside the king's immediate authority served under his command. It was against such a background in the middle years of the twelfth century that the durability of the Perche as an independent polity was to be tested.

Given the difficult political circumstances of the early 1140s it was perhaps unwise of Rotrou II to give such wholehearted support to the Geoffrey Plantagenet's cause that he participated personally in the Rouen campaign during the early months of 1144. He was himself well advanced in years in the 1140s, but his sons by Hawise of Salisbury were still little more than children. His death in the spring of 1144 left his probably young and not well-connected wife to cope with a complex political situation.³ Geoffrey Plantagenet had made good his claim *iure uxoris* to rule in Normandy, but had yet to impose his authority in the extreme north east of the duchy. He was clearly too pre-occupied to give the newly widowed countess much support. In these circumstances it was natural that she should seek the protection of a second husband and she made an almost immediate remarriage. Her new husband was the younger brother of Louis VII, Robert Capet, who by 1145 appears in documents using the title count of the Perche.⁴

Robert was the third surviving son of Louis VI of France and his queen, Adelaide of Maurienne and at the time of his marriage to Hawise was some twenty years old. Modern authorities nearly always refer to Robert, the king's brother, as Robert of Dreux, but he did not acquire Dreux,

1 M. Pacaut, *Louis VII et son royaume* (Paris, 1964), Y. Sassier, *Louis VII* (Paris, 1991).

2 *The second crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. M. Gervers (New York, 1992).

3 Hawise's family were in the process of improving their social status in the 1140s, when her brother secured the earldom of Salisbury, but they were scarcely among the greatest magnates in England. Her mother was a member of the Chaources family, which held property in Maine. It is likely that her grandmother had been a member of the Tancarville family, Crouch, *William Marshal*, 19.

4 AD Orne H2160 published as *CMPerche*, nos. 28, 29.

where he established his lineage, until 1152 and this important early stage of his career in the Perche has received little attention.⁵ He had already had some experience in the service of his elder brother, for he had commanded the soldiers who had seized the property of the bishopric of Châlons in the early 1140s.⁶ His marriage to Hawise, however, where it has been noticed at all by historians, has been seen as part of an overall Capetian strategy to provide for younger sons.⁷ If, indeed, it was the work of Louis VII, then it was an astute move for which the king's biographers have given him no credit. The marriage alliance not only secured employment for the energetic younger brother of the king, but also provided the Capet family with an important a forward position in the struggle against Normandy. The value of the outpost is indicated by the events of the years 1150 and 1151. Robert had been able to seize the castle of *La Nube* (probably Mont de la Nue, Sarthe, ct. Mamers, cme. Contilly), which was sufficiently important for Geoffrey Plantagenet himself to undertake its recapture in 1151. In retaliation Louis VII, presumably using his brother's territory in the Perche as a base, struck up into southern Normandy as far as the cathedral city of Sées, which was burned during the course of the action. So effective was this pressure on the Norman border that Duke Henry, to whom Geoffrey had entrusted the duchy in the early months of 1150, was forced to abandon his siege of Torigni in the west of the duchy in order to counter it.⁸

Robert probably retained his hold on the Perche for some five or six years. It is impossible to be more precise since little material from the Perche in the 1140s has survived.⁹ He accompanied his elder brother on the second crusade, but returned early and it would seem he was implicated in some sort of conspiracy against his brother, or at least his brother's agent, Abbot Suger. Torigni's account of the capture of *La Nube* suggests that Robert remained in control of the Perche until at least 1150, but a letter preserved among the correspondence of Abbot Suger implies that the young Rotrou was acting on his own account at this period. The letter, which cannot be dated more precisely than to the late 1140s, is addressed to Rotrou count of Perche by Louis VII's chancellor Cadurcus and an unidentified *E. de Sal.*¹⁰ It gives details of an apparent

5 A.W. Lewis, '14 charters of Robert I of Dreux (1152-1188)', *Traditio*, xli (1985), 146. Robert is more properly described in the 1140s as the king's brother or as count of the Perche. His seal bore the inscription *Sigillum Roberti fratris regis Francie*, L.-C. Douët-d'Arcq, *Collection des sceaux*, i, (Paris, 1863), no. 720.

6 See Bernard's comment, Epistola 221, *Opera*, vol. viii, ed. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais (Rome, 1977).

7 Lewis, *Royal succession in Capetian France*, 60.

8 Torigni, i, 254, Lewis, *Royal succession in Capetian France*, 60-2.

9 Only six acts can be securely dated to this period. Two acts preserved in the Bellême priory archives describe Robert the king's brother as count of Perche and lord of Bellême, *CMPerche*, nos. 28 and 29. An act restoring property to the priory of Saint-Sulpice-sur-Risle was approved by the countess, her second husband and sons by her first marriage, AD Loiret D668, fos. 9v.-10. Rotrou and his mother made an agreement with the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, BN ms. franc. 24133, p.310. A foundation narrative for the abbey of La Trappe mentions Hawise and her sons, *LT*, pp. 578-9 and it is likely that the countess and her eldest son issued a confirmation to the Augustinian priory of La Chartrage at Mortagne, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131. It is possible that Robert, the king's brother, was responsible for the foundation of La Chaise, north of Bellême, which was a priory of the Benedictine house of Fleury on the Loire, where his grandfather King Philip I had been buried, A. Fliche, *Le règne de Philippe I^{er}, roi de France (1060-1108)* (Paris, 1912), appendice II: La sépulture de Philippe I^{er}, 559-63. The earliest acts relating to this house can be dated to the 1140s, AD Loiret H22, nos. 286, 287, 289.

10 *RHF*, xv, 512-13: *...Mandaveramus quod abbas S. Dionysii turrim Bituricensem Widoni de Rebrache et militibus suis et servientibus deliberaret, et ut redderem cito mihi mandaverat. Mandamus igitur vobis quod nos fuimus ad Comitem Rodulfum et inde fuimus ad abbatem et locuti fuimus de negotio: et ipse respondit nobis quod*

disagreement over custody of the tower of Bourges between Abbot Suger and the king's seneschal, Ralph of Vermandois. Rotrou is advised to ask Ralph to send a note to Cadurcus ordering him to restore the castle only to Rotrou or his forces. The letter then goes on to suggest that Rotrou has some sort of claim, not to say designs, on Bourges: *civitas vestra Biturica vestra est si hoc faciatis*. There are also hints about the desirability of visiting the countess of Bourbon. It is hard to relate the contents of the letter to the interests of the young Rotrou, who can have been little more than an adolescent at this period. On the other hand the countess of Bourbon was Count Robert's aunt and Bourges had been the property of the Capetian family since the time of Robert's grandfather, Philip I.¹¹ It seems more likely therefore that the letter was intended for Robert, having been originally addressed to R count of the Perche.¹² It is preserved among the letter collection of the regent, Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis, and may have been brought to the abbot's attention as an attempt to implicate members of the immediate Capetian family, who were seeking to undermine the abbot's authority within the kingdom.¹³

Even allowing for the likelihood that the Bourges letter refers to Robert's activities rather than those of Rotrou, however, the control exercised over the Perche by Robert, the king's brother must have ended by 1152, for by August of that year Robert had made a second marriage to Agnes, the heiress of Braine in Champagne, implying that his first wife, Countess Hawise, had died.¹⁴ Hawise's obituary was celebrated at Chartres on 13 January,¹⁵ so she could have died in January 1152, leaving Robert free to contract his second marriage to Agnes, but she may equally well have died in an earlier January.¹⁶ The only evidence for Robert's tenure of the Perche after 1150, when he had taken *La Nube*, is Robert of Torigni's use of the title count of Perche in his description of Robert's attendance at a conference, convened in response to the marriage of Henry fitz Empress and Eleanor of Aquitaine, which took place in the summer of 1152.¹⁷ It is quite

abbas non faciebat pro eo hoc, neque praecepto ipsius. Quapropter mandamus vobis ut Comiti Rod. literis vestri significetis, et ut amico vestro mandetis ut ipse Comes mihi Cadurco amico vestro sigillum suum mittat privatim, in quo habeat : Ego Comes Rod. mando tibi Cadurco, ut non reddas turrim Bituricensem alicui homini, sicut jarasti mihi, nisi mihi vel hominibus meis..... Cadurcus had been Louis' favoured candidate in the disputed election to the archbishopric of Bourges in 1141, Pacaut, *Louis VII et les élections épiscopales*, 94-100. The incident is briefly mentioned by Devailly, *Berry*, 404.

11 The countess of Bourbon at this period was Agnes of Maurienne, wife of Archambaud VI of Bourbon and sister of Adelaide of Maurienne, mother of Louis VII and Robert, *Chartes du Bourbonnais, 918-1522*, ed. J. Monicat and B. de Fournaux. (Moulins, 1952), no. 17. On Bourges, Aimon of Fleury, *De gestis Francorum, RHF*, xi, 157: *Rex...emit Biturcias pretio sexaginta millium solidorum*; Fliche, *Philippe 1^{er}*, 149 describes it as '...peut-être la plus importante des annexations réalisées par Philippe 1^{er}'. Louis VI had given the citizens a charter which Louis VII had confirmed in 1144/5, A. Luchaire, *Louis VI le Gros: annales de sa vie et de son vie et de son règne* (Paris, 1890), no. 578. For the development of royal authority in Bourges, Devailly, *Berry*, 382-404.

12 The letter is known to modern scholarship in the edition prepared by A. Duchesne in 1640s, in which Duchesne states that he had seen the correspondence of Abbot Suger at the Augustinian house of Saint-Denis-les-Puits. It had probably been taken there when the celebrated library at Saint-Victor in Paris had been reorganised by the prior of Saint-Denis in the early sixteenth century, L. Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris, 1868-81), ii, 228. It may be that Duchesne's copyists expanded the R wrongly to Rotrou.

13 On the factions around Louis VII, Pacaut, *Louis VII*, 39-65.

14 Lewis, *Royal succession in Capetian France*, 62.

15 *Obits*, ii, 33.

16 A joint act in favour of the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, made by the young Rotrou and his mother probably dates from the period of Robert's absence in the Holy Land, though it may have been a deathbed bequest by the countess, BN ms. franc. 24133, p.310.

17 Torigni, i, 261.

possible however that Robert's participation in the 1152 conference was made in his new capacity as the lord of Dreux and that Torigni was using his former title. The campaign against Tillières-sur-Avre and Verneuil which took place later in the same year at Robert's instigation certainly suggests the vigour of a new broom intent on asserting himself in a new situation.¹⁸ The evidence therefore points to Rotrou III assuming responsibility for his inheritance around 1151.

The situation in which the young count found himself was considerably changed from that which his predecessors had known. The Perche had emerged in the previous hundred years at the insterstices between the power blocs of Normandy, Anjou and Blois, but the relationship between those neighbours was now changing. Where Normandy and Blois had been in alliance for the best part of fifty years against the Angevins, by the 1150s there had been a major change and the Normans and the Angevins now found themselves under a single ruler, leaving the count of Blois isolated and forced to look for new allies. In 1141 Count Theobald had supported, or at least not opposed, Geoffrey Plantagenet's claim to Normandy in return for a promise that the city of Tours would be restored to his family by the Angevins.¹⁹ By 1144 when Geoffrey secured Normandy by his capture of Rouen it was becoming clear that that restitution was unlikely to be made and this may go some way to explaining the reconciliation between Theobald and the king of France, with whom he had been in conflict during the early 1140s.²⁰ It is even possible that Theobald suggested the marriage between the widowed Countess Hawise and the king's brother, for this would have secured an active ruler for the Perche, which would then protect Theobald's lands around Chartres from Angevin aggression emanating from the new base in Normandy.

By 1151 Theobald was still on sufficiently good terms with the Angevins to knight his cousin the Empress's second son, Geoffrey,²¹ but there are signs that he had been seeking to strengthen his own position with new allies. When his (probably) eldest daughter, Isabelle, had made her first marriage at the turn of the 1140s it had been a very grand alliance with the eldest son of Roger II of Sicily, but when she was widowed in the late 1140s a husband was found for her rather nearer to home. Theobald's new son-in-law was William Gouet IV, lord of Alluyes, Bazoches and Montmirail on the very borders between Theobald's lands and those of the Plantagenet family.²² It comes as no surprise moreover that another daughter, Matilda, became the wife of the young Rotrou III of Perche, William Gouet's immediate neighbour to the north. The date of the

18 Torigni, i, 269-70.

19 OV, vi, 548.

20 T. Evergates, 'Louis VII and the counts of Champagne', *The second crusade and the Cistercians*, 109-17.

21 Torigni, i, 253.

22 Torigni, i, 315. Isabelle's first marriage is mentioned in a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux, *RHF*, xv, 574: *Rogamus ut patrem vestrum vel aliquem alium nuncium rationabilem et discretum mittatis pro nobis apud Montepessulanum ita ut ibi sit in octavis Assumptionis Beate Mariae. In ipsa enim die et in ipso loco debent esse nuncii Regis Siciliae qui descendunt mare in navibus ut portent filiam comitis Theobaldi filio domini sui.* Duke Roger died on 2 May 1148, *Necrologio de Liber Confratrum di S. Matteo de Salerno*, ed. C.A. Crombi (Rome, 1922), 60 or 2 May 1149, *Annals of Montecassino*, *MGH SS*, xix, 310. I am grateful to Dr. G.A. Loud for these references. Links between the courts of Blois/Champagne and Sicily are indicated in Suger's *De rebus in administratione sua gestis*, *RHF*, xii, 102: *Lagenam quoque praeclaram quam nobis comes Blesensis Theobaldus in eodem vase destinavit in quo ei Rex Siciliae illud transmiserat...*

marriage of Rotrou and Matilda of Blois is not known, but it clearly fits into a pattern of alliances under creation in the late 1140s and early 1150s. During the minority of the young count, the Perche, under the control of the vigorous Robert, had protected Blois/Chartres and the continuation of that safeguard was ensured when Rotrou and his southern neighbour were drawn into a Thibaudian family alliance. The nephew of Henry I, Count Theobald knew only too well the value of the Perche as a potential irritant on the border of Normandy and it is in this role that the county continued to function in the middle years of the century.

On a number of occasions in the 1160s and 1170s, for example, King Henry II can be found taking counter measures against the hostile zone of the Perche, and his forces pursued their enemies well into the county in the course of several campaigns. In 1167, for example, after the foray towards Chaumont in the Vexin, stragglers from the main French force withdrew through the Perche only to be captured there by the Normans.²³ Indeed the direction of the king's campaign in the next year, 1168, reveals all too clearly the identity of those he regarded as enemies. After a raid by King Louis on Chennebrun (Eure, ct. Verneuil) Henry's reprisals were aimed firstly at Hugh of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, whose castle at Brézolles (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Dreux) was destroyed by his forces, and then at the count of Perche, the greater part of whose lands were ravaged by troops under the personal command of the king.²⁴ The pipe roll for this year records that royal displeasure towards the count of Perche had been felt on his English property, for the stock of the count's Wiltshire manors had been sold and the profits paid into the royal exchequer.²⁵

Although the count's English property was restored in the late 1160s, the potential of the Perche as an irritant to the Plantagenet king remained and must have prompted Henry's establishment of the castle of Beauvoir in northeast Maine in 1169.²⁶ In 1173 it was by way of Rotrou's stronghold at Mortagne that the Young King made his way to the court of Louis VII²⁷ and in the following year the dangers of a hostile Perche were illustrated all too clearly. For in 1174 a party led by the young king was able to strike up into Normandy towards Sées in an raid which was an almost exact repetition of that of Rotrou's stepfather, Robert in 1151, though not as destructive. Rotrou and other members of his family including his brother-in-law, Theobald of Blois and nephew-in-law, John of Alençon were among the raiders in the attack which was only beaten off by the energetic efforts of the townspeople.²⁸

²³ Wendover, i, 67.

²⁴ Torigni, ii, 8.

²⁵ *PR 14 Henry II 1167/8... instauramento terrae comitis de Perche vendito et de assisa facta super homines ejusdem terre.*

²⁶ Torigni, ii, 14. For Henry's charter to the men of Beauvoir and two acts given by him there, *Actes Henri II*, i, 521-3, 573-4, 574-5.

²⁷ Diceto, i, 355.

²⁸ Diceto, i, 379.

The raid on Sées illustrates particularly clearly the place of the Perche in the politics of the middle years of the twelfth century, for it shows Rotrou acting within the context of a family alignment. Although his relations with Henry II cannot have broken down completely, all the count's acts, which can be securely dated to the 1150s and 1160s, and the chronicle references to him in this period, place Rotrou firmly within the Blois connection. In December 1158, for example, it was at the instigation of his brother-in-law, Theobald V of Blois, that Rotrou was persuaded to exchange with King Henry II custody of the castles at Moulins and Bonsmoulins for that of Bellême.²⁹ The arrangement must have seemed an acceptable bargain, for Rotrou secured total control of the town of Bellême, which his family had sought for generations, and it may well be that the property at Moulins, having been exposed to the repeated conflict along the southern border of the duchy, had fallen in value. Duke Henry Plantagenet had certainly burned the castle of Bonsmoulins as a reprisal against Rotrou's cousin, Richer of Laigle in 1152.³⁰ Nonetheless the agreement reveals how closely Rotrou's independence had been compromised, for it was part of a package arranged between King Henry and Theobald of Blois, and was probably related to the homage which Theobald performed to King Henry in 1159.³¹ Theobald surrendered Amboise and Fréteval to Henry, while Rotrou's contribution was Moulins and Bonsmoulins. Rotrou still had sufficient influence to persuade his cousin Richer of Laigle to part with Bonsmoulins, but he did not negotiate with Henry directly and the Perche appeared an appendage of Blois rather an independent principality, a position which is hinted at in Rotrou's own acts dating from this period.

In 1159 for example Rotrou gave exemption from comital exactions and rights of *vicaria* at Le Pas Saint L'Homer (Orne, ct. Longny) to the monks of Saint-Laumer of Blois, a Thibaudian family foundation. His grant, which was made with the approval of his wife and sons, was made within the monks' cloister at Blois itself.³² Other comital acts dating from the 1160s and 1170s indicate a similar deference to the counts of Blois. An act confirming the privileges of the family foundation of Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou was made not in Nogent, but in Orléans *in presentia comitis Theobaldi* and was attested by members of his entourage.³³ Rotrou's act of foundation for the new Carthusian house at Val Dieu mentions the *consilio et auxilio* of his brother-in-law, William who was bishop of Chartres at the time,³⁴ while in 1173 Rotrou exempted the abbey at Bonneval, which was specifically under the protection of the counts of Blois, from all customary payments throughout his jurisdiction. This act was made with the

29 Torigni, i, 315. Bonsmoulins which had been granted to Richer of L'Aigle in 1137 had been stormed by Henry II in 1152, Torigni, i, 269. Rotrou must have persuaded his cousin to part with Bonsmoulins.

30 Torigni, i, 269.

31 *Continuatio Beccensis*, in Torigni, ii, 174.

32 Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6. For the Thibaudian connection with Saint-Laumer, N. Mars, *Histoire du royale monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois...1646*, ed. A. Dupré (Blois, 1869), 97-132.

33 *NLR*, no VIII/XII. These two acts as preserved in the cartulary of Saint-Denis are substantially the same with only slight variations in the witness list and anathema clause. They are dated by the editor to c. 1160 and are attested by Count Theobald's cancellor, Huldric, and the Chartrain landholders, Bernard Decanus, Richard Aculeus and William of Bullou. Count Theobald is known to have been in Orléans in 1164 when he gave property to St. Crux, *GC*, viii, col. 515-6.

34 *RCVD*, f. 1.

specific participation of his wife, who is described as the daughter of the great prince Theobald and whose approval was witnessed in the chapter of Bonneval itself by her elder sister, Isabelle, the former duchess of Apulia and widow of William Gouet.³⁵

It is possible therefore to make a case for the Perche continuing under Rotrou III in its role as a potential irritant to the rulers of Normandy, but with some decrease in the count's autonomy as he was drawn into a network of family relationships. What had begun, however, as a set of family alliances established by Theobald IV in the face of the advancing power of his Angevin rival took on an entirely different character in the 1160s as the Theobald's alliances became subsumed in a far greater coalition against the Plantagenets. The creation of a new alignment between the Thibaudian family and Louis VII as both parties re-examined their position in relation to the greatly increased power of the Plantagenet count of Anjou, who was now Henry II of England and Normandy, was the major political development of that decade, and indicates the scale of the political changes which caused it.

Relations between the Thibaudian family and the Capetian kings had always been tense and open conflict had broken out on a number of occasions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most notably in the reign of Louis VII over the divorce of Count Theobald's niece, Eleanor, by the Count of Vermandois.³⁶ The first signs of a change can be detected in the late 1140s, when there was a marked improvement achieved in part by the enthusiastic participation of Theobald's eldest son, Henry, in the second crusade.³⁷ During the course of the expedition Henry was promised Louis VII's only daughter Mary in marriage. Although that marriage did not take place until 1164 the betrothal was the first indication of a lasting rapprochement between the counts of Blois/Champagne and the Capetians.³⁸

Shortly after the death of Count Theobald IV in January 1152 his sons and successors, Henry count of Champagne and Theobald count of Blois, were pressed into alliance with King Louis by the increase in the authority of Henry Plantagenet, duke of Normandy and count of Anjou, brought about by his marriage of Louis's divorced wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine.³⁹ Count Theobald V of Blois himself had sought to profit from the divorce by attempting to detain the former queen

35 AD Eure-et-Loir H619: *Rotrodus Perticensis comes et uxor mea Maildis magni principis comitis Teobaldi filia concedentibus filiis nostris Gaufrido et Stephano atque Rotrodo...hoc ipsum confirmavit in capitulo Boneuallis uxor mea Maildis cum predictis filiis nostris et donum super altare martirum posuit. Testes cum ea Ducissa soror ejus.*

36 Relations between the Thibaudian and Capetian families in the first half of the twelfth century are reviewed in Bur, *Champagne*, 281-92. It is perhaps overstating the case to describe Theobald as the 'intractable enemy' of Louis VI, E. Hallam, *Capetian France, 987-1328* (London, 1980), 119. There had been occasions on which their interests had coincided, but the proximity of the Thibaudian lands to the royal demesne and, after the resumption of Champagne in 1125, their near encirclement of that demesne was bound to lead to tension.

37 T. Evergates, 'Louis VII and the counts of Champagne', 113.

38 Torigni, i, 351, see also the supporting charter material cited in A. Fourier, 'Retour au "terminus"', in *Mélanges de langue et de littérature du moyen âge et de renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier* (Geneva, 1970), 305, n.41.

39 *Chronicae sancti Albini Andegavensis in unum congestae*, in *Chroniques des Églises d'Anjou*, ed. Marchegay and Mabille, 37: *rex Francie multique comites ac proceres sed et frater Hainrici Gaufridus guerram pessimam contra eum machinantes ipsum exhereditare cupiunt.*

on her return to Poitou, but had been unsuccessful, and in the summer of 1152 he and Henry of Champagne were among those who met to conspire against Eleanor's new husband, Henry Plantagenet.⁴⁰ When Henry's energetic campaigning repulsed the combined forces of the

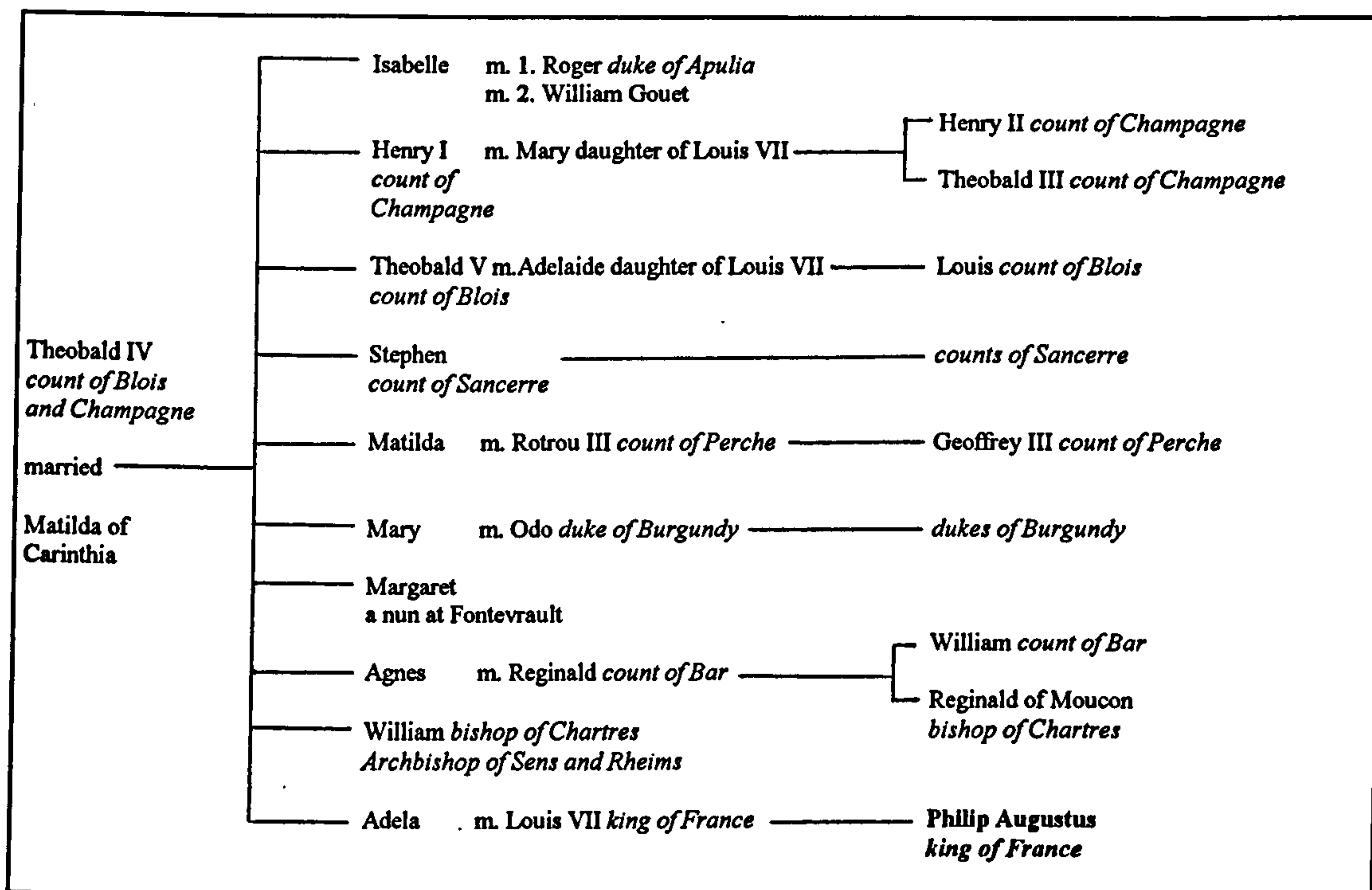


Figure 7:1 *The in-laws of Rotrou III count of Perche*

Capetians, the Thibaudian brothers, Eustace of Boulogne and his own brother Geoffrey in 1152, the alliance seems to have dissolved, for in the next year there is no mention of the participation of Counts Henry and Theobald in Louis' campaigns towards Normandy.⁴¹

The brothers remained uncommitted throughout the 1150s and there are signs of rapprochement between Theobald and King Henry II, while the count of Champagne may even have sought to repudiate his royal bride in the early 1160s.⁴² The marriage of King Louis and Adela, Henry and Theobald's youngest sister, however marked an important stage in the revival of the coalition.⁴³ For the first time a marriage alliance had been undertaken rather than projected and it presented the Thibaudian counts with an important stake in the future of the Capetian family, for it offered

⁴⁰ For Theobald and the former queen, *Chronicon Turonense*, *RHF*, xii, 474: *...apud Baugentiacum castrum jurata consanguinitate uxorem suam repudiat. Quo facto regina Belsim rediit; sed Theobaldo comite Belsensi eam per vim nubere sibi volente, de nocte fugit et inde evadens Turonis venit...*

⁴¹ Torigni, i, 261-2, 267-70, 272, 277.

⁴² Theobald co-operated with King Henry in his efforts to secure the borders of his territory, ceding him Amboise and Fréteval, Torigni, i, 314-5 and he acted on Henry's behalf during the Toulouse campaign, Torigni, i, 322: *Remisit itaque Rex Henricus comitem Teobaldum, qui ei favebat, ut inquietaret regnum Franciae.* Henry had repaid Theobald with signs of favour, Geoffrey of Vigeois, *Chronicon Lemovicense*, *RHF*, xii, 439: *...Theobaldus Blesensis frater Henrici de S. Jacobo rediens a toto conventu festive exceptus...x marchas argenti obtulit...Expensas ei per suum principatum licet invito Rex Anglorum regaliter praepravit...* On Henry's long-lasting engagement and possible repudiation of Mary, Fourier, 'Retour au "terminus"', 309.

⁴³ The marriage of Louis and Adela is often described as the culmination of the realignment, Dunbabin, *France*, 316, but there was always the possibility of disintegration until the birth of the heir five years later.

the prospect that a son born of that marriage would be both king of France and their nephew. The king's choice of a Thibaudian bride was almost certainly decisive in the consolidation of the alliance, although a number of other devices were used to strengthen the links between the two families. In 1165 William of the White Hands, a younger brother of Henry and Theobald became bishop of Chartres despite his youth and Theobald himself had been honoured with the title of royal seneschal.⁴⁴ It was to be family ties however, which finally cemented the alignment. In 1164 Theobald of Blois married Louis VII's second daughter, Adelaide, and in the following year Henry eventually contracted his long-delayed marriage with her elder sister, Mary, but the final component of the alliance arrived in August 1165 with the birth of Louis and Adela's son, Philip.

By the early 1170s then the count of the Perche appears to have been completely detached from the Anglo-Norman alliance favoured by his father. Rotrou III moved within the orbit of his wife's family, the counts of Blois and was on the verge of being drawn into a much wider coalition of anti-Plantagenet forces. Nonetheless at the point where the Capetian/Blois coalition appears at its strongest in the 1170s, there are indications of a revival in the Anglo-Norman connections of the Rotrou family. A link with the Plantagenet court was reopened in the person of Rotrou's younger brother, Geoffrey, who first appears in the acts of King Henry II in 1174. He witnessed the peace treaty between the king and his sons in the autumn of that year and some weeks later on 8 December 1174 witnessed William the Lion's homage at Valognes.⁴⁵ In October 1175 he was present when the treaty between Henry and Ruaidrí king of Connacht was drawn up at Windsor and throughout the 1170s there are signs of favour in the financial records, including the payment of the substantial sum of £56 on the 1180 Norman exchequer roll.⁴⁶ By the mid 1170s Geoffrey was well-established in England and assumed control of the family's English property.⁴⁷ His access to the English king must have facilitated the rapprochement between King Henry and the count of Perche, which begins to become apparent in the middle 1170s.

An increasing cordiality between the Rotrou and Plantagenet family is first indicated in the pipe roll of 1177/8 which records a visit by Count Rotrou to England made at the king's expense.⁴⁸ The reason for the visit cannot be determined, but the good relations continued into the 1180s, even though Geoffrey of Perche had died before September 1181.⁴⁹ Late in 1182 or more probably in 1183 Count Rotrou was granted control of Geoffrey's property and proceeded in the

⁴⁴ Torigni, i, 357. For Theobald as seneschal, A. Luchaire, *Études sur les actes de Louis VII* (Paris, 1885), 47.

⁴⁵ *Actes Henri II*, ii, 21, 23.

⁴⁶ *Actes Henri II*, ii, 46; *Gesta*, i, 102-3; Howden, ii, 85. *PR 21 Henry II*, 103, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 39: *per cartam Regis*.

⁴⁷ *PR 21 Henry II*, 103.

⁴⁸ *PR 24 Henry II 1177/8*, 121: *in procuracione comitis de Perticha*. The visit which is recorded in the Kent section of the pipe roll may have been a visit to Canterbury. Henry had financed a similar all-expenses paid excursion made by Theobald V of Blois to Compostella in 1159, Geoffrey of Vigeois, *RHF*, xii, 439.

⁴⁹ *PR 27 Henry II*, 97: *censu statuto de Aldeburn' post mortem Galfridi de Pertica*. His debts continued to be recorded in the pipe rolls well into the reign of John among the pledges to Aaron of Lincoln.

next year to give the advowsons of two parish churches in Wiltshire to the new hospital in Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁵⁰

King Henry's good will towards Rotrou would have been further enhanced by the count's activities in Poitou in 1183. In the early summer of that year, as the Young King attempted to seize Aquitaine from his brother Richard, Rotrou and Bernard bishop of Agen acted as intermediaries between the young Henry and his father.⁵¹ Rotrou was particularly well-qualified for the job of peace-making, since he had connections in the area among the families whom the Young King had sought to persuade to his side and he had been a supporter of the young Henry in 1173.⁵² In the event the death of the Young King meant that negotiations came to nothing, but Rotrou's willingness to make the attempt was an indication of the changed relations between the old king and the count of Perche. It is possible too that Rotrou's interest in the Grandmontine order, which Henry II patronised, also contributed to this improvement.⁵³ Grandmontine monks played a major part in the diplomatic initiatives of Henry's reign and familiarity with the members of the order, which would necessarily have been a consequence of Rotrou's foundation of a Grandmontine house at Chêne Galon just to the north of the forest of Bellême, would have done no harm to relations between the two courts.⁵⁴

The rationale behind the resumption of friendly relations between the Perche and the Plantagenet realm is abundantly clear. Count Rotrou was as tempted by the English lands offered by Henry II as his father had been by the inducements of Henry I. His opportunities for expansion from the Perche were now limited by the tight network of family relationships in which he found himself. The lands of his brothers-in-law, the count of Blois and William Gouet lay to the south and east of his territory, his cousin Richer of Laigle held property to the north-west and his nephew-in-law John of Alençon was heir to widespread property to the west of the Perche. The career of his brother Geoffrey, however, would have indicated that opportunities were available for the family to increase its holdings in England.

For his part the king of England was returning to the policies of his grandfather by cultivating the friendship of his neighbours. In the years before the 1173 rebellion Henry had ensured the

50 *PR 29 Henry II 1182/3*, 128: *de firma Aldiburna et de Wamberga terra Galfridi de Pertico antequam comes frater ejus habuisset*; 129: *Et comiti de Perch'in catallis de Aldeburna per breve regis*.

51 Geoffrey of Vigeois, *Chronicon Lemovicense*, *RHF*, xviii, 217: *Inter utrosque tunc Comes Rotro del Perche et Britannus praesul de Aye discurrebant de pace tractantes per quos pater filio annulum pretiosum direxerat qui Henrici munifici Regis olim exstitisse narratur*. The Young King's activities in the south are briefly discussed in R. Benjamin, 'A forty years war: Toulouse and the Plantagenets, 1156-96', *Historical Research*, lxi (1988), 270-85.

52 Rotrou's aunt, Matilda, had married successively the Raymond of Turenne and Guy of Les Tours, Geoffrey of Vigeois, *RHF*, xii, 436. Her descendants are mentioned throughout Geoffrey's work. Raymond of Turenne had been closely associated with the young Henry in the last days of his life, as Geoffrey of Vigeois narrates, and had died in Martel which lay within Raymond's jurisdiction, *Gesta*, i, 301.

