

KEEPING RAPUNZEL: THE MYSTERIOUS GUARDIANSHIP OF JOAN OF  
FLANDERS THE CASE FOR FEUDAL CONSTRAINT

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department  
of History  
University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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By  
Julie M. Sarpy  
December, 2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

This argues that England King Edward III's imprisonment of Joan of Flanders, Duchess of Brittany and Countess de Montfort during the Hundred Years War was not for her so-called madness, but was political. Joan of Flanders, who had led a defense of the castellany of Hennebont that routed the French and saved Montfortist Brittany, abruptly vanished from public life in the Fall of 1343. While it has been presumed that she succumbed to mental illness, the nature of confinement, its secrecy, and its political implications indicate forcible confinement. Conflict broke out in Brittany after a succession crisis that pitted the pro-English Montfortist faction against the Blois-French forces. Joan of Flanders, wife of John de Montfort, came into prominence following her husband's imprisonment. After departing for England with her children, she disappeared from society being sequestered in the Tickhill Castle in Yorkshire, England.

Control of the Honour of Richmond and the Duchy of Brittany are overlooked elements in the captivity of Joan of Flanders. Edward III was suzerain of Brittany and he had the heirs, Joan's children, in royal wardship. Moreover, the date of John de Montfort's release from prison and whether he was an Earl or a Count of Richmond are essential to the story. For more than a half-century, English kings had been trying to reclaim the Honour of Richmond. The curious timing of Joan of Flanders' castle confinement relative to John of Gaunt's creation as Earl of Richmond in her husband's place reveals the motivations of Edward III in his war with France and desire for English hegemony on the continent. Edward III was not above neutralizing an opponent for political expediency, whether enemy, ward or widow. A political pawn in Edward III's quest to recapture the Angevin Empire, Joan of Flanders fell victim to the politics of fourteenth-century war and conflict.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### The Lion in a Yorkshire Bailiwick: Perspectives of Joan of Flanders

Joan of Flanders<sup>1</sup> has yet to find her historian. One wonders how such a remarkable woman has been lost to the ages and ostensibly marginalized. For Joan of Flanders, Countess of Montfort and Richmond, Duchess of Brittany, was, in her time, the heroine of Hennebont, pivotal siege during the first half of the *Breton Civil War* (1341-1365) that prevented the French from taking over Brittany and routing the English early in the *Hundred Years' War* (1337-1453). That was no small feat for anyone, especially a fourteenth-century woman. In fact, she seems to have been rather exceptional in many ways. Medieval French chronicler and contemporary *Jean Froissart* professed Joan of Flanders, “to possess the courage of a man and the heart of a lion.”<sup>2</sup> Breton historian Dom Lobineau said of the Countess de Montfort, “no adversity could crush her. Her consistency in the most desperate circumstances always reassured those who attached [themselves] to her.”<sup>3</sup> She had marshaled men and resources, unlike her rival the Breton-French Jeanne de Penthievre. During her husband’s imprisonment she kept Brittany from falling to the troops of Charles de Blois, Jeanne de Penthievre’s husband. She rallied her husband’s supporters, the pro-English Montfortist

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<sup>1</sup> Author will use the anglicized versions of names when referring to Joan of Flanders, her husband Duke John de Montfort and their children Duke John IV and Joan of Brittany (Joan de Bretagne, Joan Basset), Baroness Drayton. Otherwise, author will use French or respective vernacular names when referring to historic persons in the text. Author will explain the heritage and ancestry Joan of Flanders’ and John de Montfort in Chapters One and Two.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II to the Coronation of Henry IV*, in Medievalist Educational Project, ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), 1:277. “coer d’homme de lion” Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres de Froissart: publiées avec les variantes des divers manuscrits*, in Internet Archive, eds. Joseph Marie Bruno Constantin, Kervyn de Lettenhove, and Auguste Scheler (Bruxelles: V. Devaux, 1867), 3: 373, 416. Froissart frequently referred to Joan of Flanders as having the “heart of a lion and courage of a man.” In almost every new reference to the Countess de Montfort, he noted that phrase.

<sup>3</sup> Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne: Composée sur les Titres & les Auteurs Originaux*, in Hathitrust Digital Library (Paris: F. Muguet, 1707), 1: 320.

faction, in his absence during the siege of Hennebont and secured the safety of his heirs in England with the aid of King Edward III.

In some ways Joan of Flanders was predestined for notability not necessarily because of her gallantry that would not manifest until later in life, but because of the feudal politics of Flanders and Brittany in the fourteenth century. Around the time of her birth in 1298, Flanders had been in crisis for nearly a half-century. A feudatory of the French crown since 862, medieval Flanders was integral to the industrial wealth of France and the commercial wealth of England, because of its textile industry and wool manufacturing. Economically dependent on England, Flemish merchants and consequently Flemish nobility were often at odds with an increasingly hegemonic France. To achieve total autonomy, Flanders began to break away from France in the 1290s primarily on economic grounds with English support.<sup>4</sup> The Flemish militia largely drawn from peasants and workers had won a stunning victory at the Battle of Courtrai in 1302, but this was a temporary success with no lasting resolution upon which the Flemish counts could capitalize.<sup>5</sup>

Count Robert III of Flanders (1249-1322) was unwilling to meet the onerous and punitive financial conditions of the truce and spent the next sixteen years in rebellion with France. His son, Joan of Flanders' father, the largely unsuccessful Louis of Nevers, had been a disaster in most of his endeavors. His notoriously bad marriage to her mother Countess Jeanne of Rethel, his failed candidacy to become Holy Roman Emperor in 1314, and that he

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard. *Capetian France: 987-1328*, (New York: Longman, 2001), 307.

<sup>5</sup> Battle of Courtrai or Battle of the Golden Spurs, July 11, 1302 was a stunning and resounding French defeat by the Flemish comital forces largely composed of artisans and craftsmen. Henry Lucas, "The Low Countries and the Disputed Imperial Election of 1314," *Speculum* 21, no. 1 (1946): 76; J. F. Verbruggen, and Kelly DeVries. *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302) A Contribution to the History of Flanders' War of Liberation, 1297-1305*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), xxiii.



held no comital authority in Flanders, all gave others pause in their dealings with him.<sup>6</sup> The breakdown in the international status quo between England and France only exacerbated the problems between the Flemish counts and Capetian kings.

It was Joan of Flanders' brother, Louis I of Flanders, who negotiated her 1329 marriage to John de Montfort (c. 1293-1345), son of Arthur II the late Duke of Brittany.<sup>7</sup> At the time of their nuptials, John de Montfort was not the Earl of Richmond, much less the Duke of Brittany. However, Joan's union to the half-brother of the current duke was not as disadvantageous as it seemed, for Duke Jean III of Brittany was childless, even after three marriages. Upon the duke's death, a succession contest was inevitable between John de Montfort and the late duke's niece and heir, Jeanne de Penthièvre and her husband Charles de Blois, Phillippe VI of France's nephew. However, this crisis took on larger implications with the increasing hostilities between England and France in the mid-fourteenth century. The Dukes of Brittany, like the Counts of Flanders, were vassals of the Kings of France with strategic importance and strong ties to England. The Dukes of Brittany had been tenants-in-chief of the English Crown since the Norman Conquest<sup>8</sup> and Brittany's maritime outlets were highly desirable for English military and commercial traffic from Aquitaine (Guyenne).<sup>9</sup> As fate would have it, the death of Duke Jean III in conjunction with the civil war and

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<sup>6</sup> Louis of Nevers' nomination to succeed Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII was never seriously considered for many character flaws. Dying in the same year as Count Robert, he did not succeed his father to the comital throne of Flanders, but his son Louis I of Flanders, Nevers and Rethel did. Lucas, *The Low Countries*, 79-89; David M Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, (Longman: Longman, 1992), 442.