53 E. Hallam, 'Henry II, Richard I and the order of Grandmont', *Journal of Medieval History*, i (1975), 165-85.

54 No act of foundation for Chêne Galon survives, though the terms of the confirmation given to the house by Rotrou's son, the Count-Bishop William, imply that Rotrou was its founder, Duchesne 54, p. 461: *quicquid habent et possident ex dono antecessorum nostrorum scilicet bonae memoriae Rotrodi patris mei et Gaufridi fratris mei comitum Pertici*.

security of his vast realm by military means, both his own energetic activity and the maintenance of a series of castles. The border regions of southern Normandy and Maine were protected by his deal with Theobald and Rotrou in 1158, in which he had acquired Amboise, Fréteval, Moulins and Bonsmoulins, and by his own new castle of Beauvoir at Bourg-le-Roi.⁵⁵ His acquisition of the great Gouet castle of Montmirail in 1169 completed a line of fortresses, and the castles of Alençon and La Roche-Mabille, which he had secured from the Talvas family in 1166, gave strength in depth behind that line.⁵⁶ (Map 7:1 Castles acquired by Henry II in southern Normandy and Maine)

The raid on Sées in 1174 undertaken by the young king, Rotrou and his allies, although not disastrous in its effects, had been a repetition of that undertaken by Rotrou's stepfather in 1151 and illustrated how easily such fortifications might be bypassed, as well as showing all too clearly the continuing threat from the Perche.⁵⁷ From the 1170s Henry seems to have decided that reliance on border fortresses was not enough, but needed to be combined with the conciliation of his near neighbours and it was to be an effective policy.⁵⁸ The accommodation with the Perche worked well for the rest of the reign. There were no further sorties from the Perche and even in the closing days of the king's life after the meeting at La Ferté-Bernard, when much of Northern Maine surrendered to Richard and King Philip, there is no indication that Count Rotrou welcomed Henry's enemies.⁵⁹

Rotrou's mission to the Young King in 1183 was the first indication that the traditional role of the Perche between power blocs had been revitalised. Although Rotrou was acting as an envoy between the head of the Plantagenet family and his eldest son, it was Rotrou's connections with the Capetian alliance and his support of the Young King in 1173 which made him an acceptable envoy. In the autumn of 1189 he can be found in the same role.⁶⁰ Rotrou had himself taken the cross in 1188 and was in the process of setting his affairs in order when he was sent by Philip Augustus to the new Plantagenet king, Richard I.⁶¹ His role in 1189 was to make administrative arrangements for the forthcoming crusade and in the spring of 1191 it was to act as a guarantor

⁵⁵ For the building of Beauvoir, Torigni, ii, 14.

⁵⁶ Henry bought Montmirail from William Gouet's son-in-law and heir, Hervey of Gien, in 1169, Torigni, ii, 15-16: *..Herveus intercurrente magna pecunia et quibusdam pactionibus tradidit Henrico regi Anglorum Montem Mirabilem...* For Alençon and La Roche Mabille, Torigni, i, 360: *Willermus Talavacius comes Sagiensis et filius ejus Johannes et iterum Johannes nepos ejus filius Guidonis primogeniti sui comitis Pontivi concesserunt regi Henrico castrum Alenceium et Rocam Mabiliae cum eis quae ad ipsa pertinent. Et forsitan ideo praedictas municiones perdiderunt, quia malas consuetudines ipsi et eorum antecessores diu ibi tenuerant...* Despite Torigni's comment that the family may have lost the castles because of malpractice, the consent of both lines of the Talvas family implies that the castles were ceded, possibly purchased rather than seized by the king.

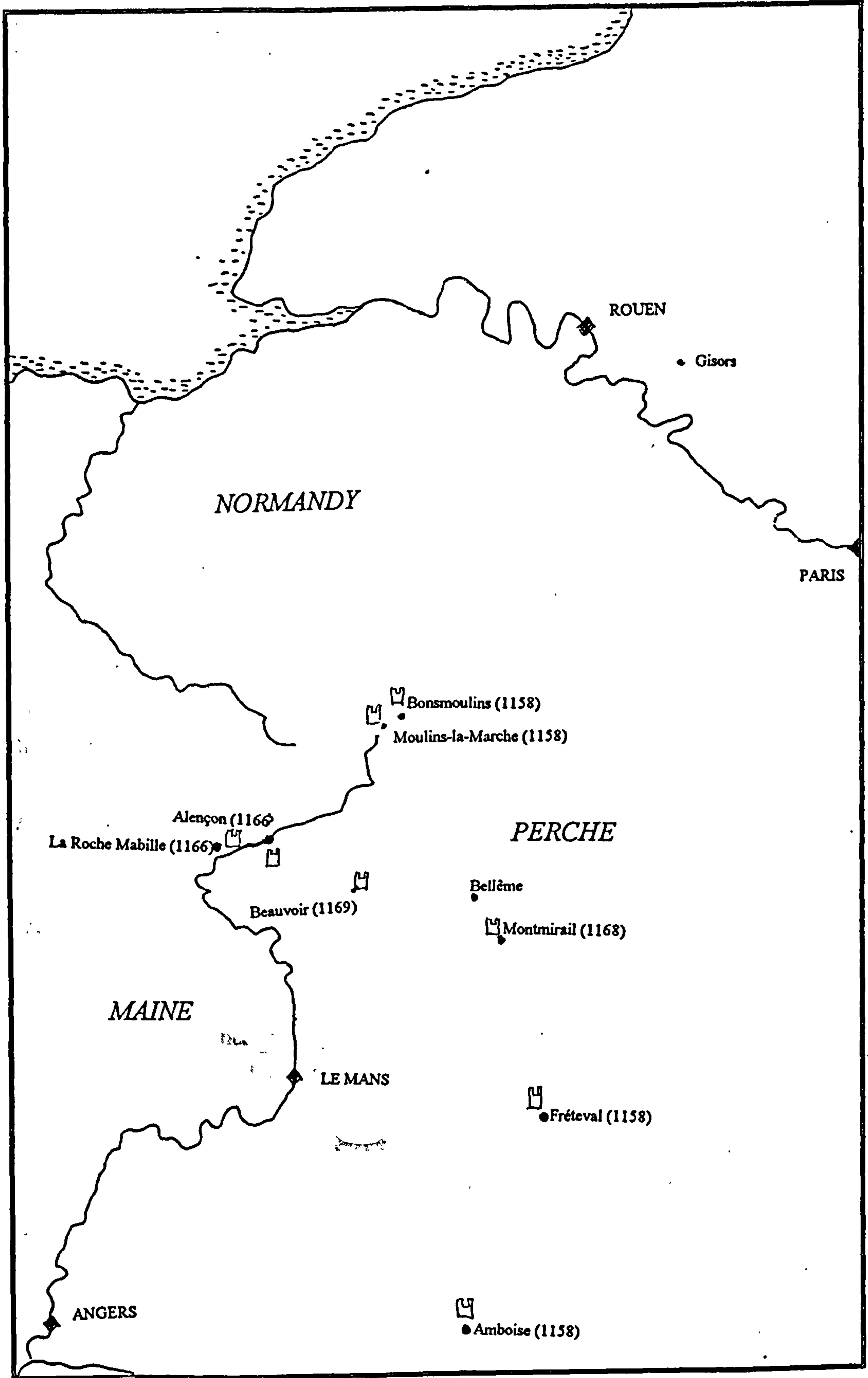
⁵⁷ On castles in the Angevin empire, Powicke, *Loss*, 196-204; Warren, *King John*, 73-4.

⁵⁸ Henry and Richard seem to have pursued a similar policy with Robert of Dreux, who received £300 annually from King Henry and £600 from Richard, *Rot. chart.*, 58.

⁵⁹ The material on the closing days of Henry's life is reviewed in W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), 623-6.

⁶⁰ Howden, iii, 19-20; Wendover, i, 170. Wendover places the embassy in October and Howden in November. Since Howden was almost certainly not at court in the period, Wendover's date is more likely to be correct, D. Corner, 'The *Gesta regis Henrici secundi* et the *Chronica* of Roger, parson of Howden', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, lvi (1983), 126-45.

⁶¹ For Rotrou's preparations, *LT*, 587-90 (Manves 1189); *GC*, xi, col. 823 for St Evroul (22 July 1189); *CMPerche*, no. 34 (June 1190); *NDC*, i, p. 221 (19 June 1190); *CSJ C/108* (1190).



Map 7 : 1 Castles acquired by Henry II in southern Normandy and Maine

of the settlement reached between Richard and Philip at Messina.⁶² His son Geoffrey was even better placed to take on the role of intermediary, which he undertook in October 1190 when he was among a deputation of nobles who remonstrated with King Richard about the behaviour of Richard's troops.⁶³ For Geoffrey was not only cousin of the French king, Philip, but he had also married into the Plantagenet family itself.

When Richard Count of Poitou succeeded his father in July 1189 he was an experienced ruler with a particular political purpose: he was intent on leading an expedition to Jerusalem. He clearly appreciated the potential of his father's accommodation with the Perche and within days of his accession he must have approached the count with an offer of a marriage alliance. By 20 July 1189, when Richard was invested as duke of Normandy, negotiations had been completed and on the afternoon of the investiture in Rouen Rotrou's eldest son, Geoffrey, was married to Richard's niece, Richenza-Matilda of Saxony.⁶⁴ The bride had been much sought after by would-be allies of the Plantagenets and she brought as her *maritagium* the so-called honour of the constable.⁶⁵ The honour was centred on the manor of Haughley in Suffolk, by which name it was sometimes described, and was made up from the property escheated to the crown by Henry of Essex in the 1160s.⁶⁶ It also included the honour of Rayleigh in Essex and extensive interests in Kent, where 19 fees were said to pertain to the *constabularia Anglie* in 1203.⁶⁷ It was the same incentive which Henry I had used to win over Rotrou II nearly ninety years before, a marriage alliance and a parcel of English lands, but in 1189 the contractual consideration was rather greater. Where Rotrou II's wife had been one among many of Henry I's illegitimate daughters, Richenza-Matilda seems to have been particularly attached to her uncle King Richard and the honour of the constable was clearly far more substantial than the two Wiltshire manors which had constituted the first Countess Matilda's dowry.⁶⁸

Nonetheless Richard's attempt to secure the cooperation of the Perche was initially unsuccessful. The king remained well-disposed to his niece's new husband, as a payment of 50s. to Geoffrey of Perche recorded in the pipe roll of 1190/1 suggests, and Geoffrey was among the witnesses of Richard's marriage settlement made in Limassol in 1191.⁶⁹ Geoffrey, however, despite the increase in his resources brought about by marriage to Matilda and an interest in crusading

⁶² *Dip. doc. 1101-1272*, no. 5. Rotrou is described simply as the count of Perche.

⁶³ *Gesta*, ii 128, Howden, iii, 57.

⁶⁴ *Gesta*, ii, 73. William the Lion and Bela of Hungary had been previous suitors, Jordan, *Henry the Lion*, 185.

⁶⁵ *CRR*, xiii, no. 684 where it is described as the *honore de Essex*. For the honour of the constable, *PR 5 John 1203*, 27 under Kent *in hoc comitatu qui pertinent ad constabulariam Anglie*. Haughley itself had been worth £20 in 1086 and in 1205 46 fees were associated with it, *PR 5 John 1203*, 175.

⁶⁶ J. H. Round, *The king's serjeants and officers of state* (London, 1911), 81; I. Sanders, *English baronies* (Oxford, 1960), 121.

⁶⁷ *PR 7 John 1205*, 27.

⁶⁸ In September 1189 only two months after her marriage Richenza-Matilda joined Richard at Geddington, *Gesta*, ii, 87 and she joined her grandmother, Queen Eleanor on 21 April 1199 at Fontevrault, shortly after Richard's burial there, *CDF*, no. 1301, text in *Layettes*, i, no. 489.

⁶⁹ *PR 3 Richard I 1191*, 60. For Richard's marriage, *Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum historicum dogmaticorum moralium amplissima collectio*, ed. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris, 1724-33), i, 995 quoted in L. Landon, *The itinerary of King Richard I* (PRS NS, 13, London, 1935), no. 358.

shared with King Richard, reverted to a policy of antagonism as soon as he returned from the crusade. From 1192 the Perche again became a hostile area beyond the southern border of the duchy of Normandy, from which enemies of the Plantagenets might launch raids. Geoffrey himself clearly anticipated conflict for he strengthened the defences of the castle at Bellême and his hostilities with King Richard's Norman subjects are clearly implied in the terms of a treaty made at Melun on 9 July 1193, in the long process of negotiation for King Richard's release.⁷⁰ In the treaty it is specifically stated that Geoffrey should hold his English revenues in their entirety and that the forces of the king of England should keep the peace with him. The implication is that some of Geoffrey's property was appropriated by the English authorities after he had been at war with supporters of King Richard.

The withholding of Geoffrey's English revenues was scarcely a policy calculated to control a magnate such as Geoffrey, who had returned from the Holy Land burdened with debts and had been obliged to seek a payment of £200 from the Cluniacs of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁷¹ Even after the settlement of Melun the count continued take advantage of his position and in the summer of 1194, as Richard made his way back to his kingdom after his eventual release, Geoffrey of Perche was among the allies of the French king who struggled to take possession of the property conceded by Prince John in a treacherous agreement made with the French king in January 1194.⁷² Geoffrey's share of John's handout would have been possession of the castles of Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins and it is clear that he made every effort to secure them. The warfare around Moulins has left traces in the Norman pipe roll for 1195 and Mortagne itself must have been the scene of fighting for Geoffrey made a generous grant in 1195 to repair the buildings of the Maison-Dieu there which had been damaged in the conflict.⁷³ When King Richard finally reappeared he made his displeasure felt and penalised his niece's husband, for the 1194 pipe roll shows Geoffrey's English properties of Aldbourne and Wanborough in Wiltshire as escheats, while Toddington in Bedfordshire was at farm.⁷⁴

Chronicle sources reveal nothing of count Geoffrey's activities in the years between 1195 and 1198, but it is clear that during this time he came to realise the benefits of a closer relationship with the Plantagenet rulers. While it had taken his father over twenty years to reestablish friendly relations with the rulers of Normandy, Geoffrey recovered from his initial misjudgement within

⁷⁰ Querimoniae, nos. 135, 164 for the ditches of Bellême castle. Howden, iii, 281: *Comes Particii redditus suos in Anglia integre habebit et rex Angliae et sui pacem ei tenebunt*, K. Norgate, *England under the Angevin kings* (London, 1887), ii, 325; J. Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (London, 1978), 238.

⁷¹ *NLR*, no. CX.

⁷² *Layettes*, i, no. 412. It is possible that Geoffrey was involved in the capture of the Anglo-Norman lord, Robert earl of Leicester, who was defending Rouen. One manuscript of Matthew Paris' *Historia Minor* attributes the capture to Roscelin of Beaumont, but the B and C mss mention the count of the Perche, Matthew Paris, *Historia minor*, ii, 51. William the Breton says that Robert was actually brought down by Matthew of Marly, Philippidos IV, II, 503-10.

⁷³ *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 245-6; Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 156-8.

⁷⁴ *PR 6 Richard I*, 18, 26, 199; the sums involved were £10 11s. 8d. per quarter in Wiltshire with £8 6d for the sale of wood and £2 8s. 6d. in Bedfordshire and a further £12 3s. in that county from sales. Since the receipts are for a quarter only it would appear that Geoffrey had lost these English lands in the summer of 1194.

months of King Richard's return. By September 1195 King Richard had relented, the escheats of Geoffrey's English property disappear from the pipe rolls and there are even signs of favour. Exemptions from taxation for Geoffrey's lands in Essex, Hertfordshire and Kent, granted by the king's writ, are recorded in the 1195/6 pipe roll and it would appear that Geoffrey was free to enjoy his English property.⁷⁵ Certainly there are indications that he received considerable revenues from it. When the property later came into royal hands less than half a year's revenues amounted to nearly £200 and two confirmations of property which survive show substantial sums being paid to the count in fees.⁷⁶

Indeed Geoffrey may well have assumed that he had created a cross-channel connection similar to those which had flourished a hundred years previously. There are indications of his commitment to his English property. Between 1194 and 1199 he and Richenza-Matilda gave two virgates of land at Aldbourne to fund the supply of wine for the mass at the Augustinian priory of Southwick in Hampshire, a house conveniently situated for hospitality on a passage between the Perche and the Wiltshire/Berkshire estates. At the same time they made their own foundation of an Augustinian priory at Sandford outside Newbury, to which they committed the land and church of Sandford together with 3 marks of revenue from the mills of Newbury itself.⁷⁷ These English benefactions are in marked contrast with those of Geoffrey's grandfather and father, who chose to use their English resources to make only minor gifts to continental houses.⁷⁸

Geoffrey's relationship with the Plantagenets was apparently at its most cordial however, not under Richard, but under his brother John. Geoffrey had witnessed one of John's charters given at Rouen in the lifetime of Richard and it may be that a friendship had developed between the men.⁷⁹ Soon after his first coronation King John gave Geoffrey a writ of exemption from scutage in Wiltshire and allowed a purpresture of £50 to remain unpaid through the earlier years of his reign.⁸⁰ In February 1200 the king and Geoffrey exchanged contracts to facilitate commerce. William de Brion of Rouen was to act on Geoffrey's behalf throughout the king's lands with the exception of the city of London and in return Geoffrey conceded to the king the services of Odo Sirebon of Mortagne.⁸¹

⁷⁵ *PR 8 Richard I 1196*, 120.

⁷⁶ When the property was temporarily under crown control in 1207 Robert Peverel rendered £196 12s. 1d. for the period 29 September to 2 February, *PR 9 John 1207*, 112-13. It is possible that this represents only part of Geoffrey's revenues, however, for John's writ committing the property to the charge of Robert Peverel mentions only Newbury, Aldbourne and Wanborough, *Rot.Litt. Pat.*, 66b. When Geoffrey confirmed property to Adam de Kenete he received 30 marks of silver and the countess 3 marks, PRO E326/7482, while a similar confirmation to Geoffrey Perdriz procured 9 marks of silver for the count and one for the countess, BL Harleian charter 54.g.26.

⁷⁷ Southwick, I, f. 28v, *Monasticon*, vi, 565.

⁷⁸ BL Cotton Vesp. xv F, f. 171v., *Book of Fees*, 738 for Rotrou II's gifts. Rotrou III gave the advowson of Aldbourne to the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou, Bry, *Additions*, 75.

⁷⁹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on manuscripts in various collections*, vol. vii (London, 1914), 376-7.

⁸⁰ *PR 1 John 1199*, 180: *Isti habent quietantiam de scutagiis assisis ad duas marcas per brevia post primam coronationem regis Johnanis*; *PR 2 John 1200*, 50, *PR 3 John 1202*, 70, *PR 4 John 1202*, 266.

⁸¹ *Rot. Chart.* 35. In September of the same year Odo Sirebon supplied the king with 10 ermine hoods, 27 squirrel hoods, 3 miniver hoods, 10 sables and 2 civet skins, *Rotuli Normanniae in turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1835), 31. Odo's descendants later went to law concerning his rights to exemption from sales

These favours, however, are completely overshadowed by a grant John made to Geoffrey at Château Gaillard on 24 May 1200.⁸² In his conveyance John gave Geoffrey an annual sum £1000 made up from a number of sources, the most substantial element of which was represented by the lands of all those who had been granted property on the honour of Henry of Essex since the new enfeoffment. Geoffrey held the honour as the *maritagium* of his wife and the annual value of these alienations, made in the thirty years previous to Geoffrey's tenure, were now to form part of the sum assigned by the king to the count of Perche, while their tenants were to be compensated.⁸³ In addition the king conceded the revenues of the royal manor of Shrivenham in Wiltshire until land of an equal value could be found and the balance of the £1000 was to be found from the exchequer.⁸⁴ The grant was not only a generous subsidy from English sources to the count of Perche, but it was also a sign of the highest favour, since it represents the satisfaction of a personal demand from the count. King John had not simply granted £1000 worth of annual revenue to the count; he had granted it in such a form that it could potentially produce significantly more. Geoffrey clearly wanted to reconstitute the honour of Henry of Essex as it had existed at the time of its forfeiture, presumably because the best properties had been alienated and the resumption of that property would permit more efficient exploitation.

John's good will towards his niece's husband continued until Geoffrey's death in 1202. He was careful, for example, to guard Geoffrey's interests in March 1202 when enquiry was to be made into property rights within the honour of Henry of Essex and he permitted Geoffrey to mortgage property for two years while he was on crusade, although there is no further largesse on the scale of the Château Gaillard grant. Nonetheless at some point before his death Geoffrey had succeeded in obtaining another major concession from the Plantagenets. Charter evidence indicates that before 1202 Geoffrey had control of the castellanries of Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins to the north east of his territory, for he not only gave the chapel within the castle itself to Saint-Evroul, but also granted rights to their tenants throughout the *bailliam*.⁸⁵ It is clear therefore that Geoffrey had not only recovered the militarily important fortresses, but also

taxes, *Les Olim* (Paris, 1839-48), i, 213, no. 6. It is tempting to see in Odo of Mortagne a go-between acting between the king and the count.

⁸² *Rot. Chart.*, 64b.

⁸³ *Rot. Chart.*, 64b:...*et eis quibus date fuerunt terre ille rationabile escambium faciemus*. Evidence of the compensation process at work can be found. On 29 September 1201 the king authorised Geoffrey fitz Peter to give William de Bretteville cash for the [annual] value of his land at Rotherhithe until land of equal value could be assigned to him, *Rotuli de liberate ac de misis de praestitis regnante Johanne*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1844), 20. In 1202 William undertook to pay 40 marks of silver for seisin of his lands, *Rotuli de oblatiis et finibus in turri Londinensi asservati tempore regis Johannis*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1837), 186, but only paid 10 marks, *PR 4 John 1202*, 271, 275. John ordered some of this property to be repossessed in March 1202, but was careful to indemnify Geoffrey against any loss, *Rotuli de liberate*, 28. Holders of the fees might have expected their seisin to be secure since Richard had confirmed some grants in December 1189, Cambridge, Peterhouse muniments, West Wrattling B 1, calendared in *Acta of Henry II and Richard I: handlist of documents surviving in the original repositories in the UK*, ed. J.C. Holt and R. Mortimer (List and Index Society Special series, vol. 21 1986), no. 349.

⁸⁴ The manor had been assessed at 46 hides in 1086 when it was worth £45, but in 1202 when the sheriff of Berkshire accounted on Geoffrey's behalf the figure involved was £52, so it appears that Geoffrey was granted the royal rights from the whole hundred of which Shrivenham was the head. Geoffrey's own notification of the grant is also enrolled, *Rot. Chart.*, 96.

⁸⁵ AD Orme H721.

secured the ducal rights and revenues associated with the area, which permitted him to bestow forest rights and exemptions from taxes on the monks. An entry in Philip Augustus' Register A concerning the knight service owed by the counts of the Perche within Normandy indicates that the counts also held property at *Gaspreia* (probably Gaprée (Orne, ct. Courtomer) some 14 kilometres west of Moulins on the road to Sées).⁸⁶ Just as he had succeeded in reconstituting the honour of Essex in England, Geoffrey had now secured the property which he had previously tried to achieve by the terms of John's treacherous treaty of 1194 and he had satisfied long-standing designs in the Moulins area, nurtured by his family for the best part of a century. The grant of the castles and their associated property was obviously a subvention of some importance and it is necessary to look for a major shift in policy to justify it.

The later years of Richard's reign in Normandy have been described as 'a struggle for dominance in the region between Paris and Rouen' and no effort was spared on either side to secure victory.⁸⁷ The extent of the war effort is apparent from the Norman pipe roll of 1198 and the colossal expenditure on the fortification of La Roche d'Andelys is only one example of Richard's commitment to the conflict upon which all his resources were henceforth brought to bear.⁸⁸ While Richard expended subsidies on the rulers of the Low Countries and cash to secure the election of his nephew Otto as Holy Roman Emperor, the concession of a couple of castles and some ducal rights on the southern border to his nephew-in-law might well have seemed a good bargain.⁸⁹ In return Richard would have received not only Geoffrey's cooperation, but military service as well. Geoffrey's brother, Stephen, had taken service with King Richard in 1195, for he received a payment of £266 13s. 4d. and Geoffrey himself undertook to supply ten knights' service for Bellême, which he held from Richard as duke of Normandy.⁹⁰

Powicke remarks that Richard "understood the art of giving" and the king certainly deployed that art to draw Geoffrey and many others into alliance.⁹¹ In 1197 the count of Flanders made an alliance with Richard and a list of the magnates who renounced their allegiance to the king of France in favour of the king of England is given by Howden in his account of the year 1198.⁹² By that date however the alliance was firmly in place and on the evidence relating to Stephen of Perche it seems more realistic to look for its inception fairly soon after Richard's return. Among the names on Howden's list appears that of Louis count of Blois, cousin of Geoffrey of Perche, who now appears to be following the lead of his cousin in an interesting reversal of their fathers' roles some forty years before.

86 *Scripta de feodis*, in *RHF*, xxiv, 706.

87 Gillingham, *Richard*, 252.

88 For the expenditure on Château Gaillard and the war effort, Powicke, *Loss*, 204-8.

89 Howden, iv, 19-20. *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, ii, 301 (Count of Boulogne), 302 (Count of St. Pol).

90 *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 137. The payment of substantial sums when taking up service is discussed by Church, 'Rewards', 280. Geoffrey's deal on knight service is known from his wife's renewal of the agreement after his death, *Rotuli de liberate*, 74: *comitissa Pertici finem fecit nobiscum ita scilicet quod ipsa...nobis faciet servicium decem militum de Belhem sicut comes dominus ejus inde facere consuevit.*

91 Powicke, *Loss*, 118.

92 *Itinerary*, 118-9, Howden, iv, 54. Gillingham, *Richard*, 270-2.

While the relationship between the Rotrou family and King John may at first sight seem warmer than that which they maintained with Richard, the impression may be a factor of better documentation. Once the fact of the transfer of Moulins has been established it suggests that John's generosity to Geoffrey at Château Gaillard in 1200 had been modelled on, not to say matched by, that of his brother some years before, but the Moulins grant had never been documented. Geoffrey himself plainly felt that there were enormous opportunities to be had from the Plantagenet connection. In his act granting property within the bailliwick of Moulins to Saint-Evroul he grants exemption from comital dues to the monks in all the lands he holds or may in future hold on that (the French) side of the Channel.⁹³

The liberality extended beyond Richard's nephew-in-law, however, as the career of Geoffrey's brother Stephen indicates. The 1195 payment from the Norman exchequer is not the only evidence that Stephen, emulating the role of his uncle Geoffrey at the Plantagenet court, had taken service with the English king, for he was with Richard at La Roche d'Orival on 13 August 1198 and an additional grant against the Norman exchequer of a £40 money fee was made at some point late in Richard's reign.⁹⁴ Stephen must have been particularly useful to Richard for the 1198 pipe roll records the payment of £360 to him and he seems also to have been granted temporary control of Fulk of Aunou's property in the Hiémois.⁹⁵ At some point before 1200 he also held property at Chambois (Orne, ct. Trun).⁹⁶

When John succeeded Richard it was very much business as usual for Stephen. In July 1200 John made him castellan of Châteauneuf-sur-Sarthe (Maine-et-Loire), north of Angers, and the impression that Stephen continued to make himself useful to the English king is confirmed by several other references in royal records.⁹⁷ He was responsible, for example, for the transport of Jewish bonds to Geoffrey fitz Peter and the king gave letters of protection for his serjeant, Matthew Albertus, to go about his business.⁹⁸ On 7 September 1201 Stephen was with John at Chinon, shortly presumably after having made the channel crossing with his knights and tackle

93 AD Orne H721: *libertatem et quietantiam coruagii et talliarum et aliarum quarumlibet exactionum omnium hominum suorum manentium in terris quas nunc habent uel habituri sum in toto tenemento meo...*

94 CDF, no. 310. Arrears of the fee are referred to in *Memoranda roll 1 John 1199-1200*, (PRS NS, 21), 95-6: *mandamus vobis quod faciatis habere dilecto nostro S[tephano de Pertico lx] li Andeg' que ei aretro sunt de reragio feodi sui.*

95 *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, ii, 386, 396. Stephen owed the Norman exchequer £32 for *auxilium* payable from the fee of Fulk of Aunou and there are several references in the 1198 roll to Fulk's own fines to the exchequer. It may be the Stephen had control of the property during a minority or temporary escheat.

96 *Rot. Chart.*, 75b: *...sicut idem Stephanus ipsum liberius et quietius habuit unquam dum predicta villa de Chambaii fuit in manu sua.* Chambois had had a variety of masters, including Ralph of Vermandois and Geoffrey de Mandeville, but by 1194/5 it was in royal hands, Stapleton, Introduction, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, clxii. In the eleventh century it had been the property of Gerald Flaitel, *RADN*, no. 108.

97 *Rot. Norm.*, 28. Châteauneuf and Stephen's money fee formed part of a pledge when he was raising money for the crusade, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 4b: *...si Stephanus de Pertico vobis non reddiderit pecuniam statutis termini quam mutuo de vobis recipiet vobis liberabimus feodum suum quod de nobis tenet apud Castell' Novum et praeterea liberabimus vobis quadrigenti libros And' quas habet de feodo ad scaccarium nostrum.*

98 *Rotuli de oblatiis*, 133, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 12..

for which a payment of 22s. was authorised on the Pipe Roll of 1201, and his crusading debts were guaranteed by the king on 20 May 1202.⁹⁹

The mechanics of the relationship between the Rotrou family and the sons of Henry II then relied upon the liberal remittance of patronage. While Geoffrey chose to accept the inducements offered by Richard and John in much the same way as his grandfather, Rotrou II, had taken those of Henry I, his relationship with his cousin, Philip Augustus seems in no way to have suffered. Geoffrey's demands found their way into both the treaties which have survived from the period of Richard's imprisonment, suggesting that he had the ear of the king, and he anticipated no difficulties in obtaining letters of confirmation from the king of France for his arrangement with the canons of Le Mans concerning Courgenard and from both the English and the French kings for the exchange of property which he made with the abbey of Saint-Evroul.¹⁰⁰

His family received signs of royal approval and performed to royal requirements. Rotrou, Geoffrey's younger brother, was elected to the royal bishopric of Châlons-sur-Marne in 1190 and had been among the panel of bishops who had approved King Philip's divorce from Ingeborg of Denmark.¹⁰¹ Another brother Theobald made his career among the clergy at Tours, while his probably youngest brother, William, was established at an early age at Chartres.¹⁰² Geoffrey himself was present at the Capetian court at Melun in April 1198 where he and King Philip's other cousins, Robert of Dreux and William of Bar stood surety for the king when he accepted the homage of yet another cousin, Theobald III, the new count of Champagne.¹⁰³

Even after the events of 1197/8 when Geoffrey and the other French lords had openly declared their support for the Plantagenets, it seems to have been remarkably easy for the count of Perche to reinstate himself in Philip Augustus's favour once Richard had been replaced by John. He attended the marriage of his cousin Theobald of Champagne, which took place at Chartres on 1 July 1199 and a reconciliation may have been effected shortly thereafter, perhaps by Geoffrey's aunt, the Queen Dowager Adela, who was also present.¹⁰⁴ By 22 May 1200 little more than a year after the death of Richard Geoffrey was sufficiently well-regarded by King Philip to be

99 *Cartae antique rolls 1-10*, no. 175; *PR 3 John 1201*, 283. He may also be the Stephen who witnessed an act of c. 1200, *Cartae antiquae rolls, 11-20*, no. 384. For his debts, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 4b.

100 *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV: *..litteras domni regis Francie, cum oportunitatem haberem, de protectione predictae terre eis apertas habere facerem..* .AD Orne H702: *super sacrosancta juravi quod perquirerem cartas regum Francorum et Anglie et archiepiscoporum Rothomagensis et Senonensis et episcoporum Carnotensis et Sagiensis et abbatis et conventus Blesensis et prioris et conventus de Nogento de quitantia omnium rerum quas in ecclesia et in tota parrochia de Maisonmaugis clamabant.*

101 Howden, iii, 307.

102 Theobald is listed among Geoffrey III's brothers, *NDC*, no. CXXXIV and appears as dean of Tours, *GC*, xi, col. 692. He was presumably among the canons there who were driven out by Richard in 1194, *Chronicon Turonense*, in *RHF*, xviii, 293, discussed briefly by J.C. Holt, 'The end of the Anglo-Norman realm', *Magna Carta and medieval government* (London, 1985), 54-55. For William of Perche, *Obits*, ii, 40.

103 *Actes Philippe Auguste*, ii, no. 581.

104 *Layettes*, i, no. 497

among his guarantors in the important treaty he made with John at Le Goulet in May 1200.¹⁰⁵ The implication seems to be that Geoffrey had found the magic formula for extracting concessions from both sides or at least the capacity to make himself useful to the king of France and the king of England.

The nature of that usefulness has already been outlined in terms of the strategic value of the Perche in any conflict between the Capetians and the Plantagenets, but an examination of Geoffrey's activities between the death of Richard and the treaty of Le Goulet implies that there may have been a further dimension to Geoffrey's usefulness. Just as Rotrou III's relations with the Capetians had made him an acceptable envoy to the Young King in 1183, so in 1199/1200 Geoffrey's connections, both familial and personal, at the two courts would have given him potential as an intermediary.

In the weeks immediately after Richard's death his brother John had to work quickly to ensure his own succession in preference to that of his nephew Arthur, duke of Brittany. Mindful perhaps of King Stephen's rush to Winchester, John made straight for Chinon where the family treasure was kept and then to Rouen, where on 25 April he was invested as duke of Normandy.¹⁰⁶ John then disappeared to England for his coronation on the 27 May, returning towards the end of June. The movements of the count of Perche during this period are unknown, though he may have been among the nameless counts and barons of the French kingdom who subsequently came to John offering allegiance¹⁰⁷ and he was almost certainly the Count Geoffrey who was at the king's court in Le Mans in the autumn of 1199.¹⁰⁸ His next verifiable appearance in the king's presence, however, occurred in the unlikely setting of Poitou on 23 November, where he witnessed a charter to Grandmont at Niort (Deux Sèvres).¹⁰⁹ As the first year of John's reign wore on negotiations were reopened between the two kings in January 1200. Shortly thereafter there was another recorded contact between King John and the count of Perche when a commercial agreement between them was notified by the king at Barfleur on 5 February 1200, shortly before the king set off for more than two months in England.¹¹⁰ When the king returned to Normandy at the beginning of May 1200 Count Geoffrey was to wait on him less than two weeks later on 16 May

105 *Dip. doc. 1101-1272*, no. 9. The manuscript tradition is discussed by C. Petit-Dutaillis, 'Les copies du traité de Paix de Goulet (22 mai 1200): variantes et falsifications', *BEC*, cii (1941), 35-50 and outlined in Powicke, *Loss*, 134, n. 46.

106 Howden, iv, 86-7.

107 Howden, iv, 95.: *Venerunt igitur ad Johannem regem Angliae comites et barones de regno Franciae qui adhaeserunt Ricardo regi Angliae et devenerunt homines Johannis regis et juraverunt ei quod ipsi cum rege Franciae non componerent nisi de consensu et voluntate illius; et ille juravit eis quod ipse pacem cum rege Franciae non faceret nisi ipsi essent infra pacem.* On 28 August 1199 John and Reginald of Boulogne agreed not to make peace or a truce with the king of France without consulting each other, *Rot. Chart.*, 30

108 *Rot. Chart.*, 31, an agreement between John and Aimery of Thouars is witnessed by the archbishop of Bordeaux, the bishop of St. Andrew's, Geoffrey count of, Robert earl of Leicester, Baldwin count of Aumale, Robert count of Eu, William Marshal, Geoffrey of Lusignan and William the constable of Normandy. The elevated position of Count Geoffrey suggests an attestor with interests beyond the Plantagenet realm.

109 *Rot. Chart.*, 62.

110 *Rot. Chart.*, 35.

at Le Goulet as he made arrangements to continue the subsidy which had been paid to Geoffrey's near neighbour, Robert of Dreux.¹¹¹

The treaty of Le Goulet, which was approved by John and Philip some days later on 22 May 1200, settled the Plantagenet succession.¹¹² The nagging question of Arthur's rights was finally settled and John was recognised as Richard's heir, but at the price of acknowledging the implicit superiority of Philip of France as overlord.¹¹³ The agreement was to be sealed by the marriage of John's niece, Blanche of Castille to Philip's son, Louis, and elaborate provisions were made for her dowry. The treaty was guaranteed on both sides by the oaths of nobles and among Philip's guarantors was the count of Perche. Two days later on 24 May John made the Château Gaillard grant to Geoffrey, satisfying the count's ambitions with regard to the honour of Henry of Essex and increasing his annual income by £1000, while the remaining rights possessed by the heirs of the counts of Vermandois in Stephen's property at Chambois were surrendered to the king.¹¹⁴

The evidence is clearly circumstantial but it does appear that Geoffrey had acted as an intermediary between his two lords, both of whom desired a settlement, but were beset by personal difficulties.¹¹⁵ John needed legitimation for his claim to the Plantagenet inheritance in preference to Arthur and Philip was in serious trouble with the church as a result of his repudiation of Ingeborg. Geoffrey's immediate fortunes were enhanced by the Château Gaillard grant and his standing with the French king was restored. In May 1201 his position at court was acknowledged as he witnessed at Sens Philip's acceptance of the countess of Champagne's homage during the minority of her son Theobald.¹¹⁶

Count Geoffrey of the Perche had been remarkably useful to the king of England, whether that king was Richard I or John, but equally the king of France could not do without him either, with the result that around the year 1200 the Perche reaches its apogee. Shortly before the death of Count Geoffrey in 1202 the county possessed influence and authority out of all proportion to its size and the natural resources that it commanded. Its influence was based for the most part on the exploitation of its strategic position between the lands of the kings of France and England, but in the last decade of the twelfth century that exploitation had been effected with considerable energy and intelligence. Where in the eleventh century the counts of Perche had asserted their independence by taking advantage of their position between emerging territorial principalities, in the twelfth century they performed the same feat but the power blocs were rather larger and more

111 *Rot. Chart.*, 58.