<sup>7</sup> George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*. (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 10: 820-21.

<sup>8</sup> Contacts between the Bretons and Anglo-Normans predated the eleventh-century through intermarriage between the Dukes of Normandy and Dukes of Brittany. Judith Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins Province and Empire, 1158-1203* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War, C. 1300-C. 1450*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 14.

imprisonment of her husband, catapulted Joan of Flanders into prominence as the wife of the claimant to the ducal crown.

Joan of Flanders's did not necessarily seek the limelight; it was thrust upon her after her husband's arrest, following the judgment of the French Court of Peers against his claim to the ducal crown. It was at that moment, with the responsibility of her husband's and moreover her son's claims in her hands, that she took up the Montfortist cause. For months, she organized the resistance, motivated dispirited partisans, and pressed her husband's case in appeals to England for support.<sup>10</sup> In late spring 1342, her valiant efforts culminated in a full-throated defense of the castellany of Hennebont. In full armor astride a horse with her infant son at her side, she took command of the siege and spurred on the Montfortist forces to victory against the Blois-Penthièvre faction. With Joan of Flanders mobilizing the Breton forces and Edward III leading the English troops, the Montfortists propelled the French onslaught and won the first round in the Breton Civil War. In 1343, she and her children left Brittany for England in exile from which she was never to return.

For the rest of her life, Joan of Flanders' fate was not in her hands. In short order, Edward III abruptly moved her from London to Tickhill Castle, Yorkshire,<sup>11</sup> while leaving her very young children John (1339-1399) and Joan (1341-1402) in the care of his wife Queen Philippa of England.<sup>12</sup> When John de Montfort died in Brittany in 1345, having never seen his family again, Edward III became the guardian of his heirs and the de facto ruler of Brittany. He administered ducal affairs in the name of his ward John of Brittany, managed

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<sup>10</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901), 1340-1343, 380, 454. Referred to as *CPR* thereafter.

<sup>11</sup> Joan of Flanders was detained in Tickhill Castle "by our order" of Edward III, *CPR, 1343-1345*, 331; *1345-1348*, 211.

<sup>12</sup> Infants of Brittany, John and Joan of Brittany, *CPR, 1345-1348*, 74/

the civil war, and arranged the marriages of John and his sister to English subjects. John of Brittany succeeded in becoming duke in 1362, ultimately governing successfully. While these events occurred Joan of Flanders took a back seat not by choice, but under the auspices of others being sequestered in Tickhill Castle under the regime of various constables and keepers. She died in obscurity around 1373.<sup>13</sup>

Joan of Flanders disappeared from public life for no apparent reason. Historians have theorized from the existing records that Joan's absence from political life had something to do with mental illness. Little evidence of her life remains after 1343 beyond the memoranda in the fourteenth-century English Letters Patent.<sup>14</sup> However, I will argue that her confinement in England was not due to mental defect, but that she was a political prisoner held against her will at the hands of Edward III of England.

## **Themes**

Joan of Flanders played an integral part in the Breton Civil and her legacy shaped the destiny of Brittany and the later Middle Ages; consequently, her political imprisonment matters as a warning for us all. Forcible confinement in times of war was not uncommon then as it is not now. War changes everything. The willingness of peoples to implore organized legal violence upon one another is an inherent upending of social order. Even today's headlines are replete with stories of subjugation, imprisonment and detention where the law offers little or no protection. Women, like Joan of Flanders, have often found

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<sup>13</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 821.

<sup>14</sup> Letters Patent refers to any legal administrative action, award, grant, payment or endowment made by a monarch or institution that is published.

themselves in the middle of conflict, whether as victims or *viragos*,<sup>15</sup> there is no human activity from which half of the population can escape.

In the Middle Ages, the scope of royal power and prerogative was limitless and juxtaposed onto wartime, social norms, conventions, and proprieties would inherently be compromised. Although, the captivity of noblewomen and men would have been highly unorthodox, it reflected the intersection between power, privilege and the law in the medieval world. Social status, national allegiance and stage of life affected the chances of imprisonment as well as the relevant legal rules and customs and extent of constitutional development in medieval England.<sup>16</sup> Thus any discussion of the imprisonment of Joan of Flanders must take place against a broader discussion of power, protection and war. What happened when the power that be afforded a person no protection? Whether it be wartime or not, is it acceptable? The guardianship of Joan of Flanders is s a cautionary tale. If the imprisonment of someone with as much aplomb and notoriety as the Duchess of Brittany can occur, it can happen to you too. And no one is safe.

## **The Study**

This dissertation strives to set the record straight about Joan of Flanders through a fresh reading of legal and administrative records, narrative accounts, comparative studies, and historical scholarship. It seeks to reveal the pretense of her guardianship and the means by which Edward III of England perpetrated a hoax. Foremost, this study reconciles the events (separating fact from fiction) of Joan of Flanders' life after October 1343 when she retired to

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<sup>15</sup> Competent woman of affairs (administrative, political and political).

<sup>16</sup> Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, C.1170-1509*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), backmatter.

Yorkshire.<sup>17</sup> Most centrally it demonstrates that her captivity at the hands of Edward III was purposeful, politically-motivated, and not uncommon for the time period. Unfortunately, it seems modern scholarship has been complicit in the sully of her reputation. This dissertation has sought to be a course correction.

The control of the Richmond dower is central to Joan of Flanders' captivity. The date of John de Montfort's release from prison and whether he was an Earl or a Count of Richmond have been overlooked elements in the story of her confinement. Since the death of Jean de Bretagne, the younger son of Duke Jean II of Brittany in 1334, English kings had been trying to reclaim the Honour of Richmond. The curious timing of Joan of Flanders' castle confinement relative to John of Gaunt's<sup>18</sup> creation as Earl of Richmond reveals the motivations of Edward III in his war with France and desire for English hegemony on the continent. Edward III was not above neutralizing an opponent for political expediency, whether enemy, ward or widow.

My study opens with a discussion of Joan of Flanders' family, Norman heritage, her political reality, and her son's rule. The early years of Joan's life are undisputed; however, her son's minority is almost as arcane as her confinement. Edward III left a lasting impression upon Joan of Flanders and her children. The government of Brittany for at least twenty years after her death in 1373 was as much Montfortist as it was Plantagenet. The Duchess of Brittany's valiant efforts at Hennebont are discussed here, not just for their contribution to the records but as proof of her competence and capability.

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<sup>17</sup> The first recorded date in the Issue Rolls of Edward III of the Duchess of Brittany and her household being maintained by a Constable of Tickhill Castle by William Frank. Author will discuss in detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>18</sup> Edward III' of England's third son

*Chapter three* provides some background on the *Hundred Years' War* and *Breton War of Succession*. The *Hundred Years' War* was a cousin's war, intensely personal for its central figures, the Capetians and Plantagenets, and ultimately dominated the socio-political dynamics of Europe for 150 years. Alliances and familial ties shaped royal polity and the *Breton Civil War* was a volley in this contest between England and France. The *Hundred Years' War* amplified the Breton succession crisis. The question was not as simple as: who was the rightful ruler of Brittany? Juxtaposed against a continental war, the questions were: was Brittany a French fief or an English one? Who was the rightful King of France? Who controlled the trade routes between the Low Countries and Spain? These conflicts brought Joan of Flanders into prominence and sowed the seeds of her confinement.