112 *Dip. doc. 1101-1272*, no.9.

113 For an analysis of the assertion of feudal rights by Philip and the shift in political balance, Holt, 'The end of the Anglo-Norman realm', 58-63.

114 *Rot. Chart.*, 58, 96. The main business of the treaty is enrolled on membrane 35 and Geoffrey and Eleanor of Saint-Quentin's acts are enrolled on the dorso.

115 A similar role is proposed for Constance of Beaumont, wife of Roger of Tosny in the settlement between John and Arthur made at Le Mans in 1199, A. Richard, *Histoire des comtes de Poitou (778-1204)* (Paris, 1903), ii, 359, but Constance only petitioned for and received her own *maritagium*, *Rot. Chart.*, 20b.

116 *Actes Philippe Auguste*, ii, no. 678.

significant. Some counts of the Perche were better at exploiting this position than others, but there can be little doubt that Geoffrey III played that role to near perfection.

Chapter 8

The Perche in the kingdom of France

At the turn of the thirteenth century the Perche seemed completely secure in its new role as an independent polity whose strategic position could be exploited by its rulers in the power struggles between the Capetians and the Plantagenets. Count Geoffrey III had adeptly managed all that he had undertaken. He had ruled his inheritance with energy and intelligence, exercising his lordship successfully, and he had manipulated his family relationships with the kings of both France and England, while remaining apparently well-regarded by both. The death of the count at Easter 1202, however, left the Perche without an adult ruler during the period of major upheaval when King John allowed Normandy, Anjou and Touraine to slip from his control into that of Philip Augustus. Where Count Geoffrey III and his ancestors before him, in particular Count Rotrou II, had been able to exploit potential conflict between major power groupings, no such power blocs were to exist in northern France after 1204. The authority of Philip Augustus as the king of France was to run over most of the land mass from the Loire to the Low Countries, and those areas not under his direct control, such as the Perche and the county of Blois, began to appear isolated and anachronistic.

The death of King Richard in a minor engagement at Châlus in Poitou in April 1199 was clearly regarded by contemporaries as a watershed. The French chronicler William the Breton even goes so far as to suggest that many of the nobles, such as Geoffrey of Perche, who had openly supported Richard of England in the closing months of his reign, took the cross because they had lost heart after the death of Richard.¹ His point is echoed by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, but Count Geoffrey was not to return to the Holy Land to improve on his earlier performance as his great-grandfather, Stephen of Blois, had done in 1101.² Although Geoffrey appears to have attended the briefing session for the new crusade at Soissons, he was taken ill in Lent 1202 and by Easter of that year he was dead.³

Geoffrey's illness and death were clearly unexpected. Even as late as 13 March 1202 King John was unaware of the seriousness of Geoffrey's illness and granted him a crusader's rights to mortgage his property for up to two years, while Geoffrey's own deathbed dispositions imply that he still had many schemes as yet unstated.⁴ He seems, for example, to have regarded his

¹ William the Breton, *Gesta*, i, 211: *Flandrensis, Blensensis, Perticensis comites, et alii porceres qui Philippo regi domino suo defecerant videntes se per mortem Richardi regis auxilio et consilio destitutos cruce assumpta*. Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 877.

² Brundage, 'An errant crusader', 391.

³ Villehardouin, 439.

⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 7: *dilectus et fidelis noster G. comes Pertic' possit cui uoluerit inuadiare terras suas quas de nobis tenet in Anglia et in Normannia quia ipse crucesignatus est usque in duos annos a die qua iter peregrinationis sue arripet*.

religious foundations of the College of Saint-Jean at Nogent-le-Rotrou and the Augustinian house at Sandeford as inadequate, for he left his widow instructions that she should found a new religious community in the Perche. He apparently however had no qualms about the extreme youth of his heir, despite the situation which had occurred less than a year previously when the widowed Countess of Champagne had been forced into major concessions in return for the recognition of her son.⁵ Instead, his major priority was the family's contribution to the forthcoming crusade. His younger brother Stephen, who might have been expected to act on behalf of the young Thomas, had been called to Geoffrey's deathbed at Le Theil and he was entrusted with command of the Geoffrey's troops, a bequest not relished by the historian Villehardouin.⁶ In order to permit the Percheron contingent to make a good showing in the East Stephen was given extensive financial resources and, after making a series of benefactions to local religious houses, departed for the East, probably travelling with his cousin Louis of Blois and leaving the Perche in the hands of his brother's widow.⁷

The situation in which the countess of Perche, Richenza-Matilda of Saxony, found herself after Geoffrey's death in 1202 was remarkably similar to that of Hawise of Salisbury some sixty years before. She was to be responsible for the Perche during the minority of a young son in a period of considerable upheaval in nearby Normandy, but unlike her predecessor Richenza-Matilda was much better equipped to cope. The dowager countess, who was exactly thirty when widowed, may well have been a woman of education and religious conviction for her connection with the noted Cistercian, Adam abbot of Perseigne, is indicated by a letter which he wrote to her.⁸ Her late husband's confidence in her ability to rule during the minority of their son, however, rested not only on her personal qualities, but would have been reinforced by her Plantagenet connections. For the countess possessed not only the important advantage of royal blood, but her standing with the Plantagenets was further enhanced by personal ties. She appears to have spent much of her childhood with her Plantagenet relatives owing to her father's exile from Germany and to have been particularly close to Richard, though in 1203 she was equally able to procure favour from her other uncle John.⁹ With the well-connected countess acting as her son's regent

⁵ Baldwin, *Government*, 196-7.

⁶ *Clairrets*, no. II; Villehardouin, 439.

⁷ Stephen's access to the financial resources of the Perche is indicated by the series of benefactions he made shortly before his departure and by an act given by his brother Geoffrey in which he declares that he has made a division of property with his brother, Duchesne 54, p. 460: *antequam charissimo fratri nostro Stephano terrae nostrae pars a nobis esset assignata*. This act led some scholars to suggest that Geoffrey and his brother partitioned the county, Bry, *Perche*, 207; Romanet, *Géographie*, 53-4: *Geoffroy et son épouse Mathilde donnèrent des terres en partage à Etienne du Perche après 1193..*, but an examination of Geoffrey's other acts indicates that Stephen played no greater part in the administration of the Perche than other younger sons of comital houses. It is much more likely, therefore, that the act recorded in Duchesne refers to the temporary diversion of a particular set of resources which was intended to serve as a war treasury for the crusade. For Stephen's acts before he left for the east, *NDC*, no. CLX (June 1202), AN S4983, no. 2 (probably May/June 1202), *SPC*, 670 (May 1202), BN Collection Baluze, vol. 38, f. 232v. (May 1202), AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, p. 28 (1202). Villehardouin, 439.

⁸ Adam of Perseigne, *Lettres* (Paris, 1960), 236-49.

⁹ For her relations with John, *Rot. Norm.*, 87: *Mandamus vobis quod deliberetis Willelmo de Trien' serviente karissime neptis nostre Com' de Pertico qui conduxit Judeos et ipsos Judeos mittatis ad nos*. The Rotrou family, like all nobles at the turn of the thirteenth century, were involved in exploiting the moneylending activities of the Jews. For a discussion of this form of indirect taxation, G. Langmuir, "*Judei nostri*" and the beginning of Capetian

the preservation of the Rotrou lineage was clearly among the least of Geoffrey's concerns in the final weeks of his life and his confidence that the Perche could continue as a viable political unit seems never to have wavered.

In the immediate aftermath of Geoffrey's death it is the strength of Matilda's spiritual convictions rather than her practical abilities which is most clearly indicated, for her immediate pre-occupation seems to have been her husband's eternal well-being. In June 1202 she joined her brother-in-law Stephen in Chartres where she arranged for masses for Geoffrey's soul and her own to be offered at the cathedral, and an act jointly confirmed by Matilda and Stephen must also date from this time.¹⁰ From the summer of 1202, however, Matilda was on her own. Her brother-in-law, Rotrou, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, had died in 1201, and after Stephen's rapid departure for the east, her husband's nearest surviving male relatives were his brothers, Theobald and William, both of whom were churchmen.¹¹

Matilda then turned to the business of running the Perche and for some two years carried on the administration of the property much as her husband would have done. A series of transactions can be dated to this period. Initially Matilda was involved in clarifying the financial affairs of her husband, who had borrowed heavily to finance the crusade.¹² She began this task immediately after the count's death, for King John's notification that she had taken over Geoffrey's 300 mark debt to William Marshal is dated 22 April 1202 and another act in which she settled Geoffrey's debts to Lawrence Flaaut of Mortagne was made before Stephen's departure in the summer of 1202.¹³

Relations with the English crown continued in the same cordial manner as they had under Count Geoffrey. Some amendments were made in the terms of the Château Gaillard grant, though it is impossible to know their precise nature; the English king extended a truce to his niece and in November 1203 the countess and her uncle agreed to preserve the existing arrangements for the knight service owed by the count of Perche for Bellême.¹⁴ Cases involving Rotrou tenants in England were heard in the English courts and the efficiency of the organisation maintained by the

legislation', *Traditio*, xvi (1960), 203-39. For Stephen of Perche's Jew, *Rot. Chart.*, 75b: ...*Judeum manentem apud Chambail quem Stephanus de Pertico fecit venire de Franc'*.

¹⁰ *NDC*, no. CLIX. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 160: *Item habemus IIII libras redditus in eadem prefectura a Gaufrido de Bello-Monte, in festo sancti Remigii recipiendas. Hoc confirmat Stephanus de Pertico et M Pertici comitissa.*

¹¹ Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *MGH SS*, xxiii, 879.

¹² John had allowed Geoffrey to mortgage English and Norman property for up to two years, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 7.

¹³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 9b: *Et Matill' comitissa de Pertico uxor praedicti comitis predictam pecuniam suscepit in se eidem comite Willelmo reddendam...*; AD Loiret H22 p. 185-6, no. 290.

¹⁴ The charter roll on which the original grant was noted has been amended to indicate that it has been cancelled, *Rot. Chart.*, 64: *Cancellatur hic...modo est carta...in rotulo iii anni ...carta qu'... at deb'...Pertici comitisse ...constab' Norm' tenendam d. R.*, but the remittances from Shrivenham continued to be made until 1204. *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 18: *Sciatis quod dedimus karissime nepti nostre M comitiss' de Pert' et feodo suo treugas de nobis et hominibus nostris. Rotuli de liberate, 74: comitissa Pertici finem fecit nobiscum ita scilicet quod ipsa quolibet anno nobis dabit centum libras sterlingas et quod nobis faciet servicium decem militum de Belhem sicut comes dominus ejus inde facere consuevit...*

countess on her son's behalf is indicated by the fact that there was no difficulty in obtaining material relevant to those cases.¹⁵ There is a similar decidedly purposeful manner in Richenza-Matilda's confirmation of her husband's grant to the monks of Perseigne, which the countess was obliged to undertake on account of the monks' own negligence after her husband's death.¹⁶

Matilda also effected the bequests which Geoffrey had made on his deathbed, in particular implementing his intention to establish a religious foundation. Geoffrey had no preference for any religious order, so his wife, having taken the best advice available, decided upon a nunnery with the Savignac affiliation to the Cistercians.¹⁷ While at La Loupe in June 1204 she formally established the house at Les Clairets in the forest south of Nogent-le-Rotrou. To her husband's deathbed bequest of *Boveria* she added other endowments, including revenue from her manor of Haughley in England, so it is clear that, even as late as 1204, she saw no reason why the cross channel connection established by her husband and herself in the 1190s should not continue indefinitely. This Anglo-Percheron outlook is also suggested by the dedication to Toussaints (All Saints), a popular English dedication, chosen for her own collegiate foundation at Mortagne, where two chaplains were to pray for the soul of her husband.¹⁸

In the difficult years which followed Matilda attempted to keep together the family's property while Normandy, Anjou and Brittany slipped from the control of her Plantagenet relations and into that of Philip Augustus. In 1204 for example she continued to negotiate to preserve the Rotrou's English interests, using her connections with the English royal house to buy the right to hold her English property while the war between the kings of England and France continued.¹⁹ While Matilda was guaranteed access to the court of the English king, however, her relationship with the Plantagenet dynasty was inadequate protection against the events of summer 1204. The so-called dispossession of 'Normans', which John carried out as soon as his loss of the duchy became apparent, extended even to his own niece. By 3 June 1204 the sheriff of Berkshire had custody of the lands of the count of Perche in that county and an act of King John himself, dated 23 July, specifically mentions that the countess has been disseised.²⁰ In 1205 Toddington was placed in the hands of Peter des Roches and Simon de Pateshill was entrusted with Newbury, while Gilbert of Stanford became responsible for the scutage of the honour of Haughley.²¹ For nearly three years the Rotrou lands in England remained in the king's hand, until finally in 1207

¹⁵ CRR, iii, 241 - In a case brought against Stephen of Erdecot the defendant maintained that he had the disputed land by gift of Geoffrey count of Perche and that he had a *cartam* from Thomas his son and heir.

¹⁶ AD Sarthe H930: *quia dominus meus comes G. morte preuentus hanc donationem siue elemosinam monachis supradictis propter negligentiam eorum non confirmavit sigilli sui appositione ego que huic eleemosine et donationi presens interfui et eam pro parte mea concessi.*

¹⁷ Clairets, no. IV: *communicato cum episcopis abbatibus et aliisque viris prudentibus et honestis tam clericis quam laicis consilio.* For Matilda's choice of order, S. Thompson, 'The problem of the Cistercian nuns in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries', in *Medieval women*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1978), 227-52.

¹⁸ AD Orne IG1071/30, p.1. F. Bond, *Dedications & patron saints of English churches: ecclesiastical symbolism, saints and their emblems* (London, 1914), 309 records 1255 ancient dedications to All Saints in England.

¹⁹ PR 6 John 1204, 33: *quamdiu warra durabit inter regem et regem Francie.*

²⁰ Rot. Litt. Claus., 1, 3b.

²¹ Rot. Norm., 131, 142; PR 7 John 1205, 175.

the countess contracted to pay 2000 marks to hold her husband's property and to have custody of her son.²² Even so, not all of the lands were returned to the countess, for Geoffrey III's great prize of the manor of Shrivenham, which he had obtained in 1200, was excepted from the new arrangement with the countess in 1207 and never returned to the family.²³

The comparison between the countesses Richenza-Matilda and Hawise also holds true for remarriage, for in March 1205 Enguerrand de Coucy, who was later to be a prominent baron of the Île de France, appears as the count of the Perche.²⁴ Enguerrand was a member of a dynasty which had been a constant thorn in the side of the Capetians and Professor Baldwin describes him as a good fighter, but a troublesome magnate.²⁵ At the turn of the twelfth century however he was still a very young man, who had Capetian connections through his mother, a cousin of Philip Augustus.²⁶ It may be that Enguerrand came to Richenza-Matilda's attention through his mother's family which was established near to the Perche at Dreux and whose founder, Robert son of King Louis VI, had been the second husband of Countess Hawise.

Enguerrand's contribution to the running of the Perche remains completely untraceable, except for the possibility that coins were issued in his name, and it is possible the countess was unhappy with the match.²⁷ She never refers to a new husband in her acts and it seems likely that her second marriage was intended simply as a link between the countess herself and the Capetian family. It should perhaps be seen as Richenza-Matilda's attempt to continue the policies of her first husband, preserving the personal relations with the Capetians which Geoffrey himself had been able to sustain as a cousin of Philip Augustus. In the event, whatever revenues or responsibility Enguerrand enjoyed in the Perche, did not remain in his hands for very long, for by 1208 Thomas was rendering account for his own scutage payments in the pipe rolls, implying

²² PR 9 John 1207, 100. On John's exploitation of his rights over minors, T.K. Keefe, 'Proffers for heirs and heiresses in the pipe rolls: some observations on indebtedness in the years before the Magna Carta', *Haskins Society Journal*, v (1993), 108.

²³ PR 9 John 1207, 100; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, 3b.

²⁴ BN ms. lat. nouv. acq. 2309, no. 38. The marriage may have been made as early as 1203, for in that year Innocent III wrote to Philip Augustus mentioning Philip's *consobrinum*, *J de Pertico*, *RHF*, xix, 436-8 and Enguerrand used the title in an act which can be dated between 6 April 1203 and 25 April 1204, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de Ourscamp*, M. Peigné-Delacourt (Amiens, 1865), no. 735.

²⁵ Baldwin, *Government*, 333, 203. Enguerrand's grandfather was the infamous Thomas of Marle, Guibert of Nogent, *Self and Society in Medieval France*, ed. J.F. Benton (New York, 1972), 184-5. For a summary of Thomas's career, Hallam, *Capetian France*, 115-6. On the marital adventures of the dynasty, G. Duby, *The knight, the lady and the priest* (Harmondsworth, 1983), 153-4.

²⁶ Enguerrand was probably still quite young in the 1200s as he lived on until 1242. He had probably already been betrothed to one wealthy woman, Eustachia of Roucy, *Layettes*, i, no. 706 n. and was to go on to bid for much richer pickings in 1211 when he sought to marry Joanna, the young countess of Flanders, *Actes Philippe Auguste*, iii, no. 1227. In 1219 he was specifically excluded from the selection of husbands for another important heiress Agnes, daughter of Hervey of Donzé and Matilda of Nevers, *CPA*, no. 1941. In 1202 he had paid £400 as an aid to the king, *Le premier budget de la monarchie française: le compte générale de 1202-1203*, ed. F. Lot and R. Fawtier (Paris, 1932), CLXXIX, c.1.

²⁷ A Percheron coin survives bearing the legend I Comes Pertici, which Poey D'Avant assigned to James of Château Gontier, one of the collateral heirs of the Perche, who inherited some of the comital demesne property, *Monnaies féodales*, 262-3. However, James never received the title of count, so it seems more likely that the coin was struck during the minority of Count Thomas, when Enguerrand was technically his guardian. Adam of Perseigne's letter to the countess exhorts her to persevere in her marital duties, Adam, *Lettres*, 244: *Alligata es viro teneris ex necessitate illi obsequi in quantum contra legem matrimonii nihil disponit.*

that he had now come of age and it may be significant that not long after this Enguerrand chose to join the action against the Albigensians.²⁸ Then on 13 January 1210 Countess Richenza-Matilda herself died and her English lands are accounted separately by an administrator in the pipe roll for that year.²⁹

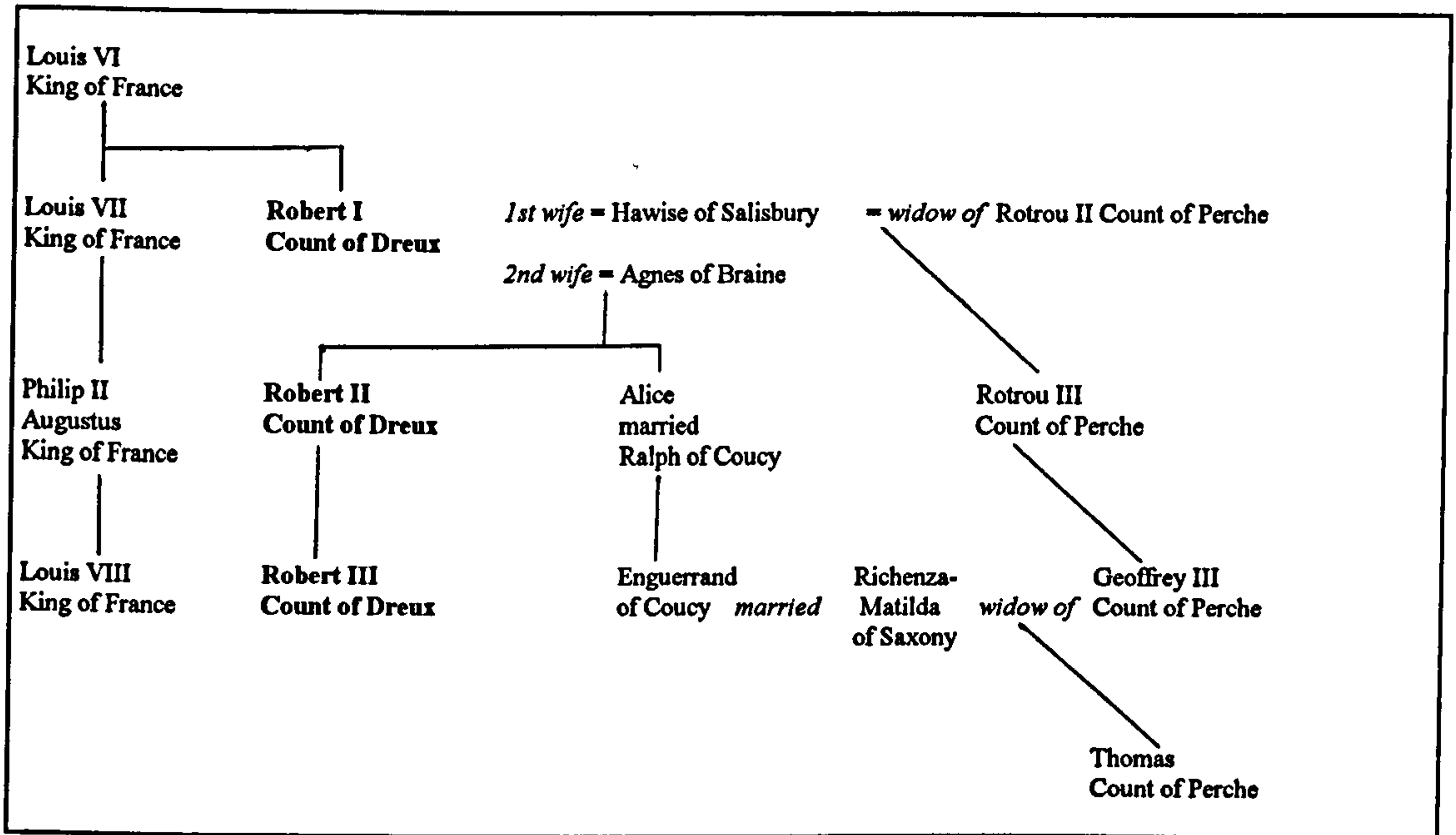


Figure 8:1 *The House of Dreux and its relation to the House of Rotrou*

With the death of his niece King John seems to have decided to sever the Plantagenet connection with the house of Rotrou.³⁰ The accounts rendered by Fulk of Cantaleu for the family's English lands between 1210 and 1212, which are punctiliously recorded in the pipe rolls as the lands of the Countess of Perche, indicate that large sums of money might be obtained from the property and such sums would have been welcome to the king as the second decade of his reign progressed. In the first six months that the lands were in the king's hands for example, they contributed £897 13s. 4d. to the king's personal finances.³¹ Not only, however, did the king have his own uses for the revenues of the family's English lands, but he also lacked any necessity to cultivate the ruler of a polity bordering the southern marches of Normandy.³² While Philip Augustus held Normandy the county of the Perche had no further strategic role in the battle between the Capetians and the Plantagenets and King John no doubt quickly recognised that fact, though he did not acknowledge it until after the death of his niece. He then withdrew his favour from the young Count Thomas, since it could be better used elsewhere, and went looking instead

²⁸ *PR 10 John 1208*, 5, 29; Peter of Vaux de Cernay, *RHF*, xix, 43.

²⁹ *Comptus Fulconis de Kantelu de terris comitisse de Pertico*, *PR 12 John 1210*, 204; the date of her death is given in *Obits*, ii, 281.

³⁰ It seems to have been easier for women to retain their lands in both England and Normandy after 1204. See the discussion of family and tenurial relations in W. Stevenson, *England and Normandy, 1204-1259*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1974, 207.

³¹ The total revenue of Matilda's lands for the period between Easter and Michaelmas 1210 was £1116 1s. 9½d. of which £897 13s. 4d. had already been delivered to the king's *camera*, *PR 12 John 1210*, 205.

³² On John's financial problems, R. V. Turner, *King John* (London, 1994), 87-114.

for allies in the Low Countries and among the nobility of his mother's duchy of Aquitaine, which he still held.

The loss of Normandy therefore took from Count Thomas the most powerful bargaining ploy of his predecessors, and, since Thomas could no longer rely on generous subsidies from the English crown, he was then left to make his way, with much depleted resources, as one among the many nobles of France. He lacked for example the great revenues generated by the fairs in the county of his infant second cousin, Theobald IV of Champagne or even the prestige of his other cousins the counts of Blois/Chartres.³³ There are clear indications that Thomas made considerable efforts to increase the resources available to him. He was scrupulous about the exploitation of his rights, issuing an act which laid down precisely when the knights of the castellanry of Bellême should pay *tallia* and defining the exact usage of his forest which the monks of Bellême might claim from the benefaction of his ancestors.³⁴ He also entered into projects such as the establishment of new mills of Nogent-le-Rotrou and the development of forest land to the north of the Perche, but markets, such as that at Bonsmoulins which was granted by Count Thomas, and fairs within the Perche were unlikely to raise even a small proportion of the income which the king might derive from similar activities in the Île de France.³⁵

Thomas also faced in Philip Augustus during his later years a Capetian king who was anxious to assert his authority in as many areas as possible, so the independence of action which had been available to his ancestors was less easily pursued by Thomas. In the year 1211/12, for example, he was obliged to acknowledge royal authority over fortifications within his jurisdiction and promised to render to King Philip, whenever the king required it, his fortress of Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny).³⁶ The castle lay on the extreme north easterly edge of the county in an area where Thomas's father had made considerable efforts to increase his influence in the 1190s, but which was clearly of much less significance to the king of France after the king of England had been forced to give up Normandy.³⁷ Although it was therefore unlikely that king Philip would ever need to use Marchainville, he nonetheless insisted on this acknowledgement of his rights and continued to press the family on the matter, for Thomas's uncle and nearest heir, William the

³³ On the Champagne fairs, R.H. Bautier, 'Les foires de Champagne: recherches sur une évolution historique', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, v (1953), 97-147; Bur, *Champagne*, 299-307. Some of their conclusions about the role of Theobald IV (of Blois) (II of Champagne) have been challenged by H. Dubois, 'Le commerce et les foires au temps de Philippe-Auguste', *La France de Philippe Auguste*, 689-711.

³⁴ *CMPerche*, nos. 43, 44.

³⁵ For Thomas's activities, *Clairêts*, no. IX; AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128, pp. 628-30; Querimoniae, no. 236. On the commercial situation in Philip's reign, Dubois, 'Le commerce et les foires', M. Bur, 'Rôle et place de la Champagne dans le royaume de France au temps de Philippe-Auguste', in *La France de Philippe Auguste*, 243.

³⁶ AN J399, no.16. A printed version appears in *Layettes*, i, 379 with note that this piece is no longer in the archives, although Delisle appears to have seen it, *CPA*, no. 1293.

³⁷ Thomas's promise needs to be seen in the context of Philip's policy on castles. Dr Coulson estimates that there are at least forty such written promises of rendability in the royal archives dating from the period 1202-1212, C.H. Coulson, 'Rendability and castellation in medieval France', *Château-Gaillard vi: actes du colloque internationale tenu à Venlo...* (Caen, 1973), 59-67. *Layettes*, i, no. 1207.

bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, would be obliged to make a the same promise in 1217 during Thomas's lifetime.³⁸

A similar insistence on the letter of the law permitted another extension of royal authority into the Perche. The record of a dispute concerning a wood and the ovens at Bellême reveals that the dispute was settled, not as might be expected in the count's court, but in that of the king which sat at Bellême in 1212.³⁹ Since Bellême was technically held of the king of France by the duke of Normandy, Philip could claim that he was asserting the rights of the Norman dukes to which he had succeeded by dispossessing John in 1204.

The extension of royal justice into a part of the Perche was an important advance in royal authority, but it was significant too for the opportunity it presented to develop relationships with the local families of the Perche. The Bellême plea, for example, shows the *bailli* of Verneuil, Bartholomew Drogo, an experienced royal officer, working with Fulk Quarrel, a member of a local Percheron family, which had in the past acknowledged both the Rotrou family and the Montgomery-Bellême before them.⁴⁰ Where previous generations of local families had assisted the counts in the running of the Perche, they were now being enlisted by the king. By 1214, when Fulk described himself as *baillivus domini regis in Belineso et in Corboneto*, he had apparently learned enough from his joint sessions with the king's *bailli* and was apparently able to act alone *in curia domini regis*.⁴¹ The king's *baillis* therefore held judicial sessions in Bellême, making no distinction between that part of the Perche and the Capetian demesne, and in the association of the local lords in that process King Philip was further able to bolster his influence.

While some Percheron lords were encouraged into the king's service with grants of office, others received more material inducements such as the £46 worth of lands formerly belonging to Robert of *Coudre*, which were granted by the king in 1214 to William of *Longuo Radio*, a member of the family which had frequently held the seneschalcy of Bellême under the Rotrous in the twelfth century.⁴² It is interesting to reflect however that even in this grant it is possible to see the value of extending royal justice into the Bellêmois, for William had been one of the plaintiffs in the 1212 dispute concerning woods and ovens which had been settled, presumably to his satisfaction, in the king's court in Bellême.

The young Count Thomas made very little impression either in chronicle sources or in the records of the French crown and, while there may be the extenuating circumstance of his youth, there seems

³⁸ *Layettes*, i, no. 1008.

³⁹ *CMPerche*, no. 42. Compare the English crown's extension of jurisdictional superiority into Wales and Scotland, R.R. Davies, *Domination and conquest: the experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge, 1990), 103-5.

⁴⁰ For Bartholomew Drogo, *RHF*, xxiv (1), 124-6, Fulk Quarrel is listed among the knights of the Perche in Philip Augustus' Register A, *RHF*, xxiii, 684 and he was the king's bailiff in Bellême in 1214, AD Loiret H22, no. 297. The family is considered in chapter 5.

⁴¹ AD Loiret H22, no. 297.

⁴² *Actes Philippe Auguste*, iii, no. 1329. The *Lonreio* family are discussed in chapter 4.

to have been something of a decline in comital prestige throughout his reign. In the matter of his own marriage, for example, Thomas was less conspicuous than his ancestors. While his grandfather, Rotrou III, for example, had married a daughter of the a powerful neighbouring dynasty and his father had secured the granddaughter of a king and the sister of the Holy Roman Emperor, Thomas was unable to profit from these connections by an equally glamorous match. Instead his wife, Helisende of Rethel, was the daughter of a lesser noble and associate of the counts of Champagne and his match was much closer to that of his ancestor, Geoffrey II, who had married Beatrix of Roucy from another Champagne family.⁴³ It is possible the marriage was arranged by Thomas's stepfather, Enguerrand, whose own brother Thomas of Vervins was married to Helisende's sister, and was intended to strengthen the Coucy/Dreux/Perche ties after the death of Richenza-Matilda. Alternatively the king may have made match with the well-connected Thomas as a means of favouring Helisende's family. The effect of the marriage, however, was to link Thomas to the lesser nobility of the lands under Capetian influence rather than of permitting him to make an alliance beyond those circles.

This is not to suggest, however, that the family lost all status in the early years of the thirteenth century, for it is clear that they were highly regarded. Count Geoffrey had left a considerable legacy of prestige, as Villehardouin's portrait of him suggests, and the activities of the career churchmen among his brothers had not passed unnoticed. In 1215 Thomas' last surviving uncle, William had been elevated from his position as Chancellor of the cathedral at Chartres to the regalian see of Châlons-sur-Marne in Champagne, an office formerly held by his brother, Rotrou. The position was an important one and indicates royal confidence, for the see was both wealthy and powerful, having accrued some comital powers within the locality.⁴⁴ King Philip had been particularly successful in his efforts to assert his authority over the counts of Champagne and the presence of a bishop committed to the Capetian cause at Châlons would have been an additional source of royal influence within Champagne. Nonetheless the appointment makes apparent that there was only one career available to the Rotrou family, that of service to the kings of France and, while his uncle served the king as the bishop of a regalian see, the young Count Thomas committed himself to military action with Philip's forces.

In 1214 he was with Philip's troops at the battle of Bouvines, which was fought against the forces of his uncle, the Emperor Otto and his great-uncle, King John, and then in 1217 he took part in his cousin Prince Louis' invasion of England.⁴⁵ Service with the Capetian forces did not of course preclude the satisfaction of Thomas' own ambitions, among which he presumably included

⁴³ For the Rethel family, *Trésor du Rethel*.

⁴⁴ Bur, *Champagne*, 181-5. A disputed election in 1201 after the death of Rotrou of Perche allows us to have some idea of the revenues of the see, *Le premier budget de la monarchie française*, CLII, c.1. They amounted to £2047 provins, though only £1527 were rendered, *Actes Philippe-Auguste*, no. 727.

⁴⁵ Wendover, ii, 109: *Dum haec circa regem Philippum agerentur Campanensis, Perticensis et de Sancto Paulo comites, cum aliis multis nobilibus de regno Francorum in acies supradictas impetum facientes, Hugonem de Boves cum universo populo ex diversis provinciis collecto in fuga compulerunt. Annales Monastici*, iii, 49 for Thomas's participation in the English campaign.

the restoration of his family's English property. Thus when southeastern England was abandoned to the French during the course of 1216, Thomas saw his opportunity. He was not apparently among the original expedition which set out on Louis' great adventure, for his name does not appear on either list of the prince's followers given in the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* or in the chronicle of the anonymous of Béthune.⁴⁶ As Louis made headway against the English, however, Thomas suddenly appeared with reinforcements, at a particularly opportune moment, during the siege of Dover when other commanders had withdrawn.⁴⁷ He was quick to assert his right the Kentish portion of the honour of the constable, which was his mother's *maritagium*, and he announced the fact by confirming an act his parents had made in favour of the Premonstratensian house of St. Radegund at Bradsole.⁴⁸ But if Count Thomas had been late in joining the invasion, he was soon to make up for that tardiness by his enthusiasm.

He must have returned to France after the truce of October 1216, for he was at Marchainville in 1217 where he settled a dispute with the priory of Bellême and he also made a benefaction to the nunnery at Les Clairets in the same year, but after his winter at home Thomas returned to an active part in the campaign.⁴⁹ It is possible that he arrived in England in the entourage of Prince Louis who returned on 23 April 1217, for he suddenly comes to prominence when he and the earl of Winchester were sent to relieve the castle of Montsorrell.⁵⁰ After raising the siege Thomas made his way to Lincoln where the castle was still holding out for the young King Henry III. Thomas was clearly very pleased with himself and the success of his strategy, and Matthew Paris stresses the pride of the French commanders, but Wendover recounts how they seriously misjudged the size of the forces ranged against them.⁵¹ Both commentators are agreed that in the heat of the battle outside the castle at Lincoln the hard-pressed Thomas refused to surrender to the English and was struck dead with a blow through the eye. The king of England's forces under William the Marshal carried the day and Thomas was hurriedly buried with two of his companions in the orchard of a hospital outside the walls of Lincoln.⁵²

If Prince Louis had succeeded in taking the kingdom of England, then Thomas' reward would no doubt have been the restoration of all the family's English property and a likely increase to it, a not unreasonable gamble for Thomas. In the event not only was Louis driven out of England, but Thomas was killed, leaving as his successor his uncle, William the bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne,

⁴⁶ *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, ed. F. Michel (Paris, 1840), 165, where the list of participants appears at the point of embarkation. BN ms. nouv. acq. franc. 6295, Chronique d'un anonyme de Béthune, excerpt published in *RHF*, xxiv (II), 771, where a list appears elsewhere in the narrative.

⁴⁷ Anonymous of Béthune, *RHF*, xxiv (II), 773: *Mais la rencontre arriva li cuens de Perche od x chevaliers qui pas ne crut tant l'ost que cil la descruent*. It is possible to put names to some of Thomas' troops using the Querimoniae, no. 119: *Gervasius de Condeto miles conqueritur quod cum esset in Anglia in servicio comitis Pertici...*; no. 123: *Guillelmus de Bevraria miles de Verreria conqueritur quod cum esset in Anglia in servicio comitis Pertici...*

⁴⁸ *Monasticon*, vi, 941. King John had given a general confirmation to the house in 1199, *Rot. Chart.*, 12.