*Chapter Four* examines the madness theory of Joan of Flanders. It discusses the evidence for it and against. It focuses on madness, women, and use of insanity as a political tool. It examines the history of *custodia* and *garde* from the earliest legal constructs in Roman and canon law to their application in feudal society. Moreover, it analyzes the means by which a lord through lordship manipulated the involuntary constraint of the vulnerable. The administration of such practices required the decision-making of the central authorities in Westminster as well as representatives in the localities to carry out those judgments. While these conventions functioned efficiently in England as the case of Emma de Beston will illustrate, they were often complicated by unforeseen events. A full exposition is given to Frossiart's take on Joan of Flanders and that of Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie. Moreover a

## Hundred Years' War Capetian and Plantagenet Kings with Brittany<sup>19</sup>

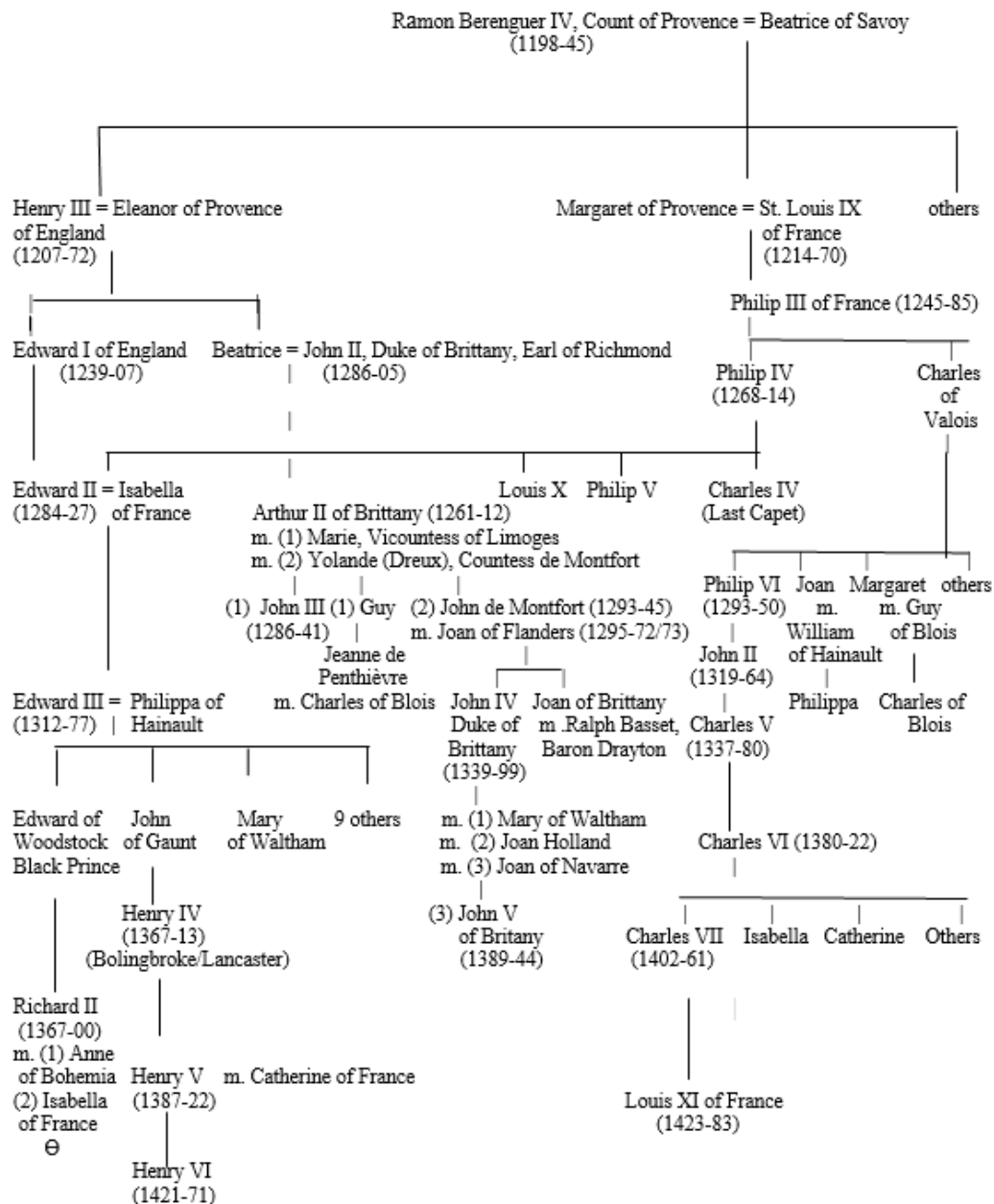


Table 1. A table of the relations between the Houses of Plantagenet, Capet and de Montfort