⁴⁹ AD Orne H2153=*CMPerche*, no. 44, *Clairets*, no. X.

⁵⁰ D.A. Carpenter, *The minority of Henry III* (London, 1990), 36. *Annales Monastici*, iii, 49.

⁵¹ Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ii, 210: *...comes Perticensis et Franciae marescallus superbientes et eorum consiliis obsecundare dedignantes*. Wendover, ii, 214.

⁵² Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ii, 213.

who could father no legitimate heir. Thomas' attempt to reconstitute the cross channel connection of his ancestors was not only a failure, but had disastrous consequences for the dynasty. He had had little alternative but to support the Capetian kings, but his over enthusiastic participation in the English campaign had effectively ended the family. While his uncle's tenure of the county preserved the comital status of the Rotrous for another nine years, it only postponed the final extinction of the house of Rotrou and with it the independence of the Perche.

William was to be a valued counsellor of the kings of France for the next nine years. In his episcopal capacity he had been present in July 1216 at the celebrated arbitration of the succession to Champagne, the participants in which would henceforth be considered among the peers of France.⁵³ He was an acceptable surety for the homage of other great nobles, including that of his own cousin, Isabelle of Chartres, who inherited that county when the direct line of the counts of Blois failed in 1218. He was also to play a part in all the major events of French history for the best part of ten years. In 1223 he was to be placed first in the list of the peers of France with whom the king made the important *stabilimentum* concerning the Jews of the kingdom, while two letters from Pope Honorius III dated April 1219 indicate William's intention of participating in the crusade against the Albigensians.⁵⁴ A series of benefactions, made by William in May 1219 to fund his *anniversarium*, together with a general confirmation to the family foundation of Chêne Galon made at the same time, reveal William's own spiritual preparations for that crusade.⁵⁵ He also acted in a number of diplomatic initiatives on behalf of the king of France, visiting the Emperor Henry in 1219 and negotiating on the king's behalf with papal envoys at Viterbo in 1224, but, high as was William's personal standing with Kings Philip and Louis, it was insufficient to protect his county.⁵⁶

No sooner had Count Thomas died than King Philip challenged the right of the counts of Perche to hold Moulins and Bonsmoulins, presumably on the grounds that they belonged to the ducal demesne of Normandy which the king now held himself. When William came to Melun to make his formal homage to the king for the county of Perche in June 1217, he was obliged to notify that the king was enquiring into his right to hold the castles and, even if the inquiry found in his favour, he would only retain a life interest in them.⁵⁷ While the king made claims on large portions of William's inheritance, his officials, who had already made their presence felt in

⁵³ *Actes Philippe Auguste*, iii, no. 1436-7.

⁵⁴ Langmuir, "Judei nostri" and the beginning of Capetian legislation'; *RHF*, xix, 681-2. The expedition's costs may also account for William's sale of a rent in Châlons which Philip Augustus confirmed in January 1220, *CPA*, no. 1949.

⁵⁵ He gave £5 to the cathedral at Chartres, BN ms. lat. 10095 *Privilegia ecclesiae Carnotensis* (Cartulaire 28 bis), f. 65; 40s. each to Val-Dieu, *LT*, 73, La Trappe, *LT*, 19, and Chêne Galon, Duchesne, 54, 459. For his confirmation to Chêne Galon, Duchesne 54, p. 461.

⁵⁶ *GC*, ix, col. 885, *Dip. doc. 1101-1272*, no. 153, p. 105.

⁵⁷ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 8: *rex recepit nos in hominem suum de comitatu Perticensi exceptis Molendinis et Bonis Molendinis que ad presens retinuit in manu sua, tali modo quod ipse debet inquirere utrum in illis jus habeamus et si per legitimam inquisitionem invenerit quod dicta castra ad nos de jure pertineant exinde faciet erga nos quod debet, hoc tamen modo quod nos ipsi tanquam domino nostro ligio craantavimus et litteras nostras inde fecimus quod post decessum nostrum ad ipsum et heredes suos predicta castra cum pertinenciis suis libere revertentur.*

Bellême during the lifetime of Count Thomas, made further inroads on the business of running the Perche, sometimes with the connivance of the count-bishop himself. In June 1217, for example, shortly after his accession William found it expedient to grant a regular money payment of £10 a year from the *prepositura* of Mortagne to Bartholomew Droco, the king's bailiff in the Verneuil region, who presumably then took up some responsibilities within the Perche.⁵⁸

The advance in royal influence within the Perche and the corresponding erosion of comital authority was thus aided in some measure by the count-bishop's own actions, and it is clear that William attached far less importance to his claims in England than his ancestors had done. Although he went to England in December 1217 it was remarkably easy for his cousins, William Marshal and the earl of Salisbury, to buy out William's claims to the family's English lands, concerning which he made no further representations, tamely nominating William Marshal to act on his behalf in a lawsuit concerning family lands in 1220.⁵⁹ It is possible that the sheer size of William's episcopal revenues at Châlons meant that he had adequate resources and he was certainly able to lend other members of the French nobility substantial sums of money as surviving details of his loans to Simon of Joinville, Henry, count of Bar-le-Duc and Count Theobald of Champagne show.⁶⁰

William's apparent indifference to his inheritance is further indicated by the fact that he clearly spent much of his time away from the Perche. A *generalis procurator* for all the land of the count of Perche is mentioned in 1220⁶¹ and William even anticipates his own absence in one of his acts by specifying that a render is to be made to himself, his successors or the bailiff of his land if he is not in his land.⁶² It is possible therefore that he was happy to leave much of the routine work of running the county to the king's bailiff of Verneuil and his son, who in 1225 gave his retainer to La Trappe.⁶³ William dealt with his dual responsibilities by allocating portions of time to the Perche, as is indicated by the "bunching" of his acts in for example May 1219,⁶⁴ June/August 1221,⁶⁵ April 1222,⁶⁶ August/September 1225,⁶⁷ but the problems associated with William's status as both a bishop and a secular ruler are suggested by a letter from pope Honorius III in reply to a request from the bishop.⁶⁸ The death of this largely absentee count-bishop would therefore have had less impact in the Perche than that of any of his predecessors.

⁵⁸ *LT*, 7-8. on Bartholomew, *RHF* xxiv (I), 124-6.

⁵⁹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Henry III 1216-1225* (London, 1901), 129 for letters patent granting William a safe conduct to England. For subsequent events, *Book of Fees*, iii, 1154, Carpenter, *Minority*, 92. For the lawsuit, *CRR*, ix, 301.

⁶⁰ Arbois de Jubainville, *Histoire*, v, nos. 1441, 1629, 2266.

⁶¹ *CMPerche* no. 211.

⁶² *CMPerche*, no. 68: *nobis et nostris successoribus vel ballivo nostre terre, si in terra nostra non fuerimus quadam calcaria..pro omnibus serviciis..annuatim exinde persolvendo.*

⁶³ *LT*, 9.

⁶⁴ *NDC*, no. CCXXXIV, *LT*, 73, Duchesne 54, p. 461, *NDC*, ii, 94, n.1.

⁶⁵ *Clairêts*, nos. XVI, XVII, Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 8-9, *CMPerche*, no. 68.

⁶⁶ *Clairêts*, no. XX, *NLR*, no. XCI.

⁶⁷ *LT*, 9, *Tiron*, no. CCCLVIII.

⁶⁸ *RHF*, xix, 747: *suppresso episcopi nomine Comitem te appellent ut sic possint ad loca remotiora trahere te in causam.*

When William died in February 1226 on the eve of King Louis's departure for the Midi, the question of the succession to the Perche was left unresolved and it remained unresolved for several years. Eventually the landed property of the comital family was divided into two portions and distributed among the collateral descendants of the house of Rotrou, but the comital title itself was not granted to any of the heirs and fell into abeyance.⁶⁹ Part of the property had already been appropriated by the king before the partition was made and was used by him to mollify the troublesome magnate, Peter of Dreux. Later the dower of Thomas's widow, the countess Helisende, was used to dower Queen Margaret, the wife of Louis IX rather than returning to the patrimony.

This treatment of the Rotrou inheritance was not an isolated case, for the Capetian kings had begun to intervene in the succession of many of the major principalities, as the Champagne incident illustrates.⁷⁰ Philip Augustus had presided over a remarkable revival in the authority of the French crown and this advance in royal influence was due in no small part to a surprising run of luck as lineage after lineage either failed or ran to disputed successions. The Thibaudian counts of Champagne had indeed been forced to make concessions to the king's power to secure his recognition, and many of King John's problems stemmed from his need for Philip's approval for his succession. Bishop William seems to have succeeded his nephew without question in 1217, but the failure of the direct line of the Thibaudian counts of Blois/Chartres in 1218 raised the question of succession to a principality in the absence of a male heir. After the death of Count Theobald VI of Blois in 1218, the county of Blois/Chartres, was partitioned, with Blois passing to Theobald's sister, Margaret and Chartres to his other sister Isabelle.⁷¹ A similar failure of a major lineage, that of the counts of Alençon, which took place at much the same time, however, was treated differently. For when the death of Robert count of Alençon in 1217 was soon followed by that of his infant heir, the property was again divided among the descendants of Robert's sisters, but significantly, unlike Blois/Chartres, the title was not passed on.⁷² When the death of the count-bishop in 1226 gave a further occasion for royal intervention, a similar settlement was devised. Comital authority was extinguished within the Perche, leaving only the demesne property to be distributed among his heirs.

Although the extinction of the line was postponed until 1226, the house of Rotrou effectively ended therefore at the battle of Lincoln on 20 May 1217 when Count Thomas fell to the English onslaught. He had chosen the path of wholehearted support for the Capetians as the best means

⁶⁹ Details of the collateral heirs and disposition of comital property are given in chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Bur, *Rôle et place de la Champagne*.

⁷¹ Chédeville, *Chartres*, 319 comments on '*L'élément humain*' which had led to the failure of a number of families, including the counts of Blois, the *vicecomites* of Châteaudun and the lords of Le Puiset.

⁷² For the death of Robert of Alençon 8 September 1217, *Perseigne*, 17. When Robert's posthumous son died in 1219 the property was divided between Robert's sister, Ella of Almenêches and their nephews, Aimeri of Châtellerauld and Robert Malet, *Cartulaire normand de Philippe Auguste, Louis VIII, Saint Louis et Philippe le Hardi*, ed. L. Delisle, (*Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, série 2, vi, Rouen, 1852), nos. 284, 1126.

to preserve the fortunes of the Perche, though after the withdrawal of the English king from northern France he was left with little alternative. It is quite likely that, had he left an heir, the Rotrou lineage might have preserved the county of the Perche for some generations, as the counts of Blois were to continue into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the event the Perche survived as an apanage of the Capetian dynasty, though not as an independent polity. Comital authority had already been seriously compromised during Thomas's minority and the succession of a churchman, who was largely indifferent to the fortunes of the Perche, meant that the extension of royal influence within the county was able to proceed largely unchallenged.

Thomas' wholehearted support of Prince Louis' expedition to England was, however, completely in the tradition of political action followed by his ancestors. In supporting Louis' claim to the English throne, Thomas was in effect attempting to repeat Count Rotrou II's successful duke-making activities of 1141, when he withdrew his support from Stephen of Blois and accepted Geoffrey of Anjou's claims to rule in Normandy. If Louis had succeeded in dislodging John from the throne of England and had established himself as king of England in the right of his wife, Blanche of Castille, then Thomas would again have had access to the English resources which had proved so tempting to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

While he no longer possessed the bargaining power of a marcher lord, which had been available to them, Thomas had nonetheless made some progress in emulating other activities of his father and great-grandfather. He may have lacked the prestige which Counts Geoffrey III and Rotrou II had acquired by crusading early in their careers, but Thomas was clearly aware of the importance attached to military prowess. He had attracted royal attention by his military service at Bouvines and he was well on the way to making himself an important, if not yet indispensable, figure in the entourage of the king-in-waiting, Prince Louis. His enthusiastic participation in the English campaign had won the approval of Louis, who remarked on Thomas' death that "If everyone had stood firm as he did, I would have had a glorious triumph", and a more widespread admiration is indicated by the chronicle of Rouen which recounts that many grieved for the young count.⁷³ His death made a tremendous impact at the time. It was recorded by the annalists of Tewkesbury, Burton, Winchester, Waverley, Dunstable and Worcester and a donation to Saint Bartholomew's Hospital in London was even dated by reference to it.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, just as Rotrou II's enthusiastic support for Geoffrey of Anjou had led him to join his final campaign at the siege of Rouen, so Thomas' youthful enthusiasm and over-confidence lost him his life at Lincoln.

⁷³ Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ii, 214; Chronicon Rothomagensis, *RHF*, xviii, 361: *Ibi periit Thomas comes de Pertico super quo plurimi doluerunt...*

⁷⁴ *Annales Monastici*, i, 63, 224, ii, 78, 287, iii, 49, iv, 408. *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital founded 1123: a calendar*, ed. N.J.M. Kerling (London, 1973), no. 531.

Conclusion

The history of the Rotrou counts of Perche spans just under two hundred years. It is the history of a vigorous and energetic lineage, which seized nearly every available opportunity. In almost every generation the family produced men and women of remarkable ability and talent, who built on the achievements of their predecessors, adapting their policies to meet changed circumstances. Their history demonstrates what might be achieved in the unsettled conditions of the eleventh century, when the early Capetian kings of France lost control of their kingdom to the territorial princes, and it illustrates how the strategic position of a particular principality might give its rulers immense opportunities to exercise influence.

Rotrou I laid the foundations of the Perche by extending his lordship of Nogent-le-Rotrou northwards towards Mortagne and he took the vital step title of calling himself count. His son Geoffrey II sought to extend the influence of the family, and although his efforts did not meet with a great deal of success territorially, the position of the dynasty was consolidated through the personal respect in which he was held. It was his son Rotrou II who saw the potential of alliance with the Anglo-Norman ruler, Henry I, whom he consistently supported, securing in return lands in England as his wife's dowry and the protection of his mighty partner, which secured stability and recognition for the Perche and permitted Rotrou to spend prolonged periods in Spain.

When Rotrou II died in 1144 the existence and independence of his principality were unchallenged, as was the succession of his eldest son, Rotrou III. At this point the Perche was detached from its alliance with Normandy and drawn into alignment with the Thibaudian counts of Blois/Chartres. Where the Perche had been a friendly client protecting the borders of Normandy, for a period of nearly thirty years under Rotrou III it became a friendly client of Blois/Chartres, until the inducement of English lands persuaded the Rotrous to loosen that connection in the 1170s and 1180s. Geoffrey III's marriage with a Plantagenet indicated his willingness to continue a more independent stance and he was able to act as an intermediary between the Plantagenets and the Capetians. Of all the Rotrou counts he was arguably the most able for his rule was not only energetic and efficient within the county, but he was also a masterly operator in the wider political situation.

The strategic advantages of the Perche were eliminated by Philip Augustus' seizure of Normandy and Count Thomas' opportunities to exercise influence were confined to those which he could secure by his own talents. He threw himself wholeheartedly into the pursuit of reputation on the battlefield and was lost at the Battle of Lincoln in 1217, supporting his Capetian cousin, Prince Louis, against his Plantagenet cousin, Henry III. The final eclipse of the Perche as an independent polity was delayed until the death of the last Rotrou of the direct line, Count Thomas's uncle, Bishop William of Châlons sur Marne, but the potential for its downfall had been apparent long before that.

When Philip Augustus secured and retained Normandy and Anjou in the years between 1204 and the Battle of Bouvines, the political boundary which had played such an important part in the formation and continued success of the Perche was destroyed. There were no longer two competing power blocs within northern France which could be manipulated to the advantage of the rulers of the Perche, and the strategic importance of the county had thus been extinguished. Once Normandy was firmly in the hands of Philip Augustus, moreover, it became apparent that the Perche was a rather small principality, lacking any significant ecclesiastical or urban centres and poorly positioned to benefit from increased trade. This lack of resources had not troubled Counts Rotrou I and Geoffrey II, who could exploit their rather inaccessible position at the margins of the power blocs of their day, seizing public powers in the absence of any effective control, royal or comital. Their successors could continue the policy of supporting first one side then the other, even though the power blocs changed, for they had much to gain from first the Anglo-Norman rulers and later Plantagenets. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, when Count Thomas took control of his inheritance, the subsidies had dried up and Thomas and his county were forced to make their own way in the world.

The disappearance of the Norman border was a serious blow to the position of the Perche, then, but it was not fatal. Other border lineages would fare much worse in the aftermath of King John's losses. The Counts of Meulan seem, for example, consistently to have chosen the wrong side. Like the Rotrous they held lands of the king of France and the king of England and while Count Robert of Meulan tried to negotiate with King John, his son Peter had committed both himself and part of the family's property to King Philip. Unlike the Rotrous who lost only their English lands or the Tosny who forfeited their Norman holdings, the Meulan family lost everything through political ineptitude.⁷⁵ In contrast Countess Richenza-Matilda maintained her channels of communication with both sides, permitting Count Thomas to take control of all of his inheritance in France, even if he had been deprived of the English lands. He might indeed have transmitted the comital title to a succession of descendants, as the counts of Dreux and the counts of Saint-Pol were to do, but for his fatal errors in the streets of Lincoln.

Other border principalities which had formed, like the Perche, in the eleventh century at the frontiers of the great power blocs would survive the recovery of the Capetian monarchy. Ponthieu, for example, had many similarities to the Perche. Lying at the margins between Normandy and Flanders, it had been drawn into the Norman orbit by a marriage between its count and the sister of the Conqueror, who had attempted to keep it there by marrying its heiress to a Norman.⁷⁶ The loyalties of its counts wavered throughout the twelfth century, mostly inclining to the Capetian king, but always susceptible to the subsidies of the English king.

⁷⁵ Powicke, *Loss*, 344-5 for Meulan. L. Musset, 'Aux origines d'une classe dirigeante: les Tosny, grands barons normands du X^e au XIII^e siècle', *Francia*, v (1978), 45-80.

⁷⁶ On the formation of Ponthieu, R.T. McDonald, *The countship of Ponthieu to 1100*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Brynmawr College, 1971. For the marriages, *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, ii, xxxi, n. 1; *OV*, iv, 158.

Despite the closeness of its relations with Philip Augustus, whose niece became countess in the 1220s, Ponthieu would retain its independence. Although its circumstances in many ways resembled those of the Perche, its rulers were less successful than those of the Perche in all respects save one, the capacity to produce some sort of heir.⁷⁷ While they were neither so successful politically as the Rotrous, nor as glamorous in terms of military prowess, the counts of Ponthieu remained a political force into the thirteenth century because Ponthieu remained in a border zone and its comital line continued.

It was the combination of the loss of strategic significance and the failure of the direct male however, which destroyed the independence of the Perche, just as that position and that lineage had created it in the first place. For Philip Augustus presided in the last twenty years of his reign over a revitalised monarchy, with not only increased landed resources but also enhanced authority, which enabled him to intervene in the affairs of the territorial principalities in a way which would have been inconceivable to his ancestors. By 1226 Philip's son, Louis VIII had unquestioned authority to settle the succession of the Perche. The comital title was extinguished and much of the comital property was absorbed into the royal demesne, while the residue was distributed among the collateral heirs. The Perche was dismembered as a political unit and was never again reconstituted. The title of Count of the Perche was occasionally used by cadet branches of the royal house, but there was little practical power attached to it and there was no political incentive for another vigorous lineage to take over the Rotrous' position in what had become an out of the way corner of the French king's realm.

⁷⁷ For the history of the county in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries F.C. Louandre, *Histoire d'Abbeville et du comté de Pontieu*, 3rd ed. (Abbeville, 1883), supplemented by *Pontieu*, introduction. For Countess Mary of Ponthieu, *Cartulaire normand*, no. 343 and *Layettes*, i, nos. 854, 902. Her granddaughter, Eleanor of Castille, brought Ponthieu to King Edward I of England as her dowry, H. Johnstone, 'The county of Ponthieu, 1279-1307', *English Historical Review*, xxix (1914), 435-52.

Appendices

Appendix I

Sources for the history of the Counts of the Perche

I PRIMARY SOURCES

Throughout the 150 years of their ascendancy chronicle references to the counts of the Perche are rare. There are passing references to the Rotrous in the English sources such as Roger of Howden and Ralph of *Diceto*, but little more than that in contemporary French narratives. Only Orderic Vitalis shows any sustained interest in the family, who were both near neighbours of Saint-Evroul and relations of the abbey's patrons, the Laigle. A little information on the comital family may be obtained from necrologies¹ and some light is shed on the activities of the counts by contemporary letter collections. There are, for example, references to them among the correspondence of the bishops of Chartres, Fulbert and Ivo, Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis and Bishop Hildebert of Le Mans. The text of a letter written by a member of the comital family survives, together with a memorable pastoral letter directed to the Countess Richenza-Matilda.² It is necessary therefore to turn to documentary survivals to supplement these meagre details and it is largely from the records of the religious houses which they patronised that the history of the counts has to be reconstructed. The English activities of the counts, which have never been systematically studied, generated a similar body of sources ranging from cartulary copies of monastic grants to surviving acts in favour of individuals, but this material can be supplemented from the records of English government, such as the pipe rolls. It is these two groups of sources, from French religious foundations and of English provenance, which have provided the bulk of the primary material for this study and which are discussed below.

I. FRENCH SOURCES

The religious houses which generated most of the material of relevance for the history of the Rotrous lay, as might be expected, within the Perche itself, but there were some communities beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the counts for which the family retained affection, just as there were houses within the Perche which received no comital patronage.

A. Favoured Foundations in the Perche

Of the houses favoured by the counts there are six within the Perche which are particularly useful as sources for comital history. Five of these houses, Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou, Tiron, La

¹ *Obits*, ii, *passim*.

² *RHF*, xv, 512. For Richenza-Matilda's letter from Adam abbot of Perseigne, *Lettres*, 236-249.

Trappe, Val Dieu and Les Clairets were founded by the comital family and patronage of the sixth, Saint-Léonard of Bellême, was assumed by them.

Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou

According to the records of the Cluniac priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou the community there was founded in 1031 by Geoffrey *vicecomes* of Châteaudun. His son Rotrou built a magnificent church for the house which was dedicated in the late 1070s, but it was not until the early 1080s that Rotrou's son, Geoffrey count of Mortagne, gave the foundation to the Cluniacs. The house, which seems to have functioned as a family mausoleum, continued to be patronised by the family, albeit on a smaller scale, until the extinction of the direct line in 1226.³

Little material has survived from the muniments of the house, but a fifteenth century cartulary is preserved in the Archives Départementales of the Eure-et-Loir at Chartres. It was known to Duchesne who made extensive transcripts and an edition, which was published in 1891 by Charles Métails as *Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou 1031-1791*, forms the obvious starting point for the study of the Perche under the Rotrous.⁴

No historian however seems to have compared the records preserved in the cartulary of Saint-Denis with documents in the archives of Cluny which were published in Bernard and Bruel's *Recueil des actes de l'abbaye de Cluny*. Comparisons of Geoffrey count of Mortagne's act, dating from the early 1080s, in which he granted Saint-Denis to Cluny, reveal few significant variants, but an examination of the confirmation of Saint-Denis's endowment made by his father, Count Rotrou I, in the late 1070s reveals major and important divergences between the two texts.⁵ The Cluny records also preserve a second version of Count Geoffrey's act of donation, which is at considerable variance with both the Nogent and the Cluny versions.⁶ This indicates that these acts have been extensively reworked and emphasises the need to exercise caution, which would in any case be necessary in approaching acts relating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries preserved in a fifteenth century cartulary.

Tiron

The foundation of the abbey of Tiron in the region between the Perche and the Beauce has to be set in the context of the rise of the new more ascetic orders in the early twelfth century.⁷ The life of its founder and first abbot, Bernard, compiled in the 1130s by Geoffrey Grossus stresses the support given by Count Rotrou II, though modern historians have been inclined assign a

³ For the foundation, *NLR*, no. V. For Rotrou I and Geoffrey III's acts, *NLR*, nos. VI, VII.

⁴ AD Eure-et-Loir H2601. Duchesne 20, ff. 217-9, 22, ff. 172-4, 276-98.

⁵ *NLR*, no. VI compared with *Cluny*, no. 3517

⁶ Geoffrey's grant to Cluny survives in three versions: i) *NLR*, no. VI ii) *Cluny*, no. 3589 iii) *Cluny*, no. 3563.

⁷ H. Leyser, *Hermits and the new monasticism: a study of religious communities in western Europe 1000-1150* (London, 1984).

significant role to the diocesan bishop, Ivo of Chartres.⁸ A twelfth century cartulary contains numerous acts by Count Rotrou, which confirm his personal interest in the foundation, together with details of benefactions by the local families of the Perche. The edition of the cartulary published by Lucien Merlet in 1883-4 incorporates additional material from the muniments of the house, which are now held together with the cartulary in the Archives Départementales at Chartres, and the entire corpus of material was rearranged into "chronological" order by the editor. The printed edition of the cartulary has therefore to be used with caution since the rearrangement imposes a chronological structure upon acts which cannot be precisely dated and some of the additional material has been demonstrated to be suspect.⁹

La Trappe

The early history of the great Cistercian house at La Trappe on the northern boundary of the Perche, which was reformed in the seventeenth century and gave rise to the use of the term the Trappists, is obscure. A foundation narrative dating from at least as early as the fourteenth century suggests that the house was founded by Rotrou II in the 1120s.¹⁰ The earliest surviving documentation dating from the year 1136, however, indicates that the house had originally been part of the Savignac filiation and, like other foundations of that order, was originally made under the auspices of local families.¹¹ It therefore seems likely that the count took it under his protection some years later possibly in the late 1130s or early 1140s.¹² A thirteenth century cartulary now to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale forms the basis of *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Notre-Dame de la Trappe*, which was edited H. de Charency and published in Alençon in 1889.¹³ In addition a substantial body of original acts are to be found in the Archives Départementales of the Orne at Alençon and these acts indicate a high standard of accuracy by the cartulary copyist, whose chief fault, as far as the modern historian is concerned, was his tendency to abbreviate or omit altogether the witness lists of the acts he was copying. Nonetheless the cartulary is a valuable source for the history of landholding in the north of the

⁸ Geoffrey Grossus, Vita. Cf. Dom David Knowles' account of the order in *The monastic order in England*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1966), 201.

⁹ Tiron. L. Merlet, 'Chartes fausses de l'abbaye de la Trinité de Tiron', *BEC*, 3e série, v (1854), 516-27 and his introduction to the printed edition of the cartulary, *Tiron*, xxff.

¹⁰ *LT*, 578-80.

¹¹ AD Orne H725 which describes how Gerburgis mother of William Goidus of Les Apres and her sons gave Abbot Vivian of Aunay land which they had formerly given to the priest of Crulai, with the priest's approval. The *dapifer* of Laigle also gave property and revenues and the grants were approved by Richer of Laigle who gave exemptions from his exactions. The act was witnessed by Geoffrey abbot of Savigny. It was transcribed into the cartulary of La Trappe, *LT*, 476-7.

¹² Cf. the foundation of Saint-André-en-Gouffern, Thompson, 'William Talvas', 178. An adequate endowment was an important factor in securing filiation to the Savignac order, B.D. Hill, 'The beginnings of the first French foundations of the Norman abbey of Savigny', *American Benedictine Review*, xxxi (1980), 132. The association of Richer of Laigle with the original foundation suggests that Rotrou II assumed patronage of his nephew's house and a possible motive may have been as part of his alignment with King Stephen in 1137. Stephen's patronage of the Savignac order is well-known, R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen* (London, 1967), 102-3. On Savigny, J. Buhot, 'Abbaye normande de Savigny: chef d'ordre et fille de Cîteaux', *Moyen Âge*, xlvi (1936), 1-19, 107-21, 178-94, 247-72.

¹³ BN ms. lat. 11060.

Perche and contains numerous comital acts of Counts Rotrou III, Geoffrey III, Thomas, and William.

Val Dieu

The Carthusian foundation at Val Dieu in the forest of Réno was made under the auspices of Count Rotrou III in 1170. Two important survivals from its records are now to be found in the Bibliothèque Municipale at Alençon. A cartulary compiled between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries contains 530 acts dated between 1226 and 1430 is catalogued as ms. 108, while a *recueil* of seventeenth/eighteenth century date is ms. 112. They were intensively studied by Geneviève Cagniant in the 1970s, but neither has been published.¹⁴ In addition extensive muniments from the house, including several later transcripts of the act of foundation of 1170, are in the care of the Archives Départementales of the Orne at Alençon.¹⁵ The material is useful for the comital acts of Counts Rotrou III and Geoffrey III which are included and also for details of the families who had influence in an area where the authority of the counts of the Perche was often shakey.

Les Clairets

As he lay on his deathbed in March 1202 Count Geoffrey III expressed a wish to found a religious house. He left all the arrangements including the choice of the order to his wife the countess Richenza-Matilda, who in 1204 established a Cistercian nunnery of the Savignac filiation at Notre-Dame-des-Clairets in the wooded country to the east of the River Huisne, south of Nogent-le-Rotrou. A cartulary copy of the foundation's records was made in 1720 and may now be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale. This formed the basis of a printed edition published by the Vicomte de Souancé in 1894.¹⁶ The Vicomte incorporated into this work the texts of some original charters of the abbey which are now held among the *fonds latins* in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹⁷ The material is particularly useful for the history of the Perche in the early 13th century.

Saint-Léonard of Bellême

During the eleventh century numerous priories were founded in western France and presented to the great monastery of Marmoutier in Touraine.¹⁸ One such foundation was the priory of Saint-

¹⁴ G. Cagniant, *L. Chartreuse du Val Dieu au Perche: son chartier et son domaine jusqu'à la fin du xiii^e siècle*, Thèse de l'École Nationale des Chartes, Paris, 1975.

¹⁵ AD Orne H2607-3176 in particular H2621, the transcripts of the foundation act.

¹⁶ BN ms. lat. 17140, published as *Clairets*.

¹⁷ BN ms. lat. 9220.

¹⁸ O. Gantier, 'Recherches sur les possessions et les prieurés de l'abbaye de Marmoutier de x^e au xiii^e siècle', *Revue Mabillon*, lxxv (1963/4), 93-110, 161-167.

Martin which was established by Hugh of Rocé at Vieux-Bellême, probably in 1054.¹⁹ The priory received numerous benefactions in the course of the next forty years; then in 1092 the lord of Bellême, Robert son of Earl Roger of Montgomery, added to Marmoutier's possessions in the area by giving the church of Saint-Léonard in the stronghold of Bellême itself, which had been founded by his maternal ancestors.²⁰ It is not entirely clear how the two sites, situated so near to each other, operated. It seems unlikely that there were two separate communities but the language of benefactions made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is unhelpful, sometimes referring to the foundation as Saint Martin's and on other occasions as Saint Leonard's.²¹ When Rotrou II was given control of Bellême by King Henry I in 1113 he assumed patronage of the Marmoutier communities and in 1126 issued a great charter of confirmation.²² The counts of Perche continued to be closely associated with the Bellême foundation(s) and many comital acts are preserved in the original among the remarkable Marmoutier muniments held by the Archives Départementales of the Orne. In 1894 the Abbé Barret published many of these documents under the title *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche*, though there is in fact no cartulary at all, but a collection of originals and enrolled copies, which were known to the antiquarians of the seventeenth century whose copies are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale.²³

There were a number of other religious foundations within or close to the Perche, which were patronised by the counts and may well have been founded by them. Among such foundations may be included the priory of the Madeleine at Chartrage, the Grandmontine house at Chêne Galon, the hospitals at Mortagne and Nogent-le-Rotrou and the colleges of Saint-Jean at Nogent-le-Rotrou and Toussaints at Mortagne. Records derived from these houses would be particularly valuable for the history of the counts, but they have not survived in any quantity and can only be occasionally reconstructed from later transcripts.

Chartrage

The Augustinian priory of the Madeleine at Chartrage lay just south of Mortagne on the Bellême road and was dependent on the abbey of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris. Antiquarians have assigned a very early origin to it, but no reliable account is available. Some acts of medieval date have survived, but by far the most important texts for the study of the counts have been transmitted in the texts of the antiquarian, Léonard Bart des Boulais. Writing in the seventeenth century he preserved in translation an act of confirmation issued by Count Rotrou III and a smaller act of

¹⁹ *CMPerche*, no. 5. The act is undated but is attested by Odo the brother of the king of France who is known to have been in western France in the weeks preceding the battle of Mortemer.

²⁰ *CMPerche*, no. 13.

²¹ AD Orne H2158:...*Guillelmus prior sancti Leonardi seu beati Martini Veteris Belismo* (1092-1100); AD Orne H2156: *monachis Majoris Monasterii in honore sancti Leonardi nocte dieque apud Belisimum morantibus...* (c. 1126); AD Orne H2161:...*confirmamus abbatie sancti Martini Majoris Monasterii et prioratui Castri Belismensis* (1180s); AD Orne H2212:...*concessi et tradidi viris religiosi priori et monachis prioratus sancti Martini de Veteri Bellismo* (1276). Odo Rigaud on his archiepiscopal visitations in the mid thirteenth century implies two communities, Odo Rigaud, *Regestrum*, 79, 234.

²² AD Orne H 2153.

²³ BN ms. lat. 5441B, fos. 289-340.

confirmation by Count Geoffrey III.²⁴ These acts provide information about the endowment of the house, but they have to be used with care since Bart standardised many of the place names he found to forms with which he was familiar in the sixteenth century.

Chêne Galon

The history of the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon which lay to the north of the forest of Bellême is obscure and its founder unknown, though the terms of the count-bishop William's confirmation made in 1219 implies that it was the work of his father, Rotrou III.²⁵ Its records were available both to Bry de la Clergerie, the first historian of the Perche, and Duchesne, but they have subsequently disappeared. Nonetheless the versions which survive are useful for their witness lists and valuable information concerning comital *prepositure*.

Maison-Dieu Mortagne

The Maison-Dieu of Mortagne which was united with the priory at Chartrage in 1696 has similarly obscure origins. No records survive except for the translation of an important comital act of 1195 which Bart des Boulais incorporated into his work.²⁶ Again there are useful hints about local patrons of the house, but the act is chiefly important for the fact that Count Geoffrey made extensive grants for the rebuilding of the house which had been damaged in the recent warfare. His act therefore lends support to the impression of warfare on the southern Norman borders during King Richard's captivity for which our only earlier sources have been the disbursements made in the Norman Pipe Rolls.²⁷

Maison-Dieu Nogent-le-Rotrou

The origins of a similar foundation at Nogent-le-Rotrou cannot be traced with certainty and at some point in the later middle ages, there seems to have been an amalgamation of the hospital and the leperhouse of Saint-Lazare in Nogent-le-Rotrou.²⁸ Many of the records of the two foundations were preserved by the successor institution and until recently were held by the hospital of Nogent-le-Rotrou, but have now been transferred to the care of the Château Saint-Jean in Nogent-le-Rotrou. Some of the acts were translated by M. Oeillet des Murs and included in his history of the counts of the Perche. In 1869 an analytical calendar was compiled by Stanislas Proust and this remains the only printed guide to the collection.²⁹ The acts again

²⁴ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131-6, 152.

²⁵ Duchesne 54, p. 461.

²⁶ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 156-8.

²⁷ *Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, i, 245-6.

²⁸ Rotrou II is often credited with the foundation of the house, but there may be a similar 'petit problème de paternité' to that experienced at the hospital of Saint-Jean in Angers, which King Henry II claimed to have founded in 1182 despite evidence that it was already in existence at that date, J. Bienvenu, 'Pauvreté, misères et charité en Anjou aux xi^e et xii^e siècles', *Moyen Âge*, lxxiii (1967), 206.

²⁹ Proust, *Inventaire*.

provide useful information on the seigneurs of the Nogent area and some indication of the economy of the region.

College of Saint-Jean of Nogent-le-Rotrou

The college of Saint-Jean of the castle at Nogent-le-Rotrou was probably founded by Count Geoffrey III using the endowments of the church of Saint-Etienne. Its early records have been lost, but a fifteenth century necrology now held by the Archives Départementales of the Eure-et-Loir at Chartres is vital for the history of the comital family, since it gives not only details of dates of decease, but also appears to have been compiled with access to the original acts of endowment.³⁰ As a result it is possible to reconstruct some comital acts from the information given in the necrology.