<sup>19</sup> Table 1, This is a simplified genealogy and some births and marriages do not appear on the table. The degree of intermarriage was more than could be shown in one table. For example, Richard II of England's first wife Anne of Bohemia was the step-granddaughter of Charles of Valois by his daughter Blanche of Valois and Yolande de Dreux was Queen consort of Scotland prior to her marriage to Arthur II of Brittany. Author uses the symbol Ø for the termination of a line of descent.

comparison is made between Joan of Flanders and Charles VI of France whose mental illness was widely known.

*Chapter Five* explores the omission of Joan of Flanders competency determination. By law, she should have had an investigation or hearing but she did not. Regardless of class, the competency hearing and a legal determination of insanity was justification for placing a mentally incompetent into guardianship and without one was unlawful. This dissertation brings in documented evidence of idiocy inquests, as the examinations were called, and highlights their importance as the lynchpin upon which legal guardianship turned. *Chapter Six* analyzes the political purposes of non-judicial confinement and captivity. More often than not there was an ulterior motive for the sequestering of women (rebellion, treason, profit). In comparing the constraint of the Bruce women, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and even Eleanor of Brittany the truth about Joan of Flanders can be gleaned.

*Chapter Seven* presents my thesis as to what ultimately happened to Joan of Flanders. This chapter details the likely conditions of Joan's confinement (provisions) and security measures that Edward III would have imposed. The captivities of Robert Curthose and Charles de Blois mirror important aspects of Joan of Flanders' detention and offers insight into the honorable treatment that she received. There was an aborted rescue attempt of Joan of Flanders in 1347; thus, some contemporaries had an idea that her interminable custody was unjust. Yet, she lived out the remainder of her life presumably in obscurity.

*Chapter Eight* provides final thoughts for more study on Joan and the Middle Ages. Her life played out against the backdrop of a Hundred Years' War fraught with chaos, turmoil, and bloodshed. This study ultimately has sought to understand the behind the scenes political



machinations that constrained medieval women, in particular, and shaped our knowledge and perspectives of them. As the “*Précis de Jeanne de Flandres*” eloquently states of Joan:

“...from birth, she had a spirit that was prepared to lead with caution and courage that history rarely has an opportunity to celebrate and that nature seemingly formed to reign over hearts, as well as to fight men. Without a doubt, those actions were illustrative of the life of Joan of Flanders, Countess of Montfort, and rightfully should interest us.”<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, Joan of Flanders’ narrative has been lost for generations, but the trajectory is not irreversible.

### **A Note on Methodology and Sources**

Joan of Flanders’ confinement provides historians with a situation through which to consider the variant degree of incarceration in medieval practice. My work builds on a rich theoretical discourse considering the carceral topography of confinement. Carceral topography, according to Monika Fludernik, refers to the situation or placement of a body that is contained, chained, or restrained by force or command. At times under the direct order of Edward III, his Council and Writ of Privy Seal, Joan of Flanders was held captive in England without freedom of movement. Whether it was called benevolent protection or not is irrelevant; she was imprisoned and this shaped her outlook and the context in which historians should view her. If one looks at a container as a prison, according to carceral topography, the reason for containment is irrelevant. What matters is the imprisonment itself with the symbolic functionalization of walls, bars, doors, and windows. Access to the outside through bars, doors, windows and even walls represents freedom and becomes