College of Toussaints, Mortagne

The college of Augustinian canons at Mortagne was founded in March 1203 by the countess Richenza-Matilda in memory of her husband Geoffrey III. The house seems to have prospered, attracting gifts from the local landed families even after the failure of the comital line.³¹ Its medieval records have since disappeared, although they seem to have been available to the antiquarian, Bart des Boulais.³² The Archives Départementales of the Orne holds a series of documents dating from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, which describe the foundation of the house and which include an inventory of their deeds drawn up in the course of a lawsuit.³³

B. Other Religious foundations in the Perche

Other houses whose records have survived, sometimes in abundance, appear not to have been favoured by the counts. Occasionally a local benefactor's act with comital approval is registered among their archives or a decision of the comital court is recorded, but the importance of documentary survivals from these houses tends to be in the information given about local patrons. In this group may be placed those foundations which in English parlance might be described as alien priories: Sainte-Gauburge, La Chaise and Moutiers. The very smallest of these priories which were probably little more than cells of their mother house can often only be discerned by the random survival of an odd document. These houses were usually the foundations of the local lords and it is rare for there to be comital involvement in their affairs. Such houses can be

³⁰ AD Eure-et-Loir G3485.

³¹ For grants by the count-bishop William, *LT*, 136, Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 176. Odo Rigaud asserts there were about a hundred clerks, *Registrum*, 372.

³² Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 161-3. They were probably also available to the compilers of *GC*, who in their discussion of Silvester, bishop of Sées, mention his attestation of the act of foundation, *GC*, xi, col. 692.

³³ AD Orne IG 1071/30 *Inventaire des pièces justificatives*.

detected at Brénard,³⁴ Boissy-Maugis,³⁵ Rémalard,³⁶ Parfondeval,³⁷ Pervençères,³⁸ Ceton,³⁹ Dame-Marie,⁴⁰ Montgaudry⁴¹ and Saint-Victor de Réno.⁴²

Sainte-Gauburge

The origins of Sainte-Gauburge, a priory attached to the royal monastery of Saint-Denis, north of Paris are obscure. There is no indication that Saint-Denis held property in this region of France in the Carolingian period. Records from the monastery of Saint-Père of Chartres suggest that there had been unsuccessful attempts to found a religious community on the site during the tenth and eleventh centuries under the patronage of the Bellême family and involving monks from Bonneval and Saint-Père itself.⁴³ By the 1130s the priory of Saint-Denis was sufficiently well-established to have secured episcopal confirmation of donations from the bishop of Le Mans and there are indications that the house was a going concern more than a generation before in the 1090s, but it is not known who founded the house nor how it became a priory of Saint-Denis.⁴⁴ There is abundant documentation for the priory in the twelfth century. Sealed originals of acts of donation are to be found in the Archives Nationales which also hold the *Livre blanc*, the cartulary of Saint-Denis into which these acts were copied.⁴⁵ It is not, however, until 1190 that the counts

³⁴ AD Loir-et-Cher 17 H55. The priory of Saint-Léonard of Brénard (Orne, ct./cme. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne) was a dependency of the abbey of Pontlevoy, which had been founded in the 1030s by Geduin of Saumur, a follower of the counts of Blois/Chartres. The seigneurs of Brénard were substantial benefactors of the house, BN ms. lat. 12681, f. 209, *Obits*, ii, 208-215. The house may have been overshadowed by La Trappe, cf. *LT*, 575, 53, 87-8.

³⁵ A small priory had been founded at Boissy-Maugis (Orne, ct. Rémalard) towards the end of the eleventh century and was given to Marmoutier by Walter fitz Vivian its founder, *CMPerche*, no. 150. Substantial muniments survive but there is no indication of comital involvement in its affairs, *CMPerche*, nos. 151-167.

³⁶ The priory of Saint-Germain at Rémalard was a dependency of Saint-Laumer of Blois.

³⁷ The priory of Notre-Dame at Parfondeval (Orne, ct. Pervençères) was a dependency of the abbey of Saint-Pierre de la Couture in Le Mans, *La Couture*, nos. CLXXX, CLXXXI.

³⁸ The house at Pervençères (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) had been founded at the end of the eleventh century by Fulcher Quarrel and his sons, Odo, Fulcher and Ivo and was a priory of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans, *VLM*, no. 635. At the beginning of the thirteenth century Robert Quarrel and his son Fulcher were in dispute with the abbey over the status of the monks there, AD Sarthe H93 (1209) and Robert compromised on the endowment of his new chapel nearby at Erables in order to secure a monk who was also a priest so that masses could be said for the family. The cell at Erables is mentioned in Bishop Sylvester of Sées' confirmation of a sale of land in 1214 when it was described as being founded by Oravia, wife of the late Robert Quarrel, *Liber Controversiarum*, no. 16. The editor was uncertain about the location of this cell, but given the landed interests of its patrons, the Quarrel family, it must be Erables, near Pervençères.

³⁹ The material relating to the Cluniac priory of Saint-Pierre at Ceton (Orne, ct. Le Theil) has been preserved in the cartulary of the much larger Cluniac house of Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou, although the house was an independent foundation by a lord of some influence, Walter Chesnel. In order to interpret this material which has much to say about the relations of the early counts and the local nobility, it is necessary to make adjustments not only for its preservation in a fifteenth century cartulary, but also for amendment by the scribes of the house which took control of Ceton.

⁴⁰ Albert, abbot of Micy near Orléans had given property at Dame-Marie (Orne, ct. Bellême) to the monastery of Jumièges when he became a monk there probably in the early years of the eleventh century, *Jumièges*, no. IX. The house can have been little more than a cell because when Odo Rigaud made his archiepiscopal visitation in 1255 he only found two monks there, Rigaud, *Regestrum*, 234. In 1182 the jurisdictional rights associated with the property which Albert had inherited from his mother's family, the lords of Bellême, were purchased by the monks for £220 with the approval of Count Rotrou III, *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII.

⁴¹ A cell of Saint-Martin of Sées was founded at Montgaudry (Orne, ct. Pervençères) around 1100, LBSMS, f. 59.

⁴² The priory of La Madeleine at Saint-Victor de Réno (Orne, ct. Longny) was founded before 1147 as a dependency of Tiron, *Tiron*, no. CCXCI. There is no known comital connection with the priory.

⁴³ *SPC*, 155-56.

⁴⁴ AN S2238, nos. 23, 12.

⁴⁵ AN S2238 and LL1158.

of the Perche play any part in the history of the community and then only as guarantor of a sale of jurisdictional rights.

La Chaise

The priory of Sainte-Catharine at La Chaise near Eperrais has similarly obscure origins. It first appears in the records of its mother house the great Benedictine abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire at Fleury with an act which can be tentatively dated to the mid twelfth century.⁴⁶ Comital involvement in its affairs was minimal and its records are chiefly of interest for the information they provide concerning the local lords of the Perche.

Moutiers

The priory at Moutiers was one of a number of daughter houses of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Laumer at Blois.⁴⁷ A *translatio* of the saint links the monastery at Blois with an early foundation in the forest of Perche on the Moutiers site, which is also known as Corbion.⁴⁸ It describes how monastic life at Corbion became untenable as the result of Scandinavian raids and the monks were forced to withdraw, taking the body of their founder, the holy man Laumer with them. After many years of wandering they settled at Blois. There were several priories attached to Saint-Laumer in the immediate area, which implies local attachment to the saint and possibly some memory of the community holding extensive property there.

It is often asserted by antiquarians that the priory at Moutiers was restored by Count Rotrou II, but I have been unable to discover any justification for this claim. The earliest comital link with the house appears to be a grant of jurisdictional rights and exemption from castle repair, granted by Rotrou III in 1159.⁴⁹ The muniments from the house do not appear to have survived, but there are repeated references to a mysterious cartulary. In an article based on this document and published in the *Bulletin of the Société Historique et Archéologique de l'Orne* in 1891 M. Godet asserted that the cartulary was at Blois.⁵⁰ If this was ever the case, it is not there now, at least not in the Archives Départementales, and a nineteenth century transcription formerly held by the Bibliothèque Municipale of Nogent-le-Rotrou has subsequently been lost. It is possible that the nineteenth century transcript from which the article's author worked may still be available, though as yet it has proved impossible to trace in either Alençon or Blois.

⁴⁶ AD Loiret H22 p. 185, no. 288.

⁴⁷ For the history of this house, Mars, *Histoire du royal monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois* (1646).

⁴⁸ *Translatio Sancti Launomari Blesas*, *RHF*, vii, 365.

⁴⁹ Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6.

⁵⁰ Godet, 'Moutiers-en-Perche', 134, n.3.

C. Religious Foundations outside the Perche

The counts of the Perche did not confine their patronage simply to houses within the Perche and the records of two houses in major ecclesiastical centres outside the Perche can contribute to the study of the Rotrou family. The cartularies of two monasteries in the episcopal centres of Chartres and Le Mans, those of Saint-Père at Chartres and Saint-Vincent of Le Mans, are particularly valuable for this purpose. It may be significant, however, that the Rotrous appear never to have made any grants to the important monastery of Saint-Martin at Sées, the seat of the third bishop with authority in the territory of the Perche and this may be explained by the fact that that house remained under the protection of the Rotrous great rivals, the Bellême family.⁵¹ Three other Norman monasteries provide material for the study of the family however. The cartularies of Saint-Sulpice-sur-Risle⁵² and Jumièges both contain acts of the counts of the Perche, while the devotion of the counts to Saint-Evroul is demonstrated by their patronage of two priories at Maison Maugis⁵³ and Moulins-la-Marche.⁵⁴ Clearly however it was the Chartrain houses which received most of the largesse of the comital family and the lords of the Perche. Records relating to the Augustinian houses of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée in Chartres and Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois provide useful insights into the history of the Perche, together with those of the leperhouse of Chartres, the Grand Beaulieu,⁵⁵ but the most significant for the history of the Rotrous was the priory of Belhomert.

Belhomert

The Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, where at least one member of the family, Geoffrey III's sister Oravia, was to take religious vows, had been founded by the lords of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais, probably in the 1120s or 1130s.⁵⁶ Some of the muniments of the house are preserved in the Archives Départementales at Chartres,⁵⁷ but the analysis of its archives made by

⁵¹ The main source for the history of Saint-Martin of Sées, LBSMS, which is preserved in the episcopal archives, allows the eleventh century house of the house to be recovered in some detail, but contains less twelfth century material. As a result J.-M. Bouvris has concluded that many of the twelfth century acts covering the consolidation of the house's patrimony must have been entered in the now lost Livre rouge, 'Le "Livre-rouge" de l'abbaye de Saint-Martin de Sées: essai de restitution d'un cartulaire disparu', *Annales de Normandie*, xliii (1993), 255-7. It is therefore possible that records of twelfth century benefactions by the counts of Perche may have been lost with this document.

⁵² AD Loiret D668.

⁵³ The monastery of Saint-Evroul established a house for one or two monks and a priest at Maison Maugis after Geoffrey III exchanged the church of Saint-Nicholas there for the monks' property at Marchainville, BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 36, AD Orne H702 (seventeenth century copy). The monks were later to complain that these rights had been infringed, *Querimoniae*, no. 237..

⁵⁴ The church of Saint-Laurent at Moulins-la-Marche had been given by William of Moulins to Saint-Evroul before 1090 and a monk lived there to administer the property in Orderic's lifetime, OV, iii, 132. At some stage in the twelfth century it seems to have become a fully fledged priory and the counts of Perche played a part in its endowment, BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 131. Rotrou II gave the advowson of the parish church of Moulins, BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 127, AD Orne 721 (seventeenth century copy) and Geoffrey III added the whole parish church of Saint-Nicholas, the chapel of Saint-Pierre in the castle and other property, AD Orne H721. The terms of Geoffrey's benefaction imply that the priory of Saint-Laurent was already in existence at this period, the 1190s.

⁵⁵ *SJV*, AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, *Beaulieu*.

⁵⁶ Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 216-8.

⁵⁷ AD Eure-et-Loir H5120-5230.

Guillaume Laisne, the prior of Mondeville, in the seventeenth century indicates that a significant amount has been lost including a number of acts of the counts of the Perche. Laisne's *History of the Chartrain*, which contains much material of relevance to the history of the Perche and has been accurately described as "*presque indéchiffrables*", is to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁵⁸

Saint-Père de Chartres

The precise foundation date of the great monastery of Saint-Pierre-en-Vallée in Chartres is unknown, but it was restored after the Scandinavian raids by bishop Aganon between 931 and 941. From its early days it had been a focal point for patronage from all over western France and the early dukes of Normandy made grants to the house, but its chief benefactors were the counts of Blois/Chartres. The records of the house, which is usually known by the local variant of its patron's name as Saint-Père, are to be found in the Archives Départementales of the Eure-et-Loir at Chartres. Many of these charters were copied in the eighteenth century by the Benedictine monk Dom Muley, whose work was incorporated into the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père de Chartres*, edited by B. Guérard and published in 1840. However Muley's transcript, which formed part of the manuscript holdings of the Bibliothèque Municipale of Chartres (ms. 1136), and several other sources for the history of Saint-Père were lost in the Second World War.⁵⁹ Among these the most important was the *Cartulaire d'Aganon* or *Vetus Agano*, which is still extensively quoted by modern historians.⁶⁰ This early twelfth century manuscript (ms. 1060) which purported to have been written by the monk Paul and contained not only charters, but a narrative written by the monk, was severely damaged in 1944 and is now listed among survivals which are "*difficilement utilisables ou peu utilisables*" and a twelfth century copy with variant readings (ms. 1061) is in a similar condition. Fortunately the *Codex Argenteus* or *Livre d'Argent*, which dates from about 1200 and contains deeds and privileges arranged by place and then chronologically, is still to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale (ms. lat. 10101) and there is a copy in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (ms. 993). The cartulary contains numerous attestations by the counts of the Perche, together with benefactions by their associates and tenants.

Saint-Vincent of Le Mans

The monastery of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans founded immediately outside the walls of the Roman city in 572, but had fallen into decay when it was refounded by Bishop Avesgaud of Le Mans in the early eleventh century. Its original cartulary recording donations made in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries has been lost, but a seventeenth century copy, now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale provided the text for the printed edition produced by R. Charles and the

⁵⁸ BN ms. franc. 24133, pp. 301-14. For the description, Murs, *Comtes*, 508.

⁵⁹ *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, vol. liii Manuscrits des bibliothèques sinistrées de 1940 à 1944* (Paris, 1962), 2-5.

⁶⁰ See, for example, the discussion of his social terminology by Poly and Bournazel, *Mutation féodale*, 207.

Vicomte Menjot d'Elbenne.⁶¹ Later twelfth century acts are preserved in the a book of lawsuits, *Liber controversiarum sancti Vincentii Cenomannensi*, which survives in two manuscripts in Paris and Le Mans.⁶² Count Rotrou I made two benefactions to this house during the 1060s in which important details of his family and his property are given.

2 ENGLISH SOURCES

Like their French counterparts, the acts of the counts of the Perche with an English provenance, have an ecclesiastical bias, since most have been preserved by their association with religious houses. Nonetheless a number of secular acts, granting property to named individuals, have survived either as copies in cartularies of religious houses or in their original form. The great difference between an examination of the counts' English lands, as opposed to their French interests, lies however in the significant amount of information which may be obtained from the documentation produced by English governmental authorities.

1. Records from religious houses

A quarter of the English acts of the counts of the Perche come from the records of two Augustinian priories, those of St. Mary Bradenstoke and St. Peter of Dunstable. Both houses were early Augustinian foundations in England, dating from before 1140, and the counts' interest in them can be fairly attributed to family relationships with their patrons. Bradenstoke had been founded probably in 1139 by Rotrou II's English father-in-law, Walter of Salisbury, and was the burial place of several of his descendants.⁶³ It may also have been the last resting place of Rotrou II and Hawise of Salisbury's second son Geoffrey, who administered the family's English property during the course of a career in the service of King Henry II. His brother Rotrou III gave half a mark in silver from his mill at *Berwic* to the house, noting that his ancestors rested there and Geoffrey III also granted property. The priory at Dunstable had been founded in the early 1130s by Henry I, but the family of Chaources from Maine had shown an interest in it from its early days.⁶⁴ The Chaources were cousins of the Rotrous through the marriage of Walter of Salisbury and Sibyl, daughter of Patrick of Chaources. While the genealogical relationship between the families is easily explained the tenurial relations are not, but it would appear that the counts of the Perche acquired, probably through dowry, an interest in lands held by the Chaources family. The counts also acquired an interest in the Chaources' favourite religious houses and as a result three acts may be found in the Dunstable cartulary, one in the cartulary of

⁶¹ BN ms lat 5444 = Fonds Gaignières, no. 242

⁶² BN ms. lat. 5444, pp. 353-510 and ms 95 of the Mediathèque (formerly the Bibliothèque) du Mans. For a printed edition, *Liber controversiarum*.

⁶³ For its cartulary, BL ms. Cotton Vitellius A xi.

⁶⁴ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1827. For its cartulary BL ms. Harley 1885.

Gloucester⁶⁵ and one relating to England in the cartulary of the abbey of Saint-Pierre de la Couture in Le Mans.⁶⁶

While the Bradenstoke and Dunstable cartularies represent family connections over some length of time, other sources preserve information about singular acts by the counts. The cartulary of the Benedictine nunnery of Blackborough in Norfolk preserves the settlement of a dispute between the founders of the house, the de Scaldis family and the counts in their capacity as lords of Haughley in Suffolk.⁶⁷ The cartulary of the Augustinian priory of Southwick in Hampshire contains a grant by Geoffrey III of property at Aldbourne and the Wiltshire portion of the Lewes cartulary records Rotrou II's grant of land at Wanborough.⁶⁸ Rotrou III's grant of the churches of both Aldbourne and Wanborough to the Maison-Dieu in Nogent-le-Rotrou is known to us from printed sources and a later *inspeximus*, while Geoffrey III and Count Thomas' confirmations to St. Radegund's at Bradsole give valuable information about their authority in Kent.⁶⁹

Knowledge of the counts' activities in England would however be greatly enhanced if more records had survived from the Augustinian priory of St. John the Baptist at Sandleford outside Newbury. For details of the foundation of this house by Count Geoffrey III we are indebted to Dugdale, who saw Stephen Langton's *inspeximus* of the foundation charter, but its subsequent history has to be reconstructed from fragmentary muniments preserved at St. George's College Windsor.⁷⁰

2. Governmental records

The immense value of the records created in the course of government in twelfth century England is well-known and the investigation of a family such as the Rotrous with interests in both England and northern France highlights all too clearly the dearth of similar material from France.⁷¹ The

⁶⁵ *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii S. Petri Gloucestriae*, ed. W.H. Hart (RS 33, London, 1863-67), no. CCCXXIX. The putative original of this grant made by Count Rotrou II is preserved in the archives of Hereford Dean and Chapter, item no. 798. It presents a number of problems relating to palaeography and dating. It purports to concede property at Kempsford (Glos.) granted to the abbey of St. Peter's at Gloucester by Ernulf de Hesdin and Patrick of Chaources and the form of words used *res illas quas audivi esse datas* would make sense in the context of Count Rotrou acknowledging existing commitments on property which he received as the dowry of Hawise of Salisbury, granddaughter of Patrick of Chaources. This would place the act after 1120 when Rotrou's first wife Matilda was drowned in the White Ship. Unfortunately the well-attested death of one of the attestors, Henry earl of Warwick, in 1119 calls into question the reliability of the act. However it may be that the drafter of the act was incompetent or that the act has been subsequently reworked, which would explain the peculiarities of the palaeography and it might also permit the *H comite Uuareuuic* to be interpreted as *M comitissa Uuareuuic*.

⁶⁶ *La Couture*, no. CLXV.

⁶⁷ BL ms. Egerton 3137, f. 101v.

⁶⁸ Southwick, I, f. 28v.; BL Cotton Vespasian. xv, F, f. 169.

⁶⁹ Bry, *Perche, Additions*, 75. PRO DL 25/3394(2). For St. Radegund's, Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson ms B461, f. 20, published as *Monasticon*, vi, 941.

⁷⁰ *Monasticon*, vi, 565. The endowments later became the property of St. George's College Windsor, which now holds some papal bulls and later deeds relating to Sandleford, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on manuscripts in various collections*, vol. vii (London, 1914), 16, 18, 43.

⁷¹ Baldwin, *Government*, 410 ff.

process of acquisition of property, some hints about its administration and its ultimate forfeiture can all be gleaned from the pipe rolls, and amplified by the survival from around the turn of the twelfth century by the great sequences of enrolled acts, such as the close rolls, patent rolls, Norman rolls charter rolls and liberate rolls. The Curia Regis rolls are particularly valuable for the information they provide about the counts' English tenants and the *Book of Fees* gives important details about the counts' property and its deployment. Rotrou II's grant of a hide of land to the abbey of Marcigny would for example be much harder to detect but for its inclusion in the *Book of Fees*, which then allows us to identify the placename in Calixtus II's grant to Marcigny.⁷² The Curia Regis rolls provide the information that the honour of the constable came to the counts as the *maritagium* of Richenza-Matilda, where the chronicles only mention the marriage in 1189,⁷³ while the sequence of the family's loss of lands after 1204 can be established from the rolls and Richenza-Matilda's death from the pipe roll of 1211.

3. Grants to individuals

A remarkably high proportion of the English acts of Count Geoffrey III are grants to individuals. Four have survived in their original form, of which one is to be found in the British Library, one in the Public Record office and two in the archives of the Canterbury Dean and Chapter.⁷⁴ None of them measures more than 250 x 125 mm and three of them begin with the formula *Sciunt presentes et futuri quod ego Galfr' comes Pertici*. A fifth act of Count Geoffrey is preserved in a fourteenth century copy together with two other acts relating to Aldbourne in Wiltshire.⁷⁵ Two more can be found in the Stowe compilation *Aspilogia sive de iconibus scutariis gentilitis commentarius* and one is registered in the Dunstable cartulary.⁷⁶

II SECONDARY SOURCES

The founding father of historical studies of the Perche was Gilles Bry de la Clergerie whose *Histoire des pays et comté du Perche et duché d'Alençon* was published in 1620.⁷⁷ Bry's family belonged to the *noblesse du robe* and originated from La Clergerie less than two kilometres from Bellême. He was by profession a lawyer describing himself on the title page of his work as *avocat en la Cour de Parlement* and he was peculiarly well-placed to obtain materials for the history since he held the office of *bailli* to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou.⁷⁸ He

⁷² *Book of Fees*, ii, 738, Marcigny, no. 270.

⁷³ CRR, xiii, no. 684.

⁷⁴ BL Harley ms. charter 54.g.26; PRO E210/1532; Canterbury D & C carta antiq. R62, T27.

⁷⁵ PRO E326/7482

⁷⁶ BL Stowe 666, f. 79. BL ms Harley 1885, f. 72.

⁷⁷ Bry, *Perche*.

⁷⁸ P. Siguret, 'Gilles Bry de la Clergerie', in G. Bry de la Clergerie, *Histoire des pays et comté du Perche*. 2^e éd. rev. et aug. par P. Siguret. (Paris, 1970).

was also responsible for an edition of the *coutume* of the Perche which appeared in 1621, together with his *Additions aux recherches d'Alençon et du Perche*.⁷⁹

Bry's work is remarkable both for the range of materials which he consulted and the judicious way in which he handled them. It is clear that much of the sixteenth and seventeenth century interest in historical studies was related to the contemporary interest in customary law in the various localities, but Bry did more than plead a case for local patriotism.⁸⁰ His career took him to Paris and he seems to have taken advantage of his residence there to make the acquaintance of historians such as Duchesne, whose help he acknowledged.⁸¹ He took some pains to hunt out relevant material, which he then incorporated in his work. Sometimes his text is the only source for an act, particularly where, as Stanislaus Proust narrates, he failed to return the original:

*Le titre original a disparu; il paraît d'après des notes trouvées dans les archives, qu'il aurait été prêté en 1620 à Gilles de Bry, auteur d'une histoire du Perche, qui ne l'aurait jamais rendu.*⁸²

While it is possible to detect mistakes and many of his conclusions now need to be challenged, Bry's work is still of fundamental importance to the study of the Perche and was republished with notes in 1970.

Although his was the only work published, Bry was not alone in his interest in the history of the Perche. Léonard Bart, lord of Boulais had composed probably late in the sixteenth century *Recueil des Antiquitéz du Perche*, which he presented in 1613 to Pierre Cartinat lord of Mauves and La Fauconnerie and *conseiller du roi* in the parlement. While Bart des Boulais' work is confused and contains errors of fact and interpretation, he nonetheless used primary materials some of which no longer exist and his accounts of the muniments of the religious house at Chartrage, for example, are all that survives today. This manuscript history was probably also used by René Courtin whose own *Histoire du Perche* was written in the early seventeenth century, but like the work of Bart des Boulais not published until the nineteenth century.⁸³ Courtin's history is not of standard comparable to that reached by either Bry or Bart. It is a hopeless confusion of people and events, made worse by local partiality, but many of its

⁷⁹ G. Bry de la Clergerie, *Coustumes de pays, comté et baillage du Grand Perche et des autres terres et seigneuries régies & gouvernées selon ceux* (Paris, Pierre Le Mur, 1621); *Additions*.

⁸⁰ On contemporary interest in history and its relation to legal studies, J.H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the sixteenth-century revolution in the methodology of law and history* (New York, 1963), 36-58, D.R. Kelley, 'The rise of legal history in the Renaissance', *History and Theory*, ix (1970), 174-194, esp. 187-90.

⁸¹ Bry, *Perche*, 31: *...m'aide le Sieur du Chesne Tourangeau Geographe du Roy, homme plein de recommandation pour les services qu'il rend au public en ses...recherches; 78:....dont voicy le iugement qu'il en dressa, lequel m'a esté communiqué par le sieur du Chesne.*

⁸² Proust, *Inventaire*, 8.

⁸³ Bart, *Antiquitéz*, Courtin, *Histoire*.

confusions have found their way into scholarly works as for example Jacques Boussard's unreferenced allusion to a marriage between the Bellême and Rotrou families.⁸⁴

Oeillet des Murs' work *Histoire des Comtes du Perche* was published in 1856 and runs to some 700 pages in length. Like Bry he took a chronological approach beginning in the tenth century. He spends some 200 pages dealing with the first 150 years of the period, building elaborate pictures on the basis of few references. He hypothesises a reluctance on the part of the counts of the Perche (in itself an anachronistic term) to accept the Capetian kings. He explores possible rivalries between the Bellême family and the Rotrous, portraying the God-fearing, church-founding Rotrous in conflict with the anarchic usurping Bellême. The later chapters are packed with single paragraph references to the acts of the counts, describing each act, sometimes giving a French translation, but making no attempt to draw general conclusions or fit them into a context and the quality of his references can make using his work a frustrating experience. Nonetheless his extensive researches in the archives of Chartres and Paris have clearly not left him uninformed, for he occasionally makes an interesting general observation. For example on Rotrou III (1144-1191) he writes:

*Partout et dans tout, en France comme en Angleterre et comme en Sicile, il est l'agent le plus parfait et l'expression la plus complète de la pensée du Roi de France comme le mediateur le plus heureux entre ce Monarque et le Monarque Anglais.*⁸⁵

Unfortunately he does not follow up his comments with analysis of any substance.

If Bry de la Clergerie was the only true begetter of historical studies in the Perche, its most influential exponent has been the *Vicomte* Olivier de Romanet.⁸⁶ Trained at the *École des Chartres*, his *thèse, À la Géographie et à la Topographie Féodales du Perche*, formed the basis of his detailed account of the history of the Perche with accompanying *chartes* in the French tradition of *preuves*.⁸⁷ This work has become the authority for most modern observations on the area. De Romanet did much valuable work collecting the early references to the area and attempting to trace the extent of the earlier *pagi* by examining diocesan boundaries. He reconstructed the genealogy of the Rotrou family and assigned the numeration which has found its way into most modern texts.⁸⁸ Like his predecessors he chose an essentially chronological framework for his study and concerned himself chiefly with what might be described as feudal politics and geography. There are several substantial sections on the individual castellanries which made up the county. He has few observations on social or economic history, however, and the internal workings of the county appear not to interest him, but he was instrumental in arranging for the publication of antiquarian histories, such as those of Courtin and Bart des

⁸⁴ Cf. 'Il [Hugh of Châteaudun, archbishop of Tours] semble avoir abandonné sa vicomté quand il devint archevêque, car il passa à Guérin de Domfront, mari de sa soeur Milsent', Boussard, 'Évêques', 175 and Courtin, *Histoire*, 82.

⁸⁵ Murs, *Comtes*, 489-90.

⁸⁶ H. Tournouer, Obituary, *BEC*, xcvi (1937), 196-7.

⁸⁷ Romanet, *Géographie*, reviewed by F. Funck Brentanol, *BEC*, lxiv (1903), 371-3.

⁸⁸ Cf. C. Cuissard, 'Chronologie'.

Boulais, and of primary materials in the series of which he was editor, *Documents sur la province du Perche*.

The major figure in Perche historical studies in the twentieth century has been Philippe Siguret, whose *thèse* on the Perche was presented in 1959.⁸⁹ During the 1960s he published a series of articles on the Perche, including his researches on the origins of the county which appeared in two parts with a third part promised *à suivre*, but which seems never to have materialised.⁹⁰ He wrote a study on the mottes of the Perche borders for the first Château-Gaillard conference in 1964 and much material has also appeared in the *Cahiers Percherons*.⁹¹

In the 1980s a new authority has emerged. A doctoral *thèse* was presented in 1985 by Jean Pelatan and from this a series of articles have appeared.⁹² The study of the Perche which he published in 1989 has its origins in this *thèse*.⁹³ M. Pelatan who is based at the University of Paris IV is in the tradition of French historical geographers however, his work appearing in geographical journals, and there are no modern studies similar to Chédeville's work on the Chartrain or Fossier on Picardy.⁹⁴ While de Romanet's work comes closest to the more traditional histories of Chaume, Latouche or Halphen, there has been no substantial work since the early years of this century and the area still awaits its Bur or Guillot.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ P. Siguret, *Les défenses militaires du Perche du X^e au XIII^e siècle*. École des Chartres: Position des Thèses, 1959.

⁹⁰ Siguret, 'Recherches'.

⁹¹ P. Siguret, 'Trois mottes de la région de Bellême (Orne)' *Château-Gaillard I* (Caen, 1964), 135-148.

⁹² J. Pelatan, *Le Perche: espace rural, espace régional*. Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris X (Nanterre) 1984; 'Les chemins fineraux'; 'Mottes féodales et maisons fortes: une frontière méconnue sur les franges bocagères de l'ouest', *Revue Géographique de l'Est*, xxvi (1986), 231-40.

⁹³ J. Pelatan, *Le Perche: un pays et ses hommes* (Paris, 1985).

⁹⁴ Chédeville, *Chartres*; R. Fossier, *La terre et les hommes en Picardie jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle* (Louvain, 1965).

⁹⁵ M. Chaume, *Les origines du duché de Bourgogne* (Dijon, 1925); R. Latouche, *Histoire du comté du Maine* (Paris, 1910); Halphen, *Anjou*. Bur, *Champagne*; Guillot, *Comte*.

Appendix II

Handlist of acts of the Rotrou family

Rotrou I count of Mortagne c. 1050 - c. 1080

1. Rotrou, count of Mortagne, Adelia his wife and their children concede to the abbey of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans property at Saint-Longis (Sarthe, ct. Mamers), 1067. Pd. *VLM*, no. 609.
2. Count Roger [of Montgommery], his wife Mabel [of Bellême], Rotrou and his sons Hugh and Warin grant to the abbey of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans the churches of Saosnes (Sarthe, ct. Mamers) and Courgains (Sarthe, ct. Marolles-les-Braults) and lands of the holding of *vicecomes* Geoffrey, 25 August 1076. Pd. *VLM*, no. 587.
3. Roger [of Montgommery], his wife Mabel [of Bellême], Rotrou and his sons Hugh Capellus and Warin confirm to the abbey of Saint-Vincent of Le Mans the gifts of the canon Gradulfus, *Bellême*, 25 August 1076. Pd. *VLM*, no. 589.
4. Rotrou count of Mortagne confirms the endowment of the monastery of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and makes new benefactions after the consecration of the church, c. 1078. Pd. *NLR*, no. VI.
5. Rotrou count of Mortagne's confirmation charter for Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou is confirmed by count Theobald of Blois/Chartres, 1078. Pd. *Cluny*, no. 3517. [Based on no. 4.]

Geoffrey II count of Mortagne c. 1080 - c. 1100

6. Geoffrey brother of *vicecomes* Hugh of Châteaudun gives his approval to the sale made to Marmoutier by Gervase son of Lancelin and joins his brother in giving the church of *Rosdono*, 1080. Pd. *CMD*, no. CXL.
7. Geoffrey count of Mortagne confirms his family's endowment of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and gives the house to Cluny, 1080? Pd. i) *NLR*, no. VII ii) *Cluny*, no. 3589 with slight variations.
8. Geoffrey count of Mortagne confirms his family's endowment of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and gives the house to Cluny, 1080? A=BN Collection de Bourgogne, vol. 78, no. 144. Pd. *Cluny*, no. 3563.
9. Geoffrey count of Mortagne exchanges with the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou property lying between the Rhône and Huisne rivers for the estate at Cour Bremier (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles), after 1096. Pd. *NLR*, no. XXIV.

Rotrou II count of the Perche c. 1100 - 1144

10. Notice that Rotrou, son of Geoffrey count of Mortagne on his return from Jerusalem confirmed to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou all the donations of his ancestors, 1100? Pd. *NLR*, no. X.
11. Rotrou count of Perche's grant to the abbey of Tiron a tithe of the fishing of all his lakes, a tithe from the revenues and use of his mills and a tithe of all the revenues of his county, in grain, animals and any other income is confirmed by his grandson, Geoffrey III, 26 September 1118. B=AD Eure-et-Loir H1412. Pd. *Tiron*, no. XVII. SPURIOUS
12. Rotrou, *consul* of Perche concedes to the abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester property at Kempsford (Glos.) granted by Ernulf de Hesdin and Patrick de Chaources, before 1119. A=Hereford D & C archives, no. 798. Pd. *Cart. Glos.*, no. CCCXXIX. [Probably a reworking of a genuine act]

13. Count Rotrou confirms the gifts of meadow at Pré-Morin (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne) made to the abbey of Tiron by Arnold *Malboverius* and of meadow near Les Prés (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Champrond-en-Perche) made by his son William, *before 1120*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. LXIV.
14. Rotrou count of Mortagne gives to the Cluniac priory of St. Pancras of Lewes 20s. from his revenues at Aldbourne (Wiltshire) payable annually on the feast of St. Michael, *before 1120*. B=BL Cotton Vespasian ms. F xv, f. 167v. Pd. *The Wiltshire, Devonshire and Dorsetshire portion of the Lewes Chartulary with London and Essex documents from the Surrey portion*, ed. W. Budgen and L.F. Salzman (Sussex Record Society, 1943), no. 36 (English translation only).
15. Rotrou count of Perche gives notice of the settlement of a dispute concerning the benefactions to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou. Geoffrey of Beaumont granted all his demesne at Happonvilliers (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron), which included the church, its tithe and appurtenances and a quarter of the territory of the locality (*totam quartam partem totius territorii ejusdem potestatis*), excluding only the fees of his knights. Later he recovered the labour services (*famulatum*) of the land, which rendered the land useless to the monks, who claimed the service in the count's court, showing a charter as evidence. When the labour services were judged to belong to the monks, it was agreed that the two knights who claimed the fees as their hereditary right should prove that their right to the fees predated Geoffrey's gift to the monks, in which case they would be allowed to retain their share of the property without prejudice. Geoffrey also had 40s. for his concession to the monks of half a mill which he had made there on the River Marolles. Conditions under which the *famulatum* of Happonvilliers would operate were then settled between the monks and Odo of *Platea*, the mayor of Happonvilliers. The concession was approved by Geoffrey of Beaumont's eldest son, Robert, who was given a palfrey, and a further concession of whatever the monks might buy or be granted throughout the fee of Happonvilliers, saving only the family's military service, was approved by the family and Robert was given another horse. The family also conceded the fee claimed at Happonvilliers by Haymard of *Resuinti*, for which he had never done service, and they were granted various money payments, *before 1120*. Pd. *NLR*, no. LXXXVIII.
16. Count Rotrou's gift of a hide of land to Marcigny is mentioned in the *Book of Fees*, *before 1120*. Pd. *Book of Fees*, ii, 738.
17. Rotrou, count of Perche grants to the abbey of Tiron a weekly quantity of salt at Mortagne and a tithe of his storehouses, together with the use of his woods for timber, firewood and pasture and a property at Arcisses (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles) including its lake and mill and a valley next to *Luxvillat* and a chapel with an orchard, *after 1117*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. XXII.
18. Count Rotrou makes a charter of gift and confirmation to Subianus, his knight, granting houses in Zaragoza formerly the property of the Alcaide Aben Aliment, with full rights for the property to be inherited or sold at will. King Alphonso [of Aragon] who had given him the property, confirms the gift, *April 1123*. B=Zaragoza. Arch. del Pilar, arm 9 cax 1, lig 2, no. 4. Pd. *Doc. Ebro*, no. 91.
19. Notice that the land at *Noimium* (probably Nogent-le-Rotrou), given to the abbey of Tiron by Stephen Gigul, was conceded in the presence of Rotrou count of Perche by Abbot William and the monks to Robert of Beaumont for his lifetime and as long as he held other land of them. In return Robert is to render the monks two *sextaria* of grain annually, *c. 1125*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. LXII.
20. Rotrou count of Perche confirms all his benefactions to the abbey of Tiron, including the wood of Thiron; the land of Bray (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Champrond-en-Perchet); meadowland formerly held of the count by the *burgenses* of La Ferrière (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles), a tithe of which was given with the count's permission, to the monks by Pagan, son of Richer; a *medietaria*; vineyards at Bray and gardens at Les Champeaux (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Margon). He also grants exemption from all comital exactions on whatever property the monks may acquire throughout his jurisdiction, *1129*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CVI.

21. Rotrou, count of Perche notifies that he had confirmed all the property of the abbey of Tiron at Arcisses (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles) in an assembly (*in aula plenaria mea circumstante curia*) at Nogent with the approval of his son-in-law, Helias, and daughter, Philippa. The property consisted of the chapel at Arcisses and all its buildings; his *medietaria* there; land at Souazé (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles); the water of the River Arcisses from the lake at Brunelles to Ozée; the waters of the River Cloche from Moulin de Crignon (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau) to the mill at Margon (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou); the tithes of the ovens of La Ferrière (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Brunelles); pasture for their cattle in his wood of Perchet, together with wood to make carts; deadwood from the same wood for firewood and for use in their vineyards; and in all his woods pasture for all their animals and deadwood for firewood and timber for building. Some time later, when at Arcisses, he gave a wood called *Sela*; land near the mill at L'Artoir (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles); an annual payment of 100s. for their clothing, payable from the *prepositura* at Nogent-le-Rotrou at Pentecost and on 29 August; a measure of salt from the *prepositura*; the tithes of his mills at Ruisseux (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Margon); of the new mills below Nogent-le-Rotrou, of La Poterie (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau) and Levainville (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Auneau), *dated by ed. c. 1120, but probably c. 1130*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. XXXIII.

22. Notice of a dispute in the court at Bellême in the presence of Count Rotrou between William prior of Saint-Léonard of Bellême and Pagan of Saint-Quentin, Count Rotrou's *prepositus* at Bellême concerning the fair of St. Leonard which was judged in favour of the monks to whom Pagan restored 16s. revenue, *1120s.* A=AD Orne H2156. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 22.

23. Rotrou count of Perche and lord of Bellême confirms the grant of the church of Saint-Léonard of Bellême and its dependencies to the monastery of Marmoutier, together with the church of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême, in whose parish Saint-Léonard lies, all its dependencies and everything which the monks were holding from his fee when control of Bellême came into his hand (*que de feodo meo tenebant monachi prefati monasterii eo die quo in manum meam devenit dominatus Castri Belismi*), *1126*. A=AD Orne H2153. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 21.

24. An agreement between the abbey of Tiron and the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou concerning the tithes of Vieux-Thiron is made at the request of Count Rotrou. The monks of Saint-Denis also concede a tithes of a field in Blainville (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Saint-Denis d'Authou) and tithes of a vineyard, garden and land. In return the priory of Saint-Denis is to retain the gift of Robert Judas which he granted to Saint-Denis before he went to Spain with Count Rotrou and to Tiron when he came back, *24 January 1130*. Pd. i) *Tiron*, no. CXVIII ii) *NLR*, no. CXX.

25. Count Rotrou concedes the sale by Odo son of Hugh of Baugny of his meadows at Baugny (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne) to the abbey of Tiron, *1130*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CXX.

26. Rotrou count of Perche's grant to the abbey of Saint-Evroul of the advowson of the parish church of Saint-Nicholas at Moulins-la-Marche, which reserved the *vicarium* for the bishop, a third of the tithes and altar dues for the existing clergy, and the archdeacon's dues, is preserved in a *vidimus*, *1137-44*. D=BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 127. E=AD Orne 721.

27. Rotrou count of Perche concedes to the abbey of Tiron the house of Baldwin the physician and his other property at Nogent-le-Rotrou at Baldwin's request, *1141*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCLVI.

28. Rotrou the *consul* concedes to the hospital of the Grand-Beaulieu at Chartres the gift of property at Marolles-les-Buis (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) made by Robert of *Cortosleen* and his wife Juliana, *before 1144*. Pd. *Beaulieu*, no. 58.

29. Rotrou count of Mortagne concedes to the priory of Lewes one hide of land in Wanborough and instructs the custodians of the manor to protect the property of the monks, *before 1144*. B=BL Cotton Vespasian ms. F xv, f. 169. Pd. i) *Wiltshire portion*, no. 40 (English translation only).
30. [Rotrou] count of Perche's grant of property at *Arraval* to the Templars is mentioned in a later act, *before 1144*. Pd. *Cartulaire générale de l'ordre du Temple, 1119?-1150*, ed. M. d'Albon (Paris, 1913), no. DVI.
31. Count Rotrou's gift to Pagan of Saint-Quentin of a house at Nogent-le-Rotrou, free from all taxes is recorded in an act by his son, *before 1144*. Pd. *Clairêts*, no. I.
32. Count Rotrou of Perche's retention of half the church of Saint-André of Frétigny and half of its tithes, which had been granted to Saint-Laumer of Blois by William de *Folletto*, and his bestowal of the property on his [illegitimate] son Rotrou is recorded when the property was restored the presence of Rotrou's wife [Hawise-]Matilda, her new husband, Robert son of King Louis of France, and Rotrou's sons, Rotrou, Geoffrey and Stephen, to whom the property pertained, *1132-43*. B=AD Loiret, D668, fos. 9v.-10. Pd. Bouvris, 'Une notice inédite'.
33. The approval of Rotrou count of Perche is recorded in the notice of an agreement between the prior of Bellême and Robert Maschefer concerning debts owed by the priory. Robert Maschefer, who received £10 from the prior, is to hold half the tithes of Le Pin, Colonard and Dancé for his lifetime in return for the cancellation of the monks' debt, *1137-55 probably 1137-44*. A=H2154. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 63. [Dating is provided by the abbatia of Warner of Marmoutier, so the act could be 1137-44 for Rotrou II or 1151-55 for his son. However young Rotrou's acts tend to refer to his father and several witnesses of this act occur in those of Rotrou II.]
34. Count Rotrou's grant of a usage of woodland for *herbagium*, *pasnagium* and pasture to the prior of La Roussière (Orne, ct. Courtomer, cme Godisson), a dependence of Tiron, is recorded by Duchesne, *1109-44*. C=Duchesne 54, p. 449.
- Rotrou III count of the Perche 1144 - 1191**
35. Rotrou count of Perche's grant to the Augustinian priory of Chartrage at Mortagne of the profits of the fair of St. James and St. Christopher, exempt from all customs except for the punishment of thieves, is recorded by the antiquarian Léonard Bart des Boulais, *1144*. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131.
36. Rotrou count of Perche and his mother, [Hawise-]Matilda, enter into an agreement with the nuns of the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, *Rivray*, *before 1152*. C=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 310.
37. Rotrou count of Perche confirms the gift of a vineyard made by Fulk of Colonard to the priory of Saint-Léonard of Bellême, *1157-84*. A=AD Orne H2154. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 175.
38. Rotrou count of Perche notifies that he has granted the monks of Saint-Laumer of Blois [in the priory at Moutiers] the *vicarium* of all their lands with all the customs dependent on it. He will make no impositions on it, neither for his ransom, nor for his sons, daughters or successors, except for three days work once a year on the ditches of Rivray. He also grants the *vicarium* of the chapel of Le Pas-Saint-L'Homer (Orne, ct./cme. Longny) and four arpents of land around the chapel, *Blois*, *1159*. Pd. i) Murs, *Comtes* 436-7 (French translation only). ii) Gouverneur, *Essais*, 215-6.
39. Rotrou, count of Perche, the son of Rotrou confirms the liberties of the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le Rotrou, *Orléans*, c. *1160*. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 41-2. ii) *NLR*, no. VIII. iii) *NLR*, no. XII with slight changes.
40. Rotrou count of Perche confirms to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou his ancestors' gifts of the tithes of the markets of Mortagne and Nogent-le-Rotrou, retaining his rights to justice and infringements of market custom, and declares that the payments which are usually rendered on each Saturday should reach the monks by the third hour on the following Sunday. He further confirms the grant of the church of Buré (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne) made by his ancestors and approves any benefactions within that parish made by his *fideles*, *9 January 1165*. Pd. *NLR*, no. XIII.

41. Count Rotrou gives his approval to the gift of the advowson of La Chapelle-Souëf (Orne, ct. Bellême) and two parts of its tithe made by Hilgot of *Ferreria* and his brother, Aylmer the priest, to the priory of Saint-Léonard of Bellême, 1167. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 227.
42. Rotrou count of Perche, Matilda his wife, Geoffrey their son and Matilda his wife found the charterhouse of Val Dieu in the forest of Réno. Its boundaries laid out according to the practice of the Carthusian order (*iuxta morem cartusiensium*) lie from Le Moulin de Sevoux (Orne, ct. Longny, cme. Malétable) to the top of Monferré (Orne, ct. Longny, cme. Monceaux), which lies above St. Victor [de Réno] (Orne, ct. Longny), from there to the road which leads to Longny (Orne, ch.l. du ct) and thence to the River Villette. Following the course of this river to the *plessis* of Walter Boslen (?Le Plessis, Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Feings) they then return to Le Moulin de Sevoux. Within those boundaries Rotrou confirms anything he has given in the forest of Réno and his recent grant of land which extends from *vado vales* (?La Guée, Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Feings) up the hill on the left hand side to the aforementioned forest. Rotrou also promises to obtain the land on the right hand side from the River Commeauche halfway up the hill to the forest, which the brothers have shown him, as quickly as possible. He confirms whatever they may obtain from his fee within those boundaries and grants rights to pasture animals in all his land, *Réno*, 1170 probably redrafted to incorporate new gifts 1190. B=RCVD, p. 1-2.
43. Rotrou count of Perche's grant to the Carthusian house at Val Dieu of the service of a man at Mortagne free from all exactions is recorded in the confirmation of King Louis IX of France, 1170-91. C=Alençon. Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 108, Cartulaire de Val-Dieu, no. 261, f. 61 and no. 488, f. 128. C2=RCVD, f. 14.
44. Rotrou count of Perche, his wife Matilda, daughter of the great prince Count Theobald, and their sons Geoffrey, Stephen and Rotrou exempt the monastery of Bonneval from all payments throughout their jurisdiction, 1 January 1173. A=AD Eure-et-Loir H619. B=BN ms. lat. 17139, Cartulaire Bonavallis apud Carnutes, pp. 41, 112 supplies material missing from damaged original.
45. Rotrou count of Perche confirms to the hospital of Saint-Lazaire at Nogent-le-Rotrou the tithe in Mâle (Orne, ct. Le Theil) given to them by Odo of Viviers with the consent of his lord William of Buré, leaving aside the sum of £10 in Angevin money which had been disputed by a clerk, Gohier, *Nogent-le-Rotrou*, 19 July 1179. Pd. Proust, *Inventaire*, 104.
46. Rotrou count of Perche confirms to Robert of Saint-Quentin a house in the new bourg at Nogent-le-Rotrou, near the bridge of Saint Hilaire, free from all impositions, which had been given to his father, Pagan of Saint-Quentin, by the count's father, Rotrou, *before 1180*. Pd. *Clairêts*, no. 1.
47. Rotrou count of Perche and lord (*Perticensis comes et dominus*) notifies that the monks of La Trappe held Gervase Capreolus's holding (*medietaria*) at Ligni (Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne) in mortgage for the sum of £50 Angevin and paid 5s. annually until Gervase gave it to the monks free from all services except an annual render to be made to Gervase and his heirs on St. Rémy's day of two measures (*modios*) of grain, one of oats and the other half of wheat and half of rye and barley. Gervase and his eldest son Warin swore to uphold this agreement (*Fide in manu nostra corporaliter*) and gave Rotrou as their guarantor and Warin received a horse from the monks, 1181-91. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 67. Pd. *LT*, 204-5.
48. Rotrou count of Perche confirms the gift of Philip of Montdoucet to the Maison-Dieu of Nogent-le-Rotrou consisting of 12d. from the rents which Albin of Fontaine held of him on La Butte de Croisilles near l'Aunay (Eure-et-Loir, ct./cme. Nogent-le-Rotrou), a further 4d. which Albin held of him, together with 4d. which Benedict *Anglicus* held from the meadows of Viennes near the new bourg and adjoining the meadows of Bucton and the meadow of William of *Lonreio*, all payable on 24 June. Philip also granted jurisdictional rights over the property, 1 January 1182. A=CSJ A/1. Pd. i) Murs, *Comtes*, 445-7 (French translation only). ii) Proust, *Inventaire*, 7 (calendared only).

49. Rotrou, count of Perche notifies the agreement made between the monks of Jumièges and Giroie *bastardus* concerning the legal jurisdiction of the monks' property at Dame-Marie (Orne, ct. Bellême). The monks agree to purchase Giroie's rights to the jurisdiction and all other property rights within Dame-Marie for the sum of £220 angevin and they made payments of 40s. to his wife, 4s. to his sisters and 50s. to his two nephews. Rotrou received £40 for his confirmation, the countess 100s. and their son Geoffrey 20s. Giroie then surrendered the rights into the count's hands and he regranted them to the monks and the agreement was approved by Giroie's cousins, his sisters and nephews, 1182-3. Pd. *Jumièges*, no. CXXXIII.
50. Rotrou count of Perche gives the Augustinian priory of Bradenstoke, where some of his ancestors are buried, half a mark of silver from the mill at *Berwic'* (probably Wiltshire), 1182-91. B=BL ms. Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105v. Pd. *The cartulary of Bradenstoke priory*, ed. V.C. M. London (Devizes, 1979), no. 655.
51. Rotrou count of Perche gives £10 chartrain yearly from his revenues at Nogent-le-Rotrou, payable on the day of the cathedral's dedication (16 October) and on the Sunday on which the Psalm "Rejoice Jerusalem" is sung (fourth Sunday after Easter), to fund a candle to burn before the shrine of the Virgin's robe at Chartres, 1183-91. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G131, f. 116v. Pd. *NDC*, no. CX.
52. Rotrou count of Perche and lord (*Perticensium comes et dominus*) notifies that his *fidelis* Gervase of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais has granted to the charterhouse of Val Dieu all his rights in the wood of Réno within the area which lies inside the boundaries (*terminos*) of the charterhouse, Rivray, 1185. B=RCVD, f. 8v.
53. When G. Capreolus pledged the jurisdiction (*villicariam*) he held from Count Rotrou of Perche over the lands of Le Mans cathedral chapter at Courgenard (Sarthe, ct. Montmirail), Cormes (Sarthe, ct. La Ferté-Bernard), La Cordelière and *Curia Giraudi* (both unidentified) to Dean Nicholas and the chapter for the sum of £100 angevin, he declared that he held various rights of pardon as well as the jurisdiction and also pledged those. On the instruction of the aforesaid G. it was agreed that the cases would be held at Courgenard *causis illius villicariae dabit locum Curiam Genardi* and in no other place upon the authorisation of the bailiffs whom the canons would appoint. The canons were to possess the jurisdiction for three years and they should not be expected to accept repayment inside that time. But after the three year period when two further years had elapsed if the aforesaid G. or his heir had not paid the money, then it might still be redeemed by the count. The canons undertook to make good any losses to the property upon redemption and the accept the witness of the bailiff. G conceded this agreement, having sworn his oath and given guarantors, adding that if any of the guarantors should die within the specified period, G. or his heir will substitute other guarantors at the request of the canons. It was similarly agreed that if after the three year period or after five years, as laid out, the money has not been paid either by G., his heir or the count, then the canons shall possess it for ever until they receive the whole sum from G., his heir or the count. The aforementioned count of Perche taking up this agreement caused it to be written down and sealed with his seal, *Nogent, in the house of Clement the count's marshal, 17 April 1186*. Pd. *Chart. Cenom.*, no. DXXXV (abbreviated version, with corrections and longer witness list of *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXVIII).
54. Rotrou count of Perche and lord (*Perticensium comes et dominus*) confirms the foundation of the abbey of La Trappe and the donations of his followers, particularly his own grants of a *medietaria* at Ligni (Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne), the vineyard at *Piro lato* and £6 from his revenues at Mortagne, payable on the feast of St. Rémy, 1189. Pd. *LT*, 587-90 from a printed version of an eighteenth century transcript.
55. Rotrou count of Perche confirms all the property which the abbey of Saint-Evroul holds within his lands, 22 July 1189. Pd. *GC*, xi, 823c sub Richard abbot of Saint Evroul.
56. Rotrou count of Perche notifies the sale for the sum of £35 angevin of rights of jurisdiction in the land around Dancé (Orne, ct. Nocé) made to the priory of Saint-Léonard of Bellême by Aylmer of Villeray, with the approval of his brother Geoffrey, who received 100s., and their sisters, June 1190. B=AD Orne H2519. Pd. *CMPerche*, nos. 34, 210.

57. A chirograph records the agreement between Rotrou count of Perche and the chapter of Chartres concerning their respective rights in the woods of Authou (Eure-et-Loir). The woods and the pasture within the wood belong to the count and the chapter jointly, but herbage and custody is in the count's hand. Only timber for the cathedral fabric and for use at the two granges of Grandhous and Gardeis may be taken by the chapter without the count's consent and he may then take the same amount. No wood may be taken by the chapter for sale or gift, but when the count takes wood for sale he must notify the chapter who may buy the wood at the offering price. These arrangements apply to sales from the great wood. If wood is sold from the *forestagium* then there must be an oath (*juratoria*) given by agents of the count and the chapter and half the price may go to the chapter. The count may give and take as he wishes from the *forestagium* and the chapter may have an equal amount. The chapter shall have half the amount of herbage that the count assigns to pasture in alms, so that two *anniveraria* may be celebrated in the church at Chartres, those of the count's wife Matilda and his mother Amicia, on respectively 2 January and 13 January. The aforesaid revenues in pannage and pasture shall be regarded as payment for these anniversaries and shall be paid by the count's and chapter's servants on St. Rémy's day. The count reserves the other half of the pasture for himself and his heirs. It was also agreed that the count and chapter should be informed in writing concerning the provenance of the animals gathered to pasture, whether they came from the count's, the chapter's or the count's knights' land, and the right to pasturage should be sold with neither party being able to grant immunity in the same pasture except by assent of the chapter and count, 20 June 1190. B=BN ms. lat. 11094, p.96. Pd. *NDC*, no. CXIV.
58. Rotrou count of Perche notifies that Master Geoffrey Ignard sold to the hospital of Saint-Lazare at Nogent-le-Rotrou a tithe at La Poterie (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Saint-Aubin de Coudreceau), which he had been granted for life by Hugh of Nueil. Later it was asserted by Ignard, Odo and others that the tithe had been granted the tithe to the hospital to be held in perpetuity after the death of Geoffrey, *Nogent-le-Rotrou*, May 1190. A=CSJ C/108. Pd. i) Murs, *Comtes*, 471-2 (French translation only). ii) Proust, *Inventaire*, 149 (calendared only).
59. Rotrou count of Perche and his sons, Geoffrey and Rotrou, treasurer of Tours, wish to set down in writing the endowment (*redditum*) of the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou, which was founded for the soul of Rotrou's wife, Matilda. He grants the Maison-Dieu property in the parish of Champrond-en-Perchet (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou) and two churches in England at Aldbourne and Wanborough (Wilts.), 1190. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, additions, 75. ii) Courtin, *Perche*, 196. iii) Murs, *Comtes*, 466 (French translation). iv) Proust, *Inventaire*, 8 (calendared only).
60. Rotrou count of Perche notifies Aylmer of Villeray's sale of his rights, customs and justice at Berd'huis (Orne, ct. Nocé) to the priory of Sainte-Gauburge for the sum of £200 angevin and a payment of 100s. to his brother, Geoffrey. Rotrou reserves his *cervagium* and his own rights to justice within the village similar to those he exercises at Sainte-Gauburge, 1190. A=AN S2238, no. 15. B=AN LL1158, ii, p.402-3. Pd (in part) Bry, *Perche*, 200.
61. Rotrou count of Perche notifies Aylmer of Villeray's sale of his rights, customs and justice at Berd'huis (Orne, ct. Nocé) to the priory of Sainte-Gauburge for the sum of £200 angevin and a payment of 100s. to his brother, Geoffrey. The services due from the monks are specified as *duellum* and *bannum* and a *sextarium* of oats from each holding, together with a *mina* from the cottagers and a goat from whoever obtains the eggs. The prior is to have rights to do justice in his court, but tallages shall not be due from the monks unless the abbot of Saint-Denis requires it from his dependencies to fund a journey to Rome, if the monks wish to increase their revenues or if there is a fire at the house, 1190. A=AN S2238, no. 11. B=AN LL1158, ii, pp. 415-6. [Describes same act as no. 57 giving additional information]
62. Rotrou count of Perche, en route for the Holy Land, notifies that he granted the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou exemption from tallage over the monks' land outside the bourg of Saint-Denis, where the bourg is enclosed by the river. He also conceded a tithe of the wood clearances and undertakings which were known as Les Clairets and of other woods in the Perche in which the monks hold the tithe of the pannage. He also conceded the monks a *summarium* of deadwood in his woodland of Perchet and in his other woodlands, *Mâcon*, 1190. Pd. i) *NLR*, no. IX. ii) *NLR*, no. XCIX with slight variants.

63. Rotrou count of Perche's grant to the Templars, made at the siege of Acre, is noted among the records of the house at Sours, *June/July 1191*. C=Duchesne 20, f. 230.
64. Rotrou count of Perche grants exemption from all impositions to the Grandmontine priory at Chêne Galon and three free men at Mortagne, Le Theil and Nogent. To these he adds a fourth, Odo de Fay, who will remain free from all services while he remains the monks' man, but should he return to the count's service will again render comital dues, *1144-91*. C=Duchesne 54, p. 461. Pd. i) Courtin, *Perche*, 189. ii) Murs, *Comtes*, 332 (French translation).
65. Rotrou count of Perche and lord (*comes Perticensium et dominus*) grants the abbey of Perseigne exemption from all tolls and exactions throughout his lands, *1144-91*. A=AD Sarthe H927. Pd. *Perseigne*, no CCLXIV.
66. Rotrou count of Perche grants to the abbey of La Pelice the tithe of all the mills of Le Theil (Orne, ch.l. du ct.), the lands of *Putreforet*, Blandé (Orne, ct. Le Theil, cme. Saint-Germain-de-la-Coudre) and *Taconel*, the land which Walter of Loches gave, the land of *Holera*, 12d. of *census* given by the heir of William de Roger (probably La Rouge, Orne, ct. Le Theil), the land of *Verno* and the benefactions of Geoffrey Trichart and his forebears, the tithe of *Moulin-de-Courtoulin* (Orne, ct. Le Theil, cme. Saint-Germain-de-la-Coudre) and land adjoining Champfort (Orne, ct. Le Theil, cme Bellou-le-Trichard), *1144-91*. Pd. i) Courtin, *Histoire*, 215. ii) Murs, *Comtes*, 482 (French translation only).
67. Rotrou count of Perche's grant of a fee near Les Clairets to the knight Guy of Vaugrigneuse is recorded in an act by Theobald of Champagne, *1144-91*. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XXXIV.
68. Rotrou count of Perche and lord (*Perticensium comes et dominus*) notifies that G[erald] seneschal of Mortagne has acknowledged his father's gift to the abbey of La Trappe consisting of half a measure of wheat at Soligny[-la-Trappe] (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur Hoëne), which lay in his own inheritance, and half a measure of rye at Mesnil, which lay in Aylmer's portion. A gift of a *sextarium* made by his brother, William of Mortagne, from the produce of his mill called Chalo at Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne (Orne, ct. Mortagne) was also confirmed, *1144-91*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 119v. Pd. *LT*, 401.
69. Rotrou count of Perche grants a vineyard at Vaunoise [probably in Origni-le-Butin, Orne, ct. Bellême] to the abbey of La Trappe, *1144-73*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 96v. Pd. *LT*, 313.
70. Count Rotrou's approval is recorded in a notification by Herbert archdeacon of the Corbonnais of the gift made to the abbey of La Trappe by Odo Troche, which consisted of land he held of Pagan of *Gemmardees* in the parish of Thelval (Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Saint-Langis-lès-Mortagne). A residual rent of 6s. would still be due at Easter. Enguerrand of Nocé, to whom the *dominium* of the land belonged, also conceded, *1144-73*. BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 67. Pd. *LT*, 208-9.
71. Rotrou count of Perche ratifies an agreement made in his court between the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and Giroie of Orme, concerning the River Rhône, which Giroie asserted had been diverted by the monks to the detriment of his property. Ivo of Rémalard, the serving *dapifer*, and Aylmer of Villeray undertook to organise a compromise and Giroie and his brothers, Robert and William, conceded the water to the monks in both summer and wintertime up to the top of both banks. For this concession Giroie received 100s., his brother Robert 20s. and William who was about to go to Jerusalem, a leather tunic, *1144-90, probably 1170s*. Pd. *NLR*, no. XCII.
72. Rotrou count of Perche and his son Geoffrey approve the gift of a *sextarium* of wheat and 10s. rent from the mills and bakehouses of Mortagne made by Simon of Vove to the priory of Chartrage, *c. 1160-91*. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 132.
73. Rotrou count of Perche's confirmation of his father Rotrou's benefactions to the priory of Chartrage is recorded by Léonard Bart des Boulais. The count confirmed the tithe of the count's table when he stayed in the Corbonnais, except for that of Mauves, where only half the tithe might be taken, and conceded all that the house might gain from the benefactions of others. He also granted a burgher from his castellanry of Mortagne. A list of donations by the lords of the Perche follows, *1144-91, probably 1157 x 1191*. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 131-6.

74. Count Rotrou approves the grant by Lancelin de Fai of two parts of the tithes of the fee of Manou (Eure-et-Loir, ct. La Loupe) to the priory of La Chaise, *1144-91*. C=AD Loiret H22, p. 185, no. 288.
75. Rotrou count of Perche's exchange made with the ancestors of Andrew of Prulay in which the count granted them the daily customs from the bread stalls in the market at Mortagne except for those of Wednesday and Saturday is mentioned in the records of a later lawsuit, *1144-91*. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 208.
76. Rotrou count of Perche concedes to the priory of St. Pancras at Lewes in Sussex a hide of land in Wanborough (Wilts.) as given by his father and described in his father's act, and he orders the agents at Wanborough to protect the monks' property so that he may hear of no dispute, *1144-91*. B=BL Cotton Vespasian ms. F xv, f. 171v. Pd. *Wiltshire portion*, no. 53.

Geoffrey III count of the Perche 1191 - 1202

77. Geoffrey count of Perche's grant to the Templars in memory of his father and mother is mentioned among the records of the house at Sours, *1191*. C=Duchesne 20, f 230.
78. Geoffrey count of Perche and his brother Stephen give and concede two holdings to Lawrence of Champfaye, *Acre, [1191]*. C=Duchesne 54, p. 454.
79. Geoffrey count of Perche on his return from the Holy Land secures £200 angevin from prior Hubert and the monks of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou to relieve his debts. The count then confirms the charters given by his ancestors to the monks and concedes that the priory, the adjoining bourg and its inhabitants and all the monks' tenants (*hominibus mansuariis*) shall be free from all impositions and shall hold all property which they shall subsequently acquire under those conditions, *1192*. Pd. *NLR*, no. CX.
80. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms his father's gift of £10 yearly from his revenues at Nogent-le-Rotrou to fund a candle to burn before the shrine of the Virgin's robe at Chartres and with his own hand places a candle on the altar at the Virgin's shrine, *1192-9*. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G131, f. 116v. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 522-3 (French translation only).
81. Geoffrey count of Perche and his wife Countess Matilda, niece of King Richard and daughter of Henry duke of the Bavarians and Saxons, grant the Augustinian priory of Southwick (Hants) two virgates of land at Aldbourne (Wilts), formerly held by Richard Anglicus and Robert Heiward, together with their associated property including the holdings (*mansuagiis*) in Weststret, to pay for the mass wine. The donors are accepted into confraternity by the priory and their anniversaries are to be celebrated at the house, *1192-9*. B=Southwick, I, f. 28v. Another version, III, f. 24v. Pd. *The cartularies of Southwick Priory*, ed. K.A. Hanna (Winchester, 1988), 87-8 (English translation only).
82. Geoffrey count of Perche gives the priory of Chêne Galon one penny per day from each of his castles payable at Easter to provide the monks with burel clothing, *Chêne Galon, 11 February 1193*. C=Duchesne 54, p. 459. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 498-99 (French translation only).
83. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that William of Montgoubert, the heir of his father Mathew of La Heraudère, settled in his presence a dispute with the chapter of Sées concerning two *garba* of the tithes of St Julien-sur-Sarthe (Orne ct. Pervençères), *1194*. B=Evêché de Sées, Livre rouge du chapitre de Sées, f. 75.
84. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the gifts of his father, Rotrou and his grandfather, Rotrou to the priory of Chartrage at Mortagne and the benefactions made to the Calende of the Corbonnais established there. Donations by other lords follow, *Mortagne, 1194*. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 152-5.
85. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that in return for a payment of £110 William of Gemages granted to the priory of Bellême property in the parish of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême formerly held by Hugh of Préaux, *Bellême, 1194*. A=AD Orne H2163. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 206-7. ii) *CMPerche*, no. 64.

86. Geoffrey count of Perche and Countess Matilda endow the Augustinian priory of Sandleford (Berks.) with the church and all the land at Sandleford, together with the wood known as *Brademore* and with all the land on both sides of that wood that is, bounded by the watercourse known as *Aleburn* from the bridge at Sandleford to the *Alburnegate*, then by the road which runs from *Alburnegate* towards Newbury up to the croft of William the huntsman and on the third side from there along the road to the croft of Robert fitz Rembald and on the fourth side up to the bridge at Sandleford. The right to build a mill is granted together with an annual sum of thirteen marks of sterling to be taken from the mills of Newbury every four weeks. When the prior dies one of the remaining canons is to be chosen in his place, 1194-1202. Pd. *Monasticon*, vi, 565 from an *inspeximus* by Stephen Langton of Hubert Walter's charter of confirmation.
87. Geoffrey count of Perche seals an agreement between the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou and William of La Bruyère concerning the grant of a *mansura* and the wood of La Louverie (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condeau) made by Andrew of La Bruyère to the monks. After his death and burial in the priory chapterhouse the inheritance and lordship of La Bruyère came, by the wish of his heir William of La Bruyère (*per voluntatem Guillermi de Brueria, cui de jure hereditatis acciderat*) under the control of the then seneschal, William of *Lonreio*, from whom the monks sought the benefaction. After the seneschal declared that such a gift was neither legal nor reasonable, Prior Hubert, a cousin of the deceased, made him a payment of £10 angevin. When the seneschal and the monks came to partition the wood, William of La Bruyère and his associates, wishing to minimize the benefaction, asserted that the deceased had not intended to make such a gift as the monks were seeking, and the prior gave him 40 Percheron francs (*quadraginta francos Perticenses*), March 1195. Pd. *NLR*, no. XCIII.
88. Geoffrey count of Perche and Matilda his wife grant to the Maison Dieu at Mortagne £32 of revenue from their demesne in Mortagne to rebuild the house after the recent warfare and another 25s. from the same source for lighting to celebrate divine service in the hospital chapel of St. Nicholas. These revenues are to be paid in the following manner: £10 on the Saturday after the Purification of the Virgin, £10 on the Saturday after Ascension and £10 on the Saturday after St. John the Baptist's day with the rest payable on St. Nicholas' day. If these sums are not paid on these days the *prepositus* or the receiver shall pay the Maison Dieu 10s. tournois for each week during which he defaults. The count establishes a prior, two priests and four nuns of the order of St. Elizabeth to care for the poor of the hospital and builds a lodging close to it. He grants rights of inspection of all leather and shoes sold in Mortagne and possession of all confiscations of unsatisfactory work. He establishes the confraternity of Mortagne shoemakers in the chapel of Maison-Dieu and they are to feed the poor people who are resident in the hospital on St. Nicholas' day. He also grants *calvagium* to the poor of the hospital in his forest of Bellême. Several other lords make benefactions by the same charter, *Mortagne*, 1195. Pd. *Bart, Antiquitéz*, 156-9.
89. Geoffrey count of Perche and Matilda his wife notify their grant to the abbey of Saint-Evroul of the church of Saint-Nicholas of Moulins-la-Marche (Orne, ch. 1. du ct.) and two thirds of all tithes and offerings, while the other third is to go to the priest who ministers there. Geoffrey adds the chapel of Saint-Pierre within the castle of Moulins, the upkeep of which is to be paid for from his woods of Moulins. Two monks are to be sent from Saint-Evroul to staff the chapel of Saint-Pierre, together with a priest, and they are to receive the revenues of Saint-Nicholas on the advice of the prior of Saint-Laurent. Geoffrey also concedes his land of *Putrel*, estimated at about twenty acres, and a fair in the town of Moulins on the feast of St Nicholas according to the customs of the fair of St. Lawrence whereby the monks receive the profits of justice and all tolls in the town of Moulins for the nine days preceding the feast, 1195-1202. A=AD Orne H721. B=BN ms lat 11055, f. 36.
90. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that he has confirmed to the abbey of Saint-Evroul exemption for their tenants in the baileys of Moulins-la-Marche and Bonsmoulins from all customs, tolls, tallages, renders in oats, transport dues, wall and ditch repair duties and other impositions. He has also conceded to the prior of Saint-Laurent at Moulins rights of *calvagium* and *herbergagium* in all his forests and rights over branches and deadwood in the *Broilium* of Moulins and Bonsmoulins without leave from his foresters and the right to other wood as required to build the church of Saint-Laurent and other dwellings by the leave of his seneschal and foresters. He also grants an exemption from toll and transit taxes throughout his lands for the monks food and clothing and for all things which can be sworn to be the property of the monks or their dependents and any infringement of these grants is subject to a fine of 100s., 1195-1202. A=AD Orne H721.

91. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies his confirmation to the abbey of Saint-Evroul of the gifts of Simon le Bret and Isabelle his wife: that is a tenement situated at the door of the church of Saint-Nicholas at Moulins-la-Marche, whose tenants are henceforth to be free of all tallage, guard duties, aids, customs and tolls and from dues owing to the count and his successors. The count also concedes to Saint-Evroul a virgate of land at Moulins held from him by Simon and Isabel, all the lands which they have acquired or will acquire throughout the bailey of Moulins and a third part of the legacy of Simon except for their lords' share. Simon and Isabel conceded these things in the count's presence, together with half their personal property at death and all the lands they have acquired or may acquire throughout the *balliam* of Moulins. The count also granted freedom from corvage and tallage and other exactions for the monks' tenants and future tenants in any of the count's lands which he holds or shall hold on this side of the English sea, 1195-1202. A=AD Orne H721.
92. Geoffrey count of Perche's grants to the Templars made in the presence of his brother Stephen are mentioned among the records of the house at Sours, *Nogent*, 1196. C=Duchesne. 20, f. 230.
93. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that he has surrendered to the priory of Chuisnes a *procuratio* which he has formerly held in Chuisnes (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Courville-sur-Eure) and will receive henceforth a payment of 100s. chartrain on the octave of St. Rémy. In return the count undertakes to protect and defend the inhabitants of Chuisnes and their customs as they were in the time of his father, Rotrou, and to make no further impositions. In acknowledgement of his act the prior of Chuisnes gave Geoffrey £20 chartrain and the act was approved by Geoffrey's wife, Matilda, his son Geoffrey and brother Stephen, who added his seal to the document, *Chartres*, 1196. Pd. *CMD*, no. CCIII.
94. Geoffrey count of Perche gives a *gistum* which he possesses at Grandhoux (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) to the chapter of Notre Dame of Chartres, *December 1196*. B=BN ms. lat. 10094, p. 96. Pd. *NDC*, no. CXXXIV.
95. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that the two livings, which had been associated with the church of Saint-Germain of Préaux (Orne, ct. Nocé) and its chapel at *Traant* at the request of Hugh of Préaux, were assigned by his heirs in this manner. Master Hugh Viandarius' living was granted to the Maison-Dieu at Nogent-le-Rotrou, while the other which was held by Gervase of *Cormis*, was assigned to William Maior of *Cormis* and his heirs. The heirs of Hugh of Préaux conceded to the Maison-Dieu everything which the house held by Hugh's gift, that is a quarter of the tithe of corn and half the tithe of wine, flax, hemp and vegetables at both Préaux and *Traant*, excepting the rights of the monks of Tiron, together with the priest Hubert's *burgensiam* (ground rent of the house?) at Préaux and an adjoining garden. Count Geoffrey gave William of *Cormis* and his heirs a fair at Préaux on the feast of St. Germain, a tithe of which was to be given to the Maison-Dieu, *Le Theil 1196, Nogent-le-Rotrou 1197*. A=CSJ A/6. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 516-7 (French translation only).
96. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that at the request of Pope Celestine the monks of Pontlevoy have given their house at Brénard to G. chaplain of Geoffrey's brother, Rotrou bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and have also conceded to him the living of the first church whose advowson they hold within the diocese of Sées to become vacant. G. will chose a monk to keep the rule at Brénard and he will render annually 20s. angevin to the abbey's treasurer at Easter and on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin. When G. dies half his personal possessions will be divided equally between the abbey and the house at Brénard and, if G. chooses to become a monk, he will take the habit at Pontlevoy and after his death the house will be returned to the abbey, 1197. A=AD Loir-et-Cher 17 H55.
97. G[offrey] count of Perche confirms to the abbey of La Trappe Hugh of Vaunoise's gift of 100s. from the *prepositura* at Mortagne, which had been given to him by Arnold of La Ferté[-Vidame or possibly -Arnoul], *La Perrière*, 1198-1201. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 10. Pd. *LT*, pp. 9-10.
98. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms again his own confirmation of his father's grant to the cathedral at Chartres of £10 annually from the revenues of Nogent-le-Rotrou to fund a candle at the shrine of the Virgin's robe and he adds a penalty of 5s. to be rendered by the *prepositus* if the payment is not made to the cathedral's officials on time, 1199. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G131, f. 116v. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 522-3 (French translation only).

99. Notice that Gerald of *Boceio* assigned the annual sum of 60s. angevin from his *prepositura* at Longny (Orne, ch.l. du ct.) payable at Easter to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert when his sisters became nuns there and Geoffrey count of Perche guaranteed and confirmed the *benefactio*, 1199. A=AD Eure-et-Loir H5211.
100. Geoffrey count of Perche, with the approval of his wife, Countess Matilda, and his son, Thomas, grants to the abbey of La Trappe the services of Robert Ingun of Mortagne to act as an agent for the monks. The monks are also granted exemption from all service, tallage and customs, as well as *exercitu et equitatu* and are to be free to trade throughout Geoffrey's land, but Robert Ingun cannot sell or mortgage his house without the consent of the monks. The count's officers at Mortagne are ordered to do as much business through Robert Ingun as they used to do directly with the monks, c.1200. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 12. Pd. *LT*, 16.
101. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that King John has granted him the manor of Shrivenham (Wilts.) to hold with all its appurtenances until such time as he can make an exchange with him, 1200. Pd. *Rot. Chart.*, 96.
102. Geoffrey count of Perche's cession of Odo Sirebon of Mortagne and his heirs, who are to be free of all customs and fees throughout Geoffrey's lands, to King John of England is recorded in the king's act. King John takes Odo under his protection and frees him from similar charges throughout his lands with the exception of the city of London, before 5 February 1200. Pd. *Rot. Chart.*, 35.
103. Geoffrey count of Perche declares that he has seen and approved the act of his grandfather Rotrou in favour of the abbey of Tiron, July 1200. A=AD Eure-et-Loir H1412. Pd. *Tiron*, no. XVII. SPURIOUS
104. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies an agreement between Ernaud Morin of Rouperroux and the abbot of Saint-Denis concerning the lease of their house at Sainte-Gauburge, which he is to hold for thirteen years from the next feast of St. John the Baptist. Provision is made for the maintenance of the monks during this period and the eventual return of the house to Saint-Denis. The house is to be at the disposal of Ernaud's executors if he should die during this period and if the abbot should need to repossess ecclesiastical benefices then other property will be substituted, July 1201. A=AN S2238, no. 34. B=AN LL1158, ii, p. 403. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 540-3.
105. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that Gasco of Rémalard, who was about to leave for Jerusalem, granted the priory of Belhomert where his daughter Erembourg was a nun a carrucate of land in the valley of *Cupre* and pannage in the wood of *Basseria* for the nuns' pigs. Gerald of *Boceio*, to whom the land pertained by right of inheritance and who was the lord of the land, approved the gift and substituted for the carrucate an annual sum of 50s. from his mills in Longny (Orne, ch.l. du ct.) to be made at Christmas and Easter, 1201. A=AD Eure-et-Loir H5211.
106. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that Gasco of Rémalard, who was about to leave for Jerusalem, granted the priory of Belhomert a carrucate of land in the valley of *Cup'* and pannage for the nuns' pigs in the wood of *Basseria* with the approval of his son, Ivo, who was heir to the property. At the request of the nuns and Count Geoffrey the carrucate of land was commuted for a payment of 50s. from the mills of Longny (Orne, ch. l. du ct.) payable in two instalments at Christmas and Easter, ?1201. A=AD Eure-et-Loir H5211. Probably refers to same benefaction as previous act.
107. Geoffrey count of Perche grants a pension of £10 annually to the *domicella* Ozanna and her heirs to be paid from the census of La Perrière (Orne, ct. Pervençères) on the feast of St. Rémy, *Le Theil*, March 1202. Pd. *Clairrets*, no. II.
108. *Vidimus* of an act in which Geoffrey count of Perche grants the chaplain of Perchet two *mansuras* in the wood free from all customary payments, two measures of wine from his vineyards at Nogent, land at La Galaizière (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Rémalard, cme Condé-sur-Huisne), a meadow known as *de bosco* and rights to firewood, lodging at the *servus'* house and pasture in the wood of Perchet, 1202. Pd. *Pièces détachées*, ed. Métais, ii, 419.

109. Geoffrey count of Perche grants Adam of Kennet and his heirs all the land which Adam holds of Geoffrey in Aldbourne (Wilts.), together with forest rights and for this confirmation Adam gave the count thirty marks of silver and the countess three marks of silver, 1192-1202. B=PRO E326/7482.
110. Geoffrey count of Perche's grant to Adam de la More *pro homagio et servicio* of half a virgate of land at la More which Everard, Adam's father held, together with a mill, in return for an annual payment of £10 in four instalments is recorded in an *inspeximus* by William Longspée, 1192-1202. C=BL ms. Stowe 666, f. 79.
111. Geoffrey count of Perche's act in which he confirmed the grant made by Robert Quadrel to Adam de la More of half a virgate in Wanborough is recorded in an *inspeximus* by William Longspée, 1192-1202. C=BL ms. Stowe 666, f. 79.
112. Geoffrey count of Perche's grant of the old halls of Bellême (*veteras aulas comitis*) to the priory of Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême in exchange for the ditch around the tower is preserved in an account of a later lawsuit undertaken by the monks, 1192-1202. Pd. Querimoniae, no. 135.
113. G[offrey] count of Perche and the countess M[atilda] grant to the leperhouse of Grand-Beaulieu at Chartres an annuity of 60s. from the *prepositura* of Nogent and if the *prepositus* fails to pay at the appointed time he shall be liable to a weekly penalty of 10s., 1192-1202 Pd. Beaulieu, no. 153.
114. Geoffrey count of Perche and his wife the countess Matilda give £20 from the *prepositura* of Nogent-le-Rotrou to the abbey of Fontevraud, which the records of the Fontevraudine priory at Belhomert indicate was used to provide an *anniversarium*, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat 5480, p. 352. C=BN ms franc. 24133, p. 302.
115. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the priory of Saint-Léonard of-Bellême Hubert Capreolus's grant of Robert Canis and his holding, excepting only the service due to the count, 1192-1202. A=AD Orme H2163. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 66.
116. Geoffrey count of Perche gives the canons of Bradenstoke a rent which is due on the feast of St. Michael from the property of John of the Mill at Wanborough (Wilts.), 1192-1202. B=BL ms. Cotton Vitellius A xi, f. 105 (C15 damaged) B2=BL ms. Stowe 925, f. 80. Pd. *Bradenstoke*, no. 235.
117. Geoffrey count of Perche and the countess M[atilda] grant the priory of Chêne Galon a penny a day from the revenues of the castles at Mortagne, Longpont, Mauves, Maisonmaugis, Bellême, Le Theil, La Perrière, Montisambert, Nogent, Rivray, Montlondon, La Ferrière, Nonvilliers and Montigny. They add the sum of 4s. to be paid every Saturday from the *prepositura* at Mortagne and a payment at Easter of 60s. from that of La Perrière to fund their *anniversaria*, 1192-1202 probably March 1202. B=Duchesne 54, p. 460. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 206 (in part). ii) Murs, *Comtes*, 500-501 (French translation). iii) Courtin, *Perche*, 218-9 (French translation).
118. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the canons of Dunstable newly cleared land at Hare (Beds.), that is the portion of ploughland lying to the north of their wood, which has been measured as seven acres, another portion to the east of their house, which is twenty one acres, and six and a half acres of waste woodland outside the ploughlands. This land is to be held at a rent of 4d. per acre and it has all been measured and delivered by the count's men. The canons are also to have free access to the common pasture and woodland which pertain to the village of Toddington (Beds.). Count Geoffrey has received two marks of silver *in gersumam* from the canons for this concession, 1192-1202. B=BL ms. Harley 1885, Cartulary of Dunstable, f. 27v.
119. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the canons of Dunstable the five virgates of land at Chalton (Beds.) given by Patrick of Chaources, together with the land of John Crasset, whose 12d. rent he remits, and the ditch around his own land and the grove of (?)beech trees, 1192-1202. B=BL ms. Harley 1885, f.27v.
120. Geoffrey count of Perche grants to the house at Franchart, a cell of Saint-Euverte of Orléans, 60s. from his *prepositura* of Nogent-le-Rotrou to be paid in Percheron money on St. Denis's day and if the *prepositus* fails to pay at the appointed time he shall be held responsible for all costs, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 10089, p. 381. Murs, *Comtes*, 493 (French translation only).

121. Geoffrey count of Perche and Matilda his wife grant to Geoffrey Perdris property at Eastwood, (Essex): two acres formerly held by Solomon, four acres formerly held by Sych' and five acres formerly held by Robert for 14s. 4d. and the marsh formerly held by Alurichus Havoc for 60s. and 6s. for tithes, due at Easter and the feast of St. Michael. Geoffrey received nine marks of silver *de gersum* for his confirmation and Matilda one mark of silver, 1192-1202. A=BL ms. Harley charter 54.g.26.
122. Geoffrey count of Perche gives to John of *Wadelowe* fourteen acres of land in the assart of Northwood, which lies next to his own land at *Wadelowe*, and a further nine acres of land adjoining the count's demesne and *Hamstude*. He also grants a virgate of land in Chalton (Beds.), which Alban of *Gatesdene* held for a rent of 10s. 8d., 1192-1202. B=BL ms. Harley 1885, f. 72.
123. Count Geoffrey of Perche's gift of 40s. tournois from Maison Maugis (Orne, ct. Rémalard), two measures of wine, the tithes of the mill of Saint-Maurice[?-sur-Huisne] (Orne, ct. Nocé) and the tithes of the bakehouse at La Loupe (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) is confirmed in a charter of Stephen count of Sancerre to the canons of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois, 1192-1202. C=BN ms franc 24133, p. 264-5. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 509 (French translation only).
124. Geoffrey count of Perche and the countess Matilda confirm to Lawrence fitz Jordan of Paglesham the whole hundred of Rochford (Essex) to be held for an annual rent of £8 due on the octave of Easter and the octave of St. Michael, 1192-1202. A=Canterbury Dean & Chapter archives, carta antiqua R. 62.
125. Geoffrey count of Perche and the countess Matilda grant to Lawrence fitz Jordan of Paglesham the land known as *Turkelland*, with all its appurtenances including the marsh, and the great marsh called *Alfladenas* to be held for an annual rent of £6 payable in two instalments at the octaves of Easter and Saint Michael, 1192-1202. A=Canterbury Dean & Chapter archives, Carta antiqua T. 27.
126. Geoffrey count of Perche, with the approval of his wife Countess Matilda and his son Geoffrey, confirms to the abbey of Saint-Pierre de la Couture in Le Mans the church of Toddington (Beds.), which had formerly been their possession, and undertakes to protect it. Geoffrey, Matilda and their son, Geoffrey are to be received into the confraternity of the abbey and their anniversaries and those of Geoffrey's and Matilda's parents will be celebrated by the monks, *Le Theil*, 1192-c. 1198. Pd. i) *La Couture*, no. CLXV ii) *CDF*, no. 1040.
127. Geoffrey count of Perche approves the grant of the cell at Parfondeval (Orne, ct. Pervençères) made by the abbey of Saint-Pierre de la Couture in Le Mans to Philip of Prulay, who gave the monks the tithes of *Baudrereia*, which its lord Robert Baudri had granted to the monks in the time of Andrew of Prulay, 1192- 1202. Pd. *La Couture*, no. CLXXX.
128. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that he has sworn before the altar of St. Julian in the cathedral of Le Mans that he will defend the cathedral's property at Courgenard (Sarthe, ct. Montmirail). The men and the canons may seek refuge in his lands in time of peace or war and he will permit no man from his land or anywhere else to commit a crime or violence there, while the internal justice of the area is to be rendered by the canons. He has further sworn that he will take no money by force for this protection, but will guard and protect the men of the area and the canons as if they were his own men. When his heir shall come to years of discretion then he will make him swear similarly. His brother Stephen has sworn to uphold this peace and gave his letters patent in witness of the oath, while the countess Matilda, his wife, approved it with her seal. Several of Geoffrey's men swore to uphold the pact and would act as guarantors until satisfaction was given to the canons for any infringements of the pact. The concession was made in the presence of the bishops of Chartres and Sées and Geoffrey undertook to acquire letters patent from the king of France when the opportunity arose, *Le Mans*, 1192-1202 probably after 1198. Pd. *Chart. Cenom.*, no. XXV.
129. Geoffrey count of Perche's grant of exemption from all exactions for one man to the leperhouse at Mauves is preserved in the records of a later lawsuit, 1192-1202. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 225.

130. Geoffrey count of Perche's foundation of the college of Saint-Jean of Nogent-le-Rotrou is recorded in the necrology of the house, together with an endowment consisting of his own chapel of Saint-Jean built near the castle at Nogent-le-Rotrou, of *masurae* at *Mouloyn*, *Marchees* and *Campus Memorie*. He approved all their subsequent acquisitions and granted exemption from the justice of his officers and from all customs and secular payments, 1192-1202. B=AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f.13v. Pd. i) *Obits*, ii, 391. b) Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 152 (in part).
131. Geoffrey count of Perche grants to the hospital of Saint-Lazare at Nogent-le-Rotrou the sum of 20s. to be paid annually from the *prefectura* of Nogent-le-Rotrou on Palm Sunday, 1192-1202. A=CSJ C/112. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 497-8 (French translation only).
132. Geoffrey count of Perche grants to Osbert fitz Hervey the land of *Wittrichesfeld* (?Wattisfield, Suffolk) and *Hunilee* in the manor of Leiland, and land at Dagworth (Suffolk) which used to belong to Hervey fitz Wigor' together with land at *Stragelond* between the ploughlands of Dagworth and *Wixeford'* which William fitz Robert fitz Ysilia held. He also gave two acres lying between his fields of Dagworth and the fields of Haughley at *Stubbinge* and ten acres at Hoo near his wood of Dagworth, together with land in Dagworth formerly held by Godric le Suur. This property is to be held for the service of one twentieth part of a knight and is warranted by Geoffrey and his heirs, 1192-1202. A=PRO E 210/1532.
133. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the gift of land at *Valfrese* and Le Chesnay in the parish of La Menière (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne) made to the abbey of Perseigne by Guaterannus de Champs, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 5474, p. 116. Pd. *Perseigne*, no. CLXXXIV.
134. Count Geoffrey of Perche and his wife Matilda give to the abbey of Perseigne 100s. percheron from the revenues of of their *prepositura* of La Perrière which is to be paid annually on the first Sunday after St. Rémy's day. The sum of 10s. is payable by the count and his heirs if these payments are not made by his *prepositus*, 1192-1202. A=AD Sarthe H930. Pd. *Perseigne*, no. LXVII (in part).
135. Geoffrey count of Perche's grant to Ralph Asinus of part of the mills of Ruisseux (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Margon) is recorded in Ralph's grant of the property to the abbey of Les Clairets, 1192-1202. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XXI.
136. Geoffrey count of Perche grants to Robert de *Scalis* the advowson of the church of Wetherden (Suffolk), which lies in his fee and concerning which there has been a dispute between the count and Robert. Robert is also granted all the profits he has made or can make in the count's *feodum*, 1192-1202. B=BL ms. Egerton 3137, Cartulary of Blackborough, f. 101v.
137. Geoffrey count of Perche gives notice that the monks of Saint-Evroul have given him the vill of Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) with all its appurtenances except the church for an annual rent of four pounds of wax to be rendered from the *prepositura* of either Maison Maugis or Marchainville. In return Geoffrey has given the church of Saint-Nicholas at Maison Maugis (Orne, ct. Rémalard) with all its appurtenances and Cavru (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Maison Maugis). This property is to be held by one monk or two if they wish and by a priest. These monks are also granted the holding of William Serara, who will be free from all comital exactions, rights to deadwood, hay and pasturage in his woods and forests at Marchainville, Maison Maugis and Cavru without the intervention of his foresters and quittance from fees in the woods and forests for all their animals and those from their holding at Cavru. The abbey retains a settler at Marchainville, a building plot and a place suitable to make or or two granges near the Longny gate in which to collect their tithes. Geoffrey concedes a licence to fish the Huisne and Commeauche rivers for the length of the parish of Maison Maugis by whatever means the monks choose, whether with lines or nets. He also grants all customs to their men throughout the woods of Réno as are held by his *censivi*. Geoffrey undertakes to secure charters from the kings of France and England and the archbishops of Rouen and Sens and the bishops of Chartres and Sées and the abbot of Blois and the prior of Nogent concerning the property which they claim in the parish of Maison Maugis, with the exception of 10s. which the monks of Blois hold there and the tithes of the lands and of vineyards cultivated from time immemorial, of which the church of Saint-Nicholas has the ninth part. The count also accepts that tithes or churches at Marchainville shall be granted to Saint-Evroul, 1192-1202. C=AD Orne H702. Pd. De Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 205-7.

138. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies the settlement of a dispute between the priory of Sainte-Gauburge and Odo Chevrol concerning their causeway in a particular lake, *1192-1202*. A=AN S2238, no. 8. B=AN LL1158, ii, pp. 413-4. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 543 (French translation only).
139. Geoffrey count of Perche grants 20s. from the rent of his mills at Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois for his anniversary and that of his wife Matilda, *1192-1202*. C=AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, *Registre de Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois*, p.42.
140. Geoffrey count of Perche's gift of 15s. chartrain from the rents of La Loupe (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) payable on the feast of St. Rémy to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois is recorded in an act of Stephen, count of Sancerre, *1192-1202*. C=BN ms franc. 24133, p. 264. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 509 (French translation only).
141. Count Geoffrey of Perche's foundation of a chapel at La Loupe (Eure-et-Loir, ch. 1. du ct.) is described in an act of confirmation given by Stephen, count of Sancerre to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois, *1192-1202*. C=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 264.
142. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the donation made by William Quarrel and his son Geoffrey to the cathedral chapter at Sées of their rights in the mill of Barville (Orne, ct. Pervençères) with the fishery and service of the mill and all appurtenances, together with a field and the church of Barville, *1192-1202*. B=Evêché de Sées, *Livre rouge du chapitre de Sées*, f. 75v.
143. Count Geoffrey confirms the payment to the abbey of Tiron of £7 from the tolls of Mortagne, £4 on the feast of St. John the Baptist and 60s. on the feast of St. Rémy, *1192-1202, probably March 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 155.
144. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the gift made to the abbey of Tiron by the younger Ivo of Rémalard of one measure of produce and two *sextarios* to be rendered at Christmas from the great mill near Rivray, *1192-1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 155.
145. Count Geoffrey confirms two measures of produce rendered by the mills of *Broart* to the abbey of Tiron at Christmas and on St. Denis's day, which had been given by Denis of *Platea* and his father William, *1192-1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 161-2.
146. Geoffrey count of Perche and his wife grant and confirm to the abbey of Tiron a payment of £10 on the Saturday after All Saints' day from the market at Nogent, *1192-1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 160.
147. Geoffrey confirms to the abbey of Tiron the tithes of Marolles-les-Buis (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron), *1192-1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 160.
148. Geoffrey by the grace of God count of Perche confirms the grant made by Gerald of Les Apres to the abbey of La Trappe consisting of all the land he possessed in Les Barres (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche, cme. Les Genettes) and all his rights in the woodland at Fretay (Orne, ct. Tourouvre, cme. Bresolles), including *herbergagium*, deadwood, pannage and pasture for animals. For this grant Gerald received from the monks £20 angevin, his eldest son Arnold one chicken, his second son Warin 6s., his third son Hugh 5s., his fourth son Waleran 5s., his wife Mary two *sextarii* of wheat and his daughter-in-law Agnes, the wife of Arnold, a cow. Gerald had placed this gift in the hand of the count's wife Matilda while the count was in the Holy Land, *1192-1202 probably 1192/3*. A=AD Orne H1846. B=BN ms. lat.11060 f. 133v. Pd. *LT*, pp. 457-8.
149. Geoffrey count of Perche orders the keeper of tithes at his castle of Mortagne to render to the abbey of La Trappe the sum of £11 annually on St. Rémy's Eve, £6 from his ancestors' grants and 100s. from himself and his wife Matilda, and to render £5 on St. John the Baptist's Eve from the alms of H. of Vaunoise. If the *tonlearius* fails to render, then the seneschal of Mortagne is ordered to enforce the grant and render 100s. to the count in amends, *1192-1202*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 12. Pd. *LT*, pp. 16-17.

150. Geoffrey by the grace of God count of Perche confirms the gift to the abbey of La Trappe made by Guiard son of Walter of Ligni, which consisted of all the land and meadows he used to hold of Robert Gruel and his sons at Ligni (Orne, cme. Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne). The monks used to have a payment of £19 from this land, but recently had given £9 to Guiard, his mother and sisters. Robert Gruel and his sons conceded that the gift was exempt from rent and service, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 67v. Pd. *LT*, p. 205.
151. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies that the grant which Robert of Bubertré made to the abbey of La Trappe for the soul of his father, who was buried there, has been exchanged for three *sextarii* of grain from the mill of Mondion (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne), where the monks already possessed three other *sextarii* as a result of a grant by Robert's father. If the mill cannot render an additional three *sextarii* then the monks are to have them from the mill on the lake at Brénard. The monks gave Robert a horse and Robert made this annual grant, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 49. Pd. *LT*, p. 141-2.
152. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the gift to the abbey of La Trappe made on his deathbed by John of Champeaux consisting of two arpents of meadow at Moulin du Chêne (Orne, ct. Courtomer, cme. Ste-Scolasse), 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 48. Pd. *LT*, p. 138.
153. Geoffrey count of Perche approves Ralph of Thoriel's grant to the abbey of La Trappe of the mill of Bivilliers (on the River Commeauche) excepting William Leterus' 12d. rent and the tithe which the church of Bivilliers (Orne, ct. Tourouvre) has in the mill, together with a *sextarium* of wheat from the holding of La Berquière (Orne, ct. Tourouvre, cme. Bubertré) which Ralph gave instead of a measure of herrings which he owes from the hand of the *prepositus* William, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 13. Pd. *LT*, pp. 19-20.
154. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the gift made to the abbey of La Trappe by Hugh of *Recretis* and Arnoul of Sommaire which consisted of all the tithes they possessed in the fee of Champs and in the parish of Lignerolles (Orne, ct. Tourouvre). The grant is also approved by Gervase of Prulay and Mabel the heir of the fee of Champs, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 119v. Pd. *LT*, p. 400-1.
155. Geoffrey count of Perche notifies the settlement of a dispute between the abbey of La Trappe and Warin Hai concerning land the *masura* at *Tuschis*, which Ivo of *Rivo* held from the monks. Warin will hold the land during his lifetime and render two *sextarios* of wheat and one of oats on the feast of St. Rémy, 1192-1202. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 125v. Pd. *LT*, 424-5.
156. Geoffrey, count of Perche's grant of the *prepositura*, custom and *minagium* of salt at Nogent-le-Rotrou to Warin, the king's clerk, together with jurisdiction and justice is recorded in an obit for Warin. Geoffrey's brother, Stephen, added a measure of salt which he himself had in the *minagium*. Warin then gave these things to the College of Saint-Jean at Nogent-le-Rotrou and the gift was approved by Countess Matilda, here called the mother of Geoffrey and Stephen, but probably the countess Richenza-Matilda, since Geoffrey and Stephen's mother died before Geoffrey became count, 1192-1202. B=AD Eure et Loir G3485, foliation unknown. Pd. *Obits*, ii., 389.
157. The gift of a usage of wood in the forest of Bellême made by Geoffrey count of Perche to the father of Geoffrey Petronillae of La Perrière (Orne, ct. Pervençères) is recorded in the notice of a later lawsuit, 1192-1202. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 139.
158. Count Geoffrey's grant, made with the approval of his wife Matilda and brother Stephen, to the men of Marchaineville is described in an act of William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche. The men and their heirs should be free of all *pedagia*, customs, tallages and comital dues throughout the count's jurisdiction and shall have rights within his woods of Marchainville to deadwood for firewood and timber for lodging towards *Malgusset* and common pasture for their beasts towards *Malguret* and pannage for their pigs, both those raised at home and those purchased towards *Malguret*. For this those men who own an arpent of land with their house shall be liable to a tax of 12d. payable to the count of Perche and his heirs on the feast of St. Rémy, 1192-1202. C=BN Collection Dupuy, no. 222, p. 127-8. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 607-9 (French translation only).

159. *Vidimus* of an act of Geoffrey count of Perche and W. de *Lonraio* the seneschal of Bellême in which notification is given of the purchase by Lawrence Flaaut of Mortagne from Lancelin of Fay of the land of *Sorello* near the River Eperrine, excepting the property which Lancelin and his brother dispute. Lancelin concedes that Lawrence may give this land to whomsoever he wishes and has received 45s. to be distributed among his family. Lawrence is to render annually to Lancelin on the feast of St. Leonard 4s. angevin for tallage without any other service. Lawrence shall also render just aid to lord Lancelin, *Bellême, 1192-1202*. C=AD Orne H5441 (dated 1345).
160. Geoffrey count of Perche and Matilda his wife buy from Helois of *Marches*, by the hand of Prior William, the land which lay next to the grange of *Boolai* (?Boulay, Orne, ct. Mortagne, cme. Feings) on behalf of the charterhouse at Val Dieu. Helois, her mother Erembourg *de Fracta* and the lord of the fee, Arnold *de Molendino* received nearly £25 dunois for the sale, *1196-1202*. B=RCVD, f. 9.
161. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the charterhouse of Val Dieu Hugh of *Fracta's* gift of his rights of fee (*juris proprii de feodi*) inside the boundaries of the house to the west of the Commeauche river, for which he received the sum of £10 dunois and his brother Roger 5s. The gift was also approved by the lords of the fee Geoffrey of *Roboreto* and William of *Linerit* with the provision that the service (*vavasores*) remained with them, *1192-1202*. B=RCVD, f. 10.
162. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the charterhouse of Val Dieu the patrimony of Hugh son of Geoffrey Merel which Hugh gave when he entered the house with the consent of his brothers Warin and Ralph and his unnamed sisters. Walter Bolen and his son William, who had disputed the act, conceded it and received 7s., while Miles of La Charmue who had brought an action also conceded it, receiving 5s. Later Hugh of Courcerault and his son Gervase to whom the lordship belonged approved and granted to the house the rights to administer justice over all the lands which it had acquired or would acquire inside its boundaries, *1192- 1202 probably earlier in this period*. B=RCVD, f. 10v.
163. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms to the charterhouse of Val Dieu all the grants from Miles of La Charmue's patrimony and a tithing of his revenues inside their boundaries and also similar rights he may possess over any other lands the monks may acquire. The lords of the fee Robert Alit and his wife and Gervase of Courcerault approved the action and Miles received £10 *probatae monetae* from Prior William, *1192-1202 probably later in the period*. B=RCVD, f. 13.
164. Geoffrey [count of Perche], son of the founder Rotrou, and his wife Matilda grant to the charterhouse of Val Dieu three measures of wine to be taken each year from the *prepositura* at Nogent-le-Rotrou, *1192-1202*. C=Alençon. Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 108, no. 256, f. 61. C2=BN Duchesne 54, p. 450.
165. Geoffrey count of Perche's acquisition from the abbey of Saint-Laumer of Blois of the villa of Bresolles (Orne, ct. Tourouvre) and the woodland of Fretay which the abbey held jointly with the lord of Champs in return for £25 annually from his *prepositura* of Mortagne is recalled in an act of his brother William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche, *1192-1202*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 131. Pd. *LT*, 451-2.
166. Geoffrey [count of Perche] and his wife Matilda's confirmation of benefactions made by Walter Haket and his wife Emma, with the consent of William of *Poltone* and his heir Stephen, to the Premonstratensian abbey of St. Radegund at Bradsole (Kent) is recorded in the confirmation of their son, Count Thomas, *1189-1202*. B=Oxford. Bodleian Library ms. Rawlinson B461, f. 20. Pd. *Monasticon*, vi, 941.
167. The grant made by Geoffrey of Perche and his wife Matilda to Simon son of Odin of an island called La Ruwesand in Suffolk and rights in the wardenship of park of Haughley is recorded in a grant by Simon's descendant, Roger of Astwyk, *1189 x 1202*. B=PRO E40/3873. Pd. *Ancient Deeds*, iii, A. 3873, p. 5.
168. Geoffrey count of Perche confirms the possessions of the abbey of Tiron, *28 April 1205*. B=Duchesne 54, p. 444. Pd. Bry, *Perche*, 208-11. SPURIOUS

169. Geoffrey count of Perche grants to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, with the consent of his wife Matilda and his brother Stephen, the annual sum of £15 from his *prepositura* at Nogent-le-Rotrou for his sister, the nun, Oravia and their cousin, Matilda, 1208 probably a misreading for 1202. B=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303.

Thomas count of the Perche 1202 - 1217

170. Thomas count of Perche promises to deliver the fortification of Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) to the king of France whenever he requires it, *March 1212*. A=AN J. 399, no.16. Pd. i) *Layettes*, i, 379 with note that this piece is no longer in the archives. ii) *CPA*, no. 1293. iii) *Romanet, Géographie*, ii, 6.
171. Thomas count of Perche confirms the grant of *Boveria* (?Bouvereau, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme Marolles-les-Buis) made to the abbey of Clairets by his mother Matilda, countess of Perche and gives the holding at *Ponte*, a usage of the woods of Clairets, two arpents of meadow at Le Theil, a burgher at Nogent-le-Rotrou and his rights within the mill of Saint-Victor[?de Réno] (Orne, ct. Longny), *May 1213*. Pd. *Clairets*, no. V.
172. Thomas count of Perche gives notice of the four cases in which the knights of the castellanry of Bellême will be liable to pay tallage: his knighting, his first capture in warfare, the knighting of his eldest living son and the marriage of his eldest daughter, *February 1215*. A=AD Orne H2164. Pd. i) *Bry, Perche*, 215. ii) *Romanet, Géographie*, ii, 6-7. iii) *CMPerche*, no. 43.
173. Thomas, count of Perche notifies the agreement made between Nicholas of Buat, his brothers, Robert, William and Hugh and the abbey of La Trappe. The monks may raise their causeways in a disputed lake and the woodland covered shall become the monks' property, while the public road which lies at the top end of the lake shall belong to Robert, Nicholas' brother. Robert must make his causeway suitable for a public road and the monks shall no longer be harassed on this road. When Robert wishes to empty his lake on the first Sunday of Lent so that he may sell the fish, the monks shall empty their lake for twelve days. As a result of this settlement the tithe shall remain with the monks within the specified boundaries as Nicholas' father held it of the fee of Brénard. The monks concede to the church of Prépotin (Orne, ct. Tourouvre) the *mansura* of Ribald which lies inside those boundaries to the value of two measures of seed corn in place of the rest of the tithe over which the dispute arose. Nicholas and his brothers gave an annual two *sextaria* of grain to the monks, one of wheat, the other of rye to be rendered on St. Denis's day. Nicholas also assigns the monks a *sextarium* of wheat to be taken from his grange at Prépotin and his mother gives a *sextarium* of rye from her dower during her lifetime, which Nicholas undertakes that he and his heirs will continue to render with the other *sextarium* after her death. Nicholas and his brothers conceded the land their father gave the monks, 1215. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 121v. Pd. *LT*, 409.
174. Thomas count of Perche grants the abbey of La Trappe the assart called *Liverie Aucheri* which Aucherus made in the forest of *Nuisement* during the time of Count Geoffrey, 1215. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 73v. Pd. *LT*, 235.
175. Thomas count of Perche gives notice that Lawrence abbot of Saint-Laumer of Blois has conceded to him all that the community possessed at Bresolletes (Orne, ct. Tourouvre) and Champs (Orne, ct. Tourouvre), retaining only the tithes of the ovens and mills which Thomas or his heirs might have there, and of the pannage of the wood and of all land, cultivated or uncultivated, which Thomas might develop without tithes or hand over to others without the tithes being calculated, with the exception of tithes of timber sales. The monks retain the advowson and profits of the churches of Champs and Bresolletes and a tithe of the price which Thomas may obtain if he sells the lakes there either in part or completely. They shall also have a tithe of the *prepositura* of the vill of Bresolletes. Any infringement of the monks' rights shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the *prepositus* of Mortagne. Thomas grants to the abbey £25 from his *prepositura* at Mortagne, £15 payable on the middle Sunday of Lent and £10 on the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist and subject to a weekly penalty of 20s. if it is not paid and if the monks do not receive satisfaction within fifteen days then the castellanry of Mortagne shall be excluded from divine service. All this Thomas swore on the relics in the chapter of Saint-Laumer in Blois, *August 1215*. D=AD Loir-et-Cher 11 H128, pp. 628-30 copy made in 1689 of a *vidimus* by Sylvester bishop of Sées of an act of Thomas count of Perche. Pd. (in part) Mars, *Histoire de Saint-Lomer de Blois*, 166-7.

176. Thomas count of Perche confirms to the abbey of Les Clairets the benefactions of his mother and grants twenty acres of woodland outside his hays, which lie next to the original endowment of the abbey, 3 October 1215. Pd. *Clairets*, no. VII.
177. Thomas count of Perche ratifies and approves the endowment by Philip of Prulay of a mass in the college of Toussaints at Mortagne, 1215. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 162.
178. Thomas count of Perche notifies that he has seen and heard the charter by which his father, Geoffrey count of Perche granted various rights to the abbey of Saint-Evroul, April 1216. A=AD Orne H722.
179. Thomas count of Perche notifies that he has seen and heard the charter by which his father, Geoffrey count of Perche granted the church of Saint-Nicholas of Moulins-la-Marche to the abbey of Saint-Evroul and he has approved it, April 1216. A=AD Orne H722.
180. Thomas count of Perche notifies that he has seen and heard the charter by which his father, Geoffrey count of Perche approved the gifts made by Simon le Bret and his wife, Isabel to the abbey of Saint-Evroul, April 1216. A=AD Orne H722.
181. Thomas count of Perche confirms the grants at Marchainville made by his father to the abbey of Saint-Evroul in an *inspeximus* of his father's act, April 1216. B=BN ms. lat. 11055, f. 36. C=AD Orne H702. Pd. Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 205-7.
182. Thomas count of Perche, on the advice of [his uncle] William of Perche, gives Odo Grandin, the developer of the mills in the meadows near the new bourg at Nogent-le-Rotrou a quarter part of those mills. This includes the fulling of cloth, the milling of grain, the fishing rights and the *molneragium* of those mills, the second custom of the town and the milling of the new bourg and of the bourg in the meadows, whether of cloth or of grain. Odo did homage to Thomas and was given the right to take wood necessary for the mills and for his lodging from the wood of Perchet and in other forests at Thomas' expense. Thomas will provide transport for the timber, the millstone and whatever is necessary for the mills. Odo and his heirs will meet a quarter of the working expenses of the mill as they receive a quarter of the profits, 5 May 1216. Pd. *Clairets*, no. IX.
183. Thomas count of Perche confirms the benefaction of a single penny each day from the revenues of his castles made by his father Geoffrey to the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon and extends it to the castles of Moulins and Bonsmoulins, 1216. C=BN Duchesne 54, p. 459. Pd. Bry, *Perche*, 215-6.
184. Thomas count of Perche confirms three men to the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon: Robert Rossel at Nogent-le-Rotrou, William Pasquier at Mauves and Gervase the draper at Bonsmoulins, 1216. C=BN Duchesne 54, p. 461. Pd. Bry, *Perche*, 215.
185. Thomas count of Perche and Sylvester bishop of Sées approve the grant made by Hugh of Courgeon to the college of Toussaints Mortagne of the tithe of Courgeon (Orne, ct. Mortagne), with the provision that nineteen measures of wheat are provided to the priory of Chartrage to maintain the Calende of the Corbonnais which meets there, 1216. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 163.
186. Thomas count of Perche notifies that, when the monks of Bellême priory claimed a usage of as much deadwood as four donkeys could carry three times a day to Bellême and Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême, he allowed them to take it until such time as it could be proved otherwise. He now grants to the priory the right to the prunings (*sicas stantes*) of oaks and beeches, a birch, a willow, a weeping willow, an alder and a maple, a *boldenam* and all manner of deadwood except hornbeam, aspen and ash in as much quantity as can be carried by four donkeys three times a day. They will receive nothing from his new sales until ten years have elapsed. If the monks cannot find sufficient deadwood to meet these specifications, then the forester shall provide them or their agent with sufficient wood of different kinds to make up the quantity. If he fails to do this then the monks may make up the difference with their animals themselves. Since the monks had also been accustomed to have grazing for two horses and six cattle, Thomas grants this to them under the supervision of his foresters, Marchainville, 1217. A=AD Orne, H2153. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 217. ii) *CMPerche*, no. 44.

187. Thomas count of Perche grants to the abbey of Clairets rights to timber and firewood in all his woodlands and the mills at Nogent-le-Rotrou, known as the mills of the meadows, and he promises that he and his heirs will build no further mills there to the detriment of the nuns' mills. If any harm should come to the mills through the negligence of Thomas' heirs, then the nuns shall be compensated by an annual payment of £80, 1217. Pd. *Clairets*, no. X.
188. Thomas count of Perche confirms the benefactions made by his father and mother, Geoffrey count of Perche and Countess Matilda to the Premonstratensian abbey of St. Radegund at Bradsole (Kent) and confirms the other grants made by his knight Stephen, 1202-17 probably spring 1217. B=Oxford. Bodleian Library ms. Rawlinson B461, f. 20. Pd. *Monasticon*, vi, 941.
189. The grant of a market to Bonsmoulins by Thomas count of Perche is recorded in the records of a later lawsuit, 1202-17. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 236.
190. Thomas count of Perche confirms his mother's foundation of the college of Toussaints at Mortagne, together with £12 revenue from the *prepositura* of Moulins, the fair of St. Andrew at Mortagne and the customs depending on it. He himself gave the presentation of the chaplains to the canons and took the canons under his protection, 120-17 probably 1213. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 571. Murs' reference is to Bart des Boulais (mss de la Sicotière), but I have been unable to locate a reference to such an act in the printed edition of Bart which is based on the Sicotière mss. A register of acts relating to Toussaints refers to a copy made in 1311 of an act dated 1213 granting the fair of St. Andrew, but it does not specify the donor, AD Orne IF 1071/30, p.2.
191. Thomas count of Perche's grant to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois of the service of a bourgeois to act as an agent at Nogent-le-Rotrou is recorded in a confirmation by his successor William, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, 120-17. C=AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, p. 47.
192. The confirmation by Thomas count of Perche of his father Geoffrey's grants to Marchainville is described in an act of William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche, 1202-17. C=BN Collection Dupuy, no. 222, p. 127-8. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 607-9.
193. Thomas count of Perche's grant of a meadow worth £6 a year to his cook, Ranulf or Ralph is mentioned in the record of a lawsuit undertaken by the husband of Ranulf's widow, Margaret, 1202-17. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 215.
194. Thomas count of Perche's confirmation of the exchange made between Rotrou count of Perche and the ancestors of Andrew of Prulay in which the count granted them the daily customs from the bread stalls in the market at Mortagne except for those of Wednesday and Saturday is mentioned in the record of a later lawsuit, 1202-17. Pd. *Querimoniae*, no. 208.

William count of the Perche 1217 - 1226

195. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne renders homage to King Philip of France for the county of Perche apart from Moulins and Bonsmoulins, concerning his right to hold which the king is going to make inquiry and which he will restore for William's lifetime if it proves that he has a right to them, *Melun, June 1217*. B=AN JJ31, f. 37. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 219. ii) GC, ix, 885. iii) Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 8.
196. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants an annual payment of £10 in money current in the Perche from his *prepositura* of Mortagne to be paid on the feast of St. Rémy and at Easter to Bartholomew Droco in return for his service, *June 1217*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 9v. Pd. *LT*, 7-8.
197. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms the gift of 100s. of Percheron money payable from the *prepositura* of Montlondon made to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert by his late brother Stephen of Perche, *June 1217*. C=BN Collection Baluze, vol. 38, f. 232v.
198. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies the settlement of a dispute between himself and the priory of Sainte-Gauburge concerning rights in the forest of *Trahant*. William concedes that the monks may take one cartload of branches a week, an annual beech tree and the use of deadwood from various trees. If they failed to collect their cartload of branches, then they might take two the next week, 1218. A=AN S2238, no. 25. B=AN LL1158, ii, p. 404. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 605-6 (French translation only).

199. William bishop of Châlons sur Marne and count of Perche confirms to the abbey at Les Clairets all the benefactions of Geoffrey count of Perche, his wife Matilda and their son Thomas count of Perche. He adds three arpents of meadow at Le Theil next to the two arpents which Thomas gave, in order to fund the celebration of his *anniversarium*. He also grants a burgher called John Matote at Nogent-le-Rotrou in the bourg of the meadow and two *censivas* inside the boundaries of the abbey, one which the late Robert Aie had held and the other which William Summelart used to hold. The nuns are also to be free of all customs through his lands and exempt from *paagium* on all that they sell or wish to transport for their own use, 1218. A=BN ms. lat. 9220. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XII.
200. On the occasion of the dedication of the abbey church at Les Clairets, undertaken after the death of Reginald bishop of Chartres by William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche, William grants 60s. to the nuns and notifies the gifts of others, 17 June 1218. Pd.i) Bry, Perche, 223-4. ii) Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 176-9. b) *Clairets*, no. XIV.
201. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms to the priory of Belhomert the gift of Geoffrey of *Toraille*, *La Loupe*, December 1218. C=BN ms franc. 24133, p. 303.
202. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms to the men of Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) the grants of his brother Count Geoffrey, made with the approval of Geoffrey's wife Matilda and his brother Stephen and confirmed by William's nephew Thomas. Since both the original grant and Thomas's confirmation, which William had seen on several occasions, were lost in a fire William has granted these letters, 1219. C=BN Collection Dupuy, no. 222, p. 127-8. Pd. Murs, *Comtes*, 607-9 (French translation only).
203. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies and confirms the gift made to the abbey of La Trappe by Matthew of Montgoubert, with the approval of his wife, Mabel, their children, Matthew and William and the commoners of Fretay, who pertain to the lords of Champs, consisting of a third part of Fretay (Orne, ct. Tourouvre, cme. Bresolles). The grant which is intended to provide *calflagium* for the abbey and for their grange and to provide *calflagium* and *herbergagium* for the grange of Champs replaces the rights which the monks used to have next to the count's wood and near the lands of the men of Brezolles and includes the adjoining twelve acres of wood. The monks shall be free to do as they please within their own area, but have no claims on the other two parts which belong to Matthew and the commoners, 1219. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 132v. Pd. *LT*, p. 454.
204. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants to the cathedral church of Notre-Dame of Chartres a candle to burn before the shrine of the blessed robe and he assigns £10 chartrain annually, that is 100s. from the *prepositura* of Montlondon and 100s. from that of Nonvilliers, May 1219. B=BN ms. lat. 11095, f. 64v. Pd. *NDC*, no. CCXXXIV.
205. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants to the chapter of Notre-Dame of Chartres 100s. tournois from the *prepositura* of Nogent-le-Rotrou on St. Denis's day each year for his *anniversarium*, May 1219. B=BN ms. lat. 10095, f. 65.
206. Letters patent of William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirming to the abbey of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée all the woodland given by Nicholas of *Platea* near the canons' woodland at Bois de Brimont (?Brémont, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Combres) are mentioned in Geoffrey of Beaumont's confirmation of a grant by Nicholas of *Platea*, May, 1219. Pd. *SV*, no. 198 (reference only).
207. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the charterhouse of Val-Dieu an annual 40s. of money then current in the Perche to fund his *anniversarium* to be paid from his mills at Maison Maugis by the hand of the bailiff, 20s. at Christmas and 20s. on the feast of St. John the Baptist, 1219. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 29. Pd. *LT*, 73.
208. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the abbey of La Trappe the annual sum of 40s. of money then current in the Perche to fund his *anniversarium* to be paid from his mills at Maison Maugis, 20s. at Christmas and 20s. on the feast of St. John the Baptist, May 1219. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 13. Pd. *LT*, 19.

209. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms to the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon the property granted by his father, Count Rotrou and brother Count Geoffrey, that is the place where the house is built and the woodland around it, *1219*. C=BN Duchesne 54, p. 461. Pd. Bry, *Perche*, 226-7.
210. William bishop of Châlons sur Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the Grandmontine priory of Chêne Galon an annual sum of 40s. in money then current in Perche to be paid from his *prepositura* in Bellême, 20s. at Christmas and 20s. at Easter, *1219*. C=BN Duchesne 54, p. 459. Pd. Bry, *Perche*, 227.
211. William, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms the grant of 50s. for the *anniversarium* of his nephew Thomas, made by Thomas's widow Helisendis countess of Perche to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert, *March 1220*. C=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303.
212. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the abbey of Les Clairets both his flour and fulling mills, which were called the mills of the count and were situated on the River Huisne at Nogent-le-Rotrou, *August 1220*. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XV.
213. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that his brother Count Geoffrey acquired from the abbey of Saint-Laumer in Blois in return for an annual payment of £20 from his *prepositura* of Mortagne the vill of Bresolletes (Orne, ct. Tourouvre), together with all the rights the abbey possessed in the woodland of Fretay which they held jointly with the lord of Champs. Later the woodland was divided by Thomas count of Perche and Matthew of Montgoubert, the lord of Champs into parts. With the consent of Helisendis, countess of Perche William gives up all his rights to this woodland in return for a payment of £600 to himself and the countess, *1220*. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 131v. Pd. *LT*, 451-2.
214. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche approves the gift of a stone house on the bridge of Saint-Hilaire at Nogent-le-Rotrou, made to the Maison-Dieu of Nogent-le-Rotrou by the priest Gerald of Le Mêle, together with other property including an orchard, grange and reed beds, grazing formerly belonging to Baldwin the cook and two arpents of land which Gerald bought from Gerald of Aulnay. The count-bishop waives the 4d. rent which is due from the property and approves the grant by Heloise le Tensour of various stretches of grazing behind the new bourg, together with a vineyard and two arpents of land on the mound of Viennes, which she had legally purchased, *1220*. C=CSJ A7. Murs, *Comtes*, 609-11 (French translation only).
215. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants to the abbey of Les Clairets on the occasion of the institution of the abbess the right of *herbagium* for all their animals except goats in his woodland and the right to pasture animals without payment in his wood called Maurissure (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé sur Huisne). He also grants pannage for fifty of their pigs in all his woods and exemption from all other customs while the pigs journey there. He extends the boundaries of the abbey within his woodlands of Les Clairets up to ten arpents from the top of their embankments that is up to the last oak tree of the wood, which Count Thomas had lately given to them, *June 1221*. Pd. *Les Clairets*, no. XVI.
216. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the abbey of Les Clairets on the occasion of the institution of the abbess £8 due to him for his lifetime from the revenues of the count's mills, which he had conferred on them, *June 1221*. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XVII.
217. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted Montigny-le-Chartif (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) to Isabelle, countess of Chartres and lady of Amboise. If this fails to render £100 tournois annually then she may make up the difference from his property which lies around it. The property shall remain hers for her lifetime and for that of her children, if she has any, and if she does not, it shall return to the heirs of the count of Perche upon her death, *July 1221*. Pd. Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 8-9.
218. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to Agnes la Brette and her sons Reginald and William all his meadowland which lies between Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême and Bellême in return for golden spurs to be given at Easter, *August 1221*. A=AD Orne H2165. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 68.

219. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants 20s. from the rent of his mills at Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois, recalling the gift of his late brother Geoffrey count of Perche, *June 1221*. C=AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, p.42.
220. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that William of Feuillet has come to an agreement with the Templars concerning a dispute over the wood of La Gatine, by which William will make an annual payment of 25s. parisis to the knights from the *pedagium* of Montigny, which the count-bishop guarantees, *November 1221*. A=AN S4983, no.3. Pd. *Templiers Eure-et-Loir*, no. LXXXVI.
221. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies the settlement of a dispute between Odo Grandin of Le Theil and Robert and John, millers of Nogent. It was agreed that milling and fulling at Nogent-le-Rotrou should be shared between the mills established by Odo and the count's mills which he had been given to the nuns of Les Clairets. Work coming from outside Nogent could go to either mill. As part of this settlement Odo was to pay the millers Robert and John 50s. at agreed terms, with a penalty clause of 2s. weekly if he fails to pay, *April 1222*. A=BN 9220, no. 71. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XX.
222. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has inspected a charter given to the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou by Geoffrey, formerly count of Perche in which the count granted the church of Saint-Macut of Mortagne, with its appendages. William confirms the grant and gives the right of presentation to Saint-Macut to the priory, *Nogent-le-Rotrou, April 1222*. Pd. *NLR*, no. XCI.
223. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of the Perche grants to the priory of Belhomert an annual sum of 40s. in Percheron money payable from his *prepositura* at Marchainville at Christmas and on the feast of St. John the Baptist to fund his *anniversarium*, *June 1222*. B=BN ms lat. 5480, p. 245.
224. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the priory of Chêne Galon all the wood and land adjoining their boundaries below the great road and beyond the road where the watercourse of Couru borders it from Le Pont-aux-Ânes (Orne, ct. Bellême, cme. Eperrais) up to the sale of La Chaise (Orne, ct. Bellême, cme. Eperrais) concerning which there had been a dispute between the priory and himself, *November 1222*. B=BN Duchesne 54, p. 461. Pd. *Bry, Perche*, 226.
225. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies the settlement of a dispute between Agnes la Brette and her sons, Reginald and William on the one side and her stepson, William, son of Julian of Theval on the other, concerning the meadows between Saint-Martin-du-Vieux-Bellême and Bellême, which had been given to Agnes by the bishop himself. It was agreed that William of Theval should have the same third part which he held of all Julian and Agnes's other acquisitions and a third of that third part should be his to bequeath to his heirs, while Agnes and her heirs should continue to render the golden spur to the count, *1223*. A=AD Orne H2165. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 69.
226. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies the agreement made between the prior of Ulmois and Bertran of *Claramonte* concerning the mill on the river *Eduera* at the vill known as *Rabececort*, which Bertran had built to the detriment of the monks' mill, *1223*. Pd. *Recueil des plusieurs pièces curieuses servant à l'histoire de Bourgogne*, ed. E. Perard (Paris, 1664), 331-2.
227. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the abbey of La Trappe two oaks a year from his forest of Bellême for use in their vineyards and property at Vaunoise, which are to be delivered at Lent by the count's foresters and are not to be used for any other purpose, *1223*. B=BN ms. lat. f. 134v. Pd. *LT*, 460-1.
228. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies the relationship between himself and Blanche countess of Champagne and Queen Berengaria, widow of Richard the Lionheart, *October 1224*. Pd. *Romanet, Géographie*, ii, 9.

229. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies an agreement made in his presence and that of the abbot of Sées between the Maison-Dieu of Nogent-le-Rotrou and Roger son of William Roguer, 1224. Pd. (in part) Proust, *Inventaire*, 121.
230. William, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche concedes to the abbey of La Trappe the gift of £10 in Percheron money payable annually from the *prepositura* of Mortagne on the feast of St. Rémy and at Easter which had been made by the knight Bartholomew Drogo and approved by his son Bartholomew, August 1225. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 9v. Pd. *LT*, 9.
231. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that he has granted to the abbey of La Trappe for the sum of £20 his mill at Buré (Orne, ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne) on the understanding that no other mills will be constructed in the castellanry of Mont Isenbert by him or his heirs and that the monks of La Trappe will render £10 annually to the chancellor of the church of Toussaints at Mortagne, 100s. on the feast of St. Rémy and 100s. at Easter, 1225. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 47v. Pd. *LT*, 136.
232. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms the gift made to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois by his nephew Thomas count of Perche of a bourgeois to act as an agent at Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1225. C=AD Eure-et-Loir, H3907, p. 47.
233. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche establishes the abbey of Saint-Sauveur within the order of Tiron at Arcisses (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou, cme. Brunelles), granting it all his mills at Rivray (Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne) where no further mills may be constructed; five arpents of vineyard at Rivray and another arpent at Nogent-le-Rotrou, which he bought from Thomas Bouvet; all his meadows at Condé-sur-Huisne, (Orne, ct. Rémalard) and a quarter of his meadow at Le Theil (Orne, ch. l. du ct.), which is called de la Resac; three carrucates of land at Marchainville (Orne, ct. Longny) with the usage of his woods there; the lodging, orchard, lands, rents and mills at Nogent-le-Rotrou, which he bought from Odo de l'Orme; the pond at Brunelles (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou); half his woodland of Maurissure (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau and Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne); ten oaks to the value of £10 annually to use in the vineyards and houses, *Thiron*, 8 September 1225. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLVIII.
234. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche confirms to the priory of Chartrage at Mortagne the right to take from the forest of Réno four donkeyloads of dead wood to heat their house and also confirms or adds a tithe of his table every time he stays at the castle of Mauves in the Corbonnais, 1217-26. C=AD Orne H5438 *Vidimus* dated 1381 of an act of Peter, count of Alençon in which Peter confirmed the grant of *calvagium* in the forest of Réno made by John of Illiers and confirmed by William bishop of Châlons and formerly count of Perche. These rights and the right to a tithe of the count's table were exchanged for similar rights in the forest of Bellême, but they are now returning to Réno with the approval of Peter. Pd. i) Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 176. ii) Murs, *Comtes*, 598.
235. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche assigns to the abbey of Saint-Evroul the sum of 60s. from his mill at Maison Maugis, 1217-26. C=AD Orne H553.
236. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's confirmation that the knight William of Platea had granted the sum of 20s. payable to the abbey of Tiron from the *prepositura* of Nonvilliers on the feast of St. Denis is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-26. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 155.
237. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's grant and confirmation of 60s. from the *prepositura* of Rivray, payable to the abbey of Tiron in two instalments of 30s. at Christmas and 30s. on the feast of St. John the Baptist is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-26. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 158.
238. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's confirmation of 4d. rent from Ecoublanc (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Châteaudun, cme. Marboué) is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-26. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 160.
239. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's confirmation that William of Mogerville had granted the sum of 20s. payable to the abbey of Tiron from the *prepositura* of Nonvilliers during Easter week is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-26. Pd. *Tiron*, No. CCCLXXVII, 160.

240. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's confirmation of his brother Stephen's grant of six measures of grain, three of wheat and three of rye, to be taken at Christmas from the mill at La Poterie (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau) and an annual gift of £8 from the fulling mills of the same town is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-26. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 160.
241. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne's gift of a station of five cups for the stall of Waleran the precentor of Paris cathedral, to be funded from the revenues of three altars to the Saints and Martyrs, Gervase and Prothais and Saint Herbleudis, is recorded in an obituary, 1215-26. Pd. *Obits*, i, (1), 103.
242. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche notifies that William Martin and Albert his brother have sold their interest in the winepress at *Sarbuleria* to the abbey of Les Clairets, 1223. Pd. *Clairets*, no. XXII.
243. William, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's bequest of £40 to feed the poor made from his fulling mills to Isabelle countess of Chartres is recorded in a grant she later made to the abbey of Notre-Dame de l'Eau, 1217-26 probably 1226. Pd. *Cartulaire l'Eau*, no. XXIX.
244. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche acknowledges that, although his clerk William of Eperrais has provided lodging in the priory on one occasion, neither the bishop nor his successors shall have any rights of procuration in the priory of La Chaise, 1225. B=AD Loiret H22, p. 188, no. 298.
245. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche grants a measure of wine in rent to be taken from his vineyard at Nogent-le-Rotrou and confirms the grant of three similar measures made by his brother, Geoffrey count of Perche to the charterhouse of Val Dieu, 1217-26. C=Alençon. Bib. Municipale ms 108, no. 266, f. 61. C2=BN Duchesne 54, p. 450.
246. William, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's establishment of the offices of dean, precentor and treasurer in the collegiate church of Saint-Jean at Nogent-le-Rotrou is recorded in the necrology of the college. To endow them he gave two measures of wheat from his mills at La Poterie (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau) and 100s. tournois from the *prepositura* of Nogent-le-Rotrou for the dean; £10 from the same *prepositura* for the precentor and £12 from the mills of Le Theil for the treasurer, 1217-26. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 13v. Pd. a) *Obits*, ii, 390, b) *Murs, Comtes*, 591-2.
247. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne and count of Perche's confirmation of the grant of £10 payable against the *prepositura* of Mortagne, 100s. on the feast of St. Rémy to light the church at Tiron and another 100s. on the last Sunday...for the anniversary of Geoffrey count of Perche is recorded in the cartulary of Tiron, 1217-27. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCLXXVII, 164.

Beatrix wife of Geoffrey II count of Mortagne

248. Beatrix, countess of Perche's establishment of five canons in the church of Saint-Etienne at Nogent-le-Rotrou to whom she gave the mill at Margon (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou) and a *medietaria* free from comital dues (*ita libere sicut ipsa et Rotrodus filius ejus habebant*) is recorded in her obit at the college of Saint-Jean, c. 1110. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 33. Pd. *Obits*, ii, 398.

Juliana daughter of Geoffrey II count of Mortagne

249. Notice that, in the absence of Count Rotrou, the lady Juliana presided over a sitting of the court at Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou which judged that the millers of Levainville (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Auneau) had no claims over the mill there, 1100-44 probably 1120s. Pd. *NLR*, no. XXVII.

250. Robert of Blainville's grant to the abbey of Tiron of property at Malaise (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Authon, cme. Soizé) is made in the presence of the lady Juliana, *18 February 1116*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. XI.
251. The gift of two arpents of meadow on the river Yerre is made to the abbey of Tiron in the presence of the lady Juliana and her two nieces, Philippa and Felicia by Pagan son of Berlay and his brother Robert, *1117 - c. 1130*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CXLIX.

Robert count of the Perche c. 1144 - c. 1152 second husband of Countess Hawise Matilda

252. Robert count of Perche, son of King Louis, his wife [Hawise-]Matilda and her children, Rotrou, Geoffrey and Stephen concede to the abbey of Saint-Laumer of Blois the grant of half the church of Saint-André of Frétigny (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron) and half of its tithes made by William of Feuillet and its restoration after misappropriation which was made by Rotrou, [illegitimate] son of Rotrou count of Perche, *1144-51*. B=AD Loiret, D668, fos. 9v.-10. Pd. Bouvris, 'Une notice inédite'.

Matilda wife of Rotrou III count of the Perche

253. Matilda countess of Perche notifies Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen that Waleran of Le Pin has settled his dispute with the priory of Bellême by giving up his claim to the advowson of the church at Le Pin-la-Garenne (Orne, ct. Pervençères), *1165-83*. B= AD Orne H2170 coté 3, no. 27. Pd. *CMPerche*, no. 234.
254. Matilda countess of Perche's grant of an annual sum of 20s. from the bakehouse at *Vias* to the chaplains of Saint-Etienne at Nogent-le-Rotrou is recorded in her obit, *c.1150-84*. C=AD Eure-et-Loir G3485, f. 1. Pd. *Obits*, ii, 384.

Stephen son of Rotrou III count of the Perche

255. The grant of Stephen, brother of Geoffrey count of Perche, to Warin the clerk of a measure of salt which he possessed in the *minagium* at Nogent-le-Rotrou is recorded in an obit for Warin, *before 1202*. C=AD Eure et Loir G 3485, foliation unknown. Pd. *Obit*, ii, 389.
256. Stephen of Perche grants to the abbey of Saint-Evroul the entire tithe of *Haia de Foge* (unidentified) that is of its arable land, hay, crops and all fees and revenues except the sale of wood, *before 1202*. B=BN ms. lat. 11056, f. 32v.
257. Stephen of Perche grants six measures of grain, three of wheat and three of rye, to be rendered by the mills of La Poterie (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme Coudreceau) at Christmas and £8 from the fulling mills in the same place, *before 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, 160.
258. Stephen of Perche confirms the grant to the abbey of Tiron of 40s. from the rents of Trizay-au-Perche (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Nogent-le-Rotrou) made by Denis and Robert, Count Rotrou's treasurer, *before 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, pp. 156/7.
259. Stephen of Perche grants the priory of Saint-Denis of Nogent-le-Rotrou a tithe of the pannage of the woodland Maurissure (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Coudreceau and Orne, ct. Rémalard, cme. Condé-sur-Huisne) and exemption from pannage for their own pigs within that wood. He also concedes and approves with his own seal the tithe of the timber clearing granted by his father Count Rotrou, *before 1202 probably 1191-2 in the absence of Rotrou III and Geoffrey III*. Pd. *NLR*, no. XC.
260. Stephen of Perche's grant of 40s. to the Maison-Dieu at Mortagne is recorded in a charter covering benefactions by his brother Geoffrey count of Perche and other lords of Perche, *1195*. Pd. *Bart, Antiquitéz*, 157.
261. John of Fraize's grant of his rights of jurisdiction at Mittainvilliers (Eure-et-Loir, ct. Courville) and in other lands pertaining to the abbey of Saint-Père of Chartres is approved by those to whom the fee pertained, that is Robert of Vieuxpont and Stephen, brother of Count Geoffrey of Perche, *May 1202*. Pd. *SPC*, 670.

262. Stephen of Perche confirms John of Friaze's grant to the cathedral at Chartres of all his jurisdiction (*viariam*) within the cathedral's land and himself gives 50s. chartrain from the revenues of Nonvilliers to fund his *anniversarium*. He also confirms the establishment by the countess Richenza-Matilda of *anniversaria* for herself and his brother, Geoffrey, *Chartres, June 1202*. A=AD Eure-et-Loir G1459. Pd. *NDC*, no. CLX.
263. Stephen of Perche gives to the Templars his holdings at *Arponceit* and a hundred arpents of woodland at La Gatine between *Brimont* (?Brémont, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme. Combres) and Chartres, *probably 1202*. A=AN S4983 no.2. Pd. *Templiers Eure-et-Loir*, no. XXXIV.
264. Stephen of Perche grants to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert of 100s. payable annually on St. Andrew's day from the *prepositura* of Montlandon, *1202*. C=BN Collection Baluze, vol. 38, fo. 232v.
265. Stephen of Perche and the countess Richenza-Matilda confirm Geoffrey of Beaumont's grant of £4 due on the feast of St. Rémy, *before 1202 probably 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCCLXXVII, p. 160.
266. Countess Richenza-Matilda and Stephen of Perche confirm the grant to the abbey of Tiron probably made by Count Geoffrey, which provided £10 a year from the *prepositura* of Mortagne, 100s. on the feast of St Remy to light the church at Tiron and another 100s. on the last Sunday...for the *anniversarium* of Geoffrey count of Perche, *April-June 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCLXXVII, 164.
267. Stephen of Perche grants 20s. dunois to the abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois to be paid annually from the *prepositura* of Rivray, *1202*. C=AD Eure-et-Loir H3907, p. 28.

William son of Rotrou III count of the Perche, later count of the Perche

268. William of Perche provost of the cathedral of Chartres exempts those who attend fairs belonging to the priory of Belhomert from all payments, customs and taxes throughout the chapter lands, *September 1215*. C=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303.
269. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne's grant to the college of Toussaints at Mortagne of £10 to be taken from his mill at Buré (Orne ct. Bazoches-sur-Hoëne), together with 20s. from the *prepositura* at La Perrière is recorded by the antiquarian Léonard Bart des Boulais, *1216*. Pd. Bart, *Antiquitez*, 176, referred to in *LT*, 136.
270. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne guarantees the undertaking given by his nephew, Thomas count of Perche to restore the castle of Marchainville to the king on request, *Melun, March 1217*. A=AN J399, no. 17. B=AN JJ31, f. 37. Pd. i) Bry, *Perche*, 216. ii) *Layettes*, i, no. 1207. iii) *CPA*, no. 1703. iv) Romanet, *Géographie*, ii, 7.
271. William bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne confirms to the priory of Saint-Jean of Ulmois the donation made by Baldwin Taillefer, which consisted of ten *sextaria* of wheat a year from his tithes at *Bugencourt*, and was confirmed by Hugh the castellan of *Vitriacensis*, *May 1217*. Pd. i) *Recueil de Bourgogne*, ed. Perard, 320. ii) Murs, *Comtes*, 596.

Richenza Matilda wife of Geoffrey III count of the Perche

272. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche notifies the gift to the abbey of La Trappe made by Gerald of Les Apres of his property and rights in the land called Barres (Orne, ct. Moulins-la-Marche, cme. Les Genettes) which lies between Fretay (Orne, ct. Tourouvre, cme. Bresolletes) and *Heris'uneaia*. For this concession Gerald received £20 angevin, his eldest son Arnold a chicken, his sons Warin 6s. dunois, Hugh 5s. and Waleran 5s., while his wife Mary received two *sextaria* of grain and his daughter in law, Agnes, the wife of Arnold, a cow. Gerald placed this gift in the countess's hand and she handed it over to the *vicecomes*, giving the monks 100s. in alms herself, *Mortagne 1191*. A=AD Orne H1846. B=BN ms. lat. 11060, f. 133v. Pd. *LT*, p. 458.

273. A lost charter of [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche, in which she undertakes her late husband's debt of 300 marks of silver to William Marshal, is recorded in letters patent of King John, *before 22 April 1202*. Pd. *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, 9b.
274. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche notifies that her husband Count Geoffrey granted to the abbey of Perseigne a burgher, Baldwin Bovet of Nogent-le-Rotrou, who was exempt from all comital exactions, but the count had failed to confirm this gift because of an oversight of the monks [*propter negligentiam eorum*]. The countess, who had been present when the gift was made and consented to it, confirms it, *1202-10*. A=AD Sarthe H930. Pd. *Perseigne*, no. CCCLXV.
275. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche settles with Lawrence Flaaut the outstanding debts of her late husband Geoffrey count of Perche, granting him £300 angevin in the forest of Bellême. She releases him from the obligation he incurred at the count's instruction to the Maison-Dieu at Mortagne, unless she herself is pressed for the same amount which she owes to the abbot and monks of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire. If she is not released from her debt then she and Stephen of Perche will transfer Lawrence's obligation to the house at La Chaise [a priory of Saint-Benoît], *1202*. B=AD Loiret H22, p. 185-6, no. 290.
276. Countess [Richenza] Matilda and Stephen of Perche confirm the grant to the abbey of Tiron probably made by Count Geoffrey, which provided £10 a year from the *prepositura* of Mortagne, 100s. on the feast of St Remy to light the church at Tiron and another 100s. on the last Sunday....for the *anniversarium* of Geoffrey count of Perche, *April-June 1202*. Pd. *Tiron*, no. CCLXXVII, 164.
277. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche grants to the cathedral of Chartres 60s. angevin to endow her own *anniversarium* and 60s. to endow that of her late husband, Geoffrey count of Perche. These sums are to be taken annually on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin from the revenues of Marchainville, which she and Geoffrey acquired together, *Chartres, June 1202*. A=AD Eure-et-Loir G1459. Pd. *NDC*, no. CLIX.
278. Notice of the lost charter of foundation for the college of Toussaints Mortagne given by Countess [Richenza] Matilda is preserved in an inventory of the college's charters. The countess gave a site at Mortagne for the construction of a collegiate church and established there two chaplains to pray for the soul of her husband Geoffrey. She endowed it with £12 from each of the *prepositure* at Moulins-la-Marche and Mortagne and the profits of the fair on St. Andrew's day at Mortagne. A witness list is provided by reference to the act in *Gallia Christiana, Longpont, March 1203*. C=AD Orne IG1071/3, p. 1. Pd. (in part) i) Bart, *Antiquitéz*, 160-1. ii) GC, xi, col. 692.
279. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche notifies that her *domicella* Osanna has bought the land of Meslair from Gervase of Mauchenai and William Flaaut and has been granted seisin of it by Thomas of Fai, *Mauves, July 1203*. C=BN Duchesne 54, p. 454.
280. [Richenza] Matilda countess of Perche notifies the wish of her late husband, Geoffrey count of Perche, to found an abbey at *Boveria* (?Bouvereau, Eure-et-Loir, ct. Thiron, cme Marolles-les-Buis) and her promise to him as he lay on his deathbed that she would carry out his intention. After consultation with both ecclesiastical and lay advisers the countess decided to build the abbey in the woods at Les Clairets and chose to grant it to nuns of the Cistercian order, who were established in the religious life by Reginald bishop of Chartres. The countess then granted the nuns *Boveria* with all its appurtenances and added an annual sum of ten marks payable on the feast of St. Rémy from her manor of Haughley in England, half the mill of Saint Victor [?de Réno], the medietaria of *Ponte* and two arpents of meadow at Le Theil, a burgher at Nogent free from all dues, and the rents from two properties held by Robert Aie and William which lie inside the nuns boundaries. The countess also granted rights to timber, firewood, pasture and pannage for the nuns' pigs in all woodlands except those of Perchet, *La Loupe, July 1204*. Pd. *Clairets*, no. IV.

Enguerrand, count of Perche c. 1203 - 1210, second husband of Countess Richenza Matilda

281. Enguerrand de Coucy, count of Perche [second husband of the countess Richenza-Matilda], with the approval of the chapter of Laon and his cousin, Enguerrand of Terremonde, amends the benefaction of £100 laonnois made by his aunt, Melisende, to establish her *anniversarium*, *January 1206*. A=BN ms. lat. nouv. acq. 2309, no. 38.

Helisendis wife of Thomas count of the Perche

282. Helisendis, countess of Perche grants 50s. tournois from her *prepositura* of Mauves to the Fontevraudine priory of Belhomert for the *anniversarium* of her late husband, Thomas, on the understanding that it is to be held by Hawise of *Sheleio*, who has taken the veil there, during her lifetime, *April 1220*. C=BN ms. franc. 24133, p. 303.

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11 H27/1
11 H128 Cartulaire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Laumer de Blois

Abbey of Pontlevoy
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Abbey of Saint-André-en-Gouffern
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Chartres. Archives Départementales d'Eure-et-Loir

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Abbey of Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois
H3906 Inventaire des Titres et papiers de l'abbaye de Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois
H3907 - Registre de Saint-Vincent-aux-Bois
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Priory of Belhomert
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Priory of Notre-Dame du Desert
G165 Cartulaire de Notre-Dame du Désert

Priory of La Chaise du Theil
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Priory of Gué de Launay
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Abbey of Saint-Vincent du Mans
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Ms. 23 Missale ad usum monasterii S. Dyonisii de Nouigento

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Ms. 11 Cartulaire de Sainte-Gauburge (s. xix copy of AN LL1158)

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