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<sup>20</sup> “mais elles ont vu naître celle qui en fut l'ame, qui sut les preparer et les conduire avec une prudence et un courage que l'histoire a rarement eu l'occasion de celebrer dans un sexe que la nature semble avoir formé pour régner sur les coeurs, plutôt que pour combattre les hommes. A ce titre, sans doute les actions qui ont illustré la vie de Jeanne de Flandre, comtesse de Montfort, ont droit de nous intéresser.” Lesbroussart, “*Précis Historique de Jeanne de Flandres*,” 1:237.

imaginary scenarios of transcendence.<sup>21</sup> Thus, a carceral space may be physical like a prison or metaphysical inasmuch that the power structures have imposed boundaries upon someone.

Using French philosopher Michel Foucault's panopticon<sup>22</sup> as a model, this study did not limit the concept of Joan of Flanders' captivity to physical imprisonment or legal guardianship, but rather sought to define her custodial arrangement as whatever Edward III determined it to be. Foucault suggested that there were two forms of state-sanctioned penal confinement in a classical system. One model involved the physical manipulation of a subject through discipline by authorities. The other model was more psychological where:

the punishment-body relation is not the same as it was in the torture during public executions. The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty. From being an art of unbearable sensations punishment has become an economy of suspended rights.<sup>23</sup>

Suspended rights were not uncommon in the fourteenth century, as Edward III like his predecessors took advantage of attainder and the extra-judicial imprisonment of political foes.

The sources examined here on Joan of Flanders are sparse and conflicted. Those writing closest to the events of her life never questioned her constitution or resolve. Contemporary

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<sup>21</sup> Monika Fludernik, "Carceral Topography: Spatiality, liminality and Corporality in the Literary Prison, " *Textual Practice* 13, no. 1 (1999), 46.

<sup>22</sup> State-imposed or state-sanctioned incarceration and/or surveillance.

<sup>23</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Random House LLC, 1977), 11.

chroniclers *Adam Murimuth* (1274/75- 1347)<sup>24</sup> and *Froissart* (c.1337-c.1405)<sup>25</sup> validated her heroism and valor. Those historians writing a few centuries after her death, such as Dom Guy Alexis Lobineau (1666–1727)<sup>26</sup> and Pierre Morice (1693-1750),<sup>27</sup> took a decidedly positive view of Joan of Flanders throughout their works without reservation. Nineteenth-century Belgian historian Jean-Baptiste Lesbroussart in his “Précis de Jeanne de Flandres” for the *Mémoires de l’Académie Royale de Brussels* stated that she would not tamely relinquish a fight.<sup>28</sup> Joan of Flanders navigated a fine line between the social constraints of medieval patriarchy and the necessity of her leadership.

## **Manuscripts**

Medieval public records pertaining to the Exchequer are available in manuscript form. The National Archives in London houses Her Majesty’s public records formerly located in the Public Record Office. These are invaluable for their information regarding the Crown’s expenditures. The *Exchequer of Receipt: Issue Rolls and Registers* or *Issue Rolls* recorded

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<sup>24</sup> Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: University Press 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II to the Coronation of Henry IV*, in Medievalist Educational Project, ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805); *Oeuvres de Froissart: publiées avec les variantes des divers manuscrits*, in Internet Archive, eds. Joseph Marie Bruno Constantin, Kervyn de Lettenhove, and Auguste Scheler (Bruxelles: V. Devaux, 1867) ; Jean Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicles*. ed. and trans. John Jolliffe (London: P. Harvill, 1967).

<sup>26</sup> Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne: composée sur les titres & les auteurs originaux*, in Hathitrust Digital Library (Paris: F. Muguet, 1707).

<sup>27</sup> Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Mémoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne*, Gallica Bibliothèque nationale de France digital archive (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742). Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, “Histoire de Bretagne,” in *L'histoire Ecclesiastique et Civile de Bretagne: composée sur les auteurs et les titres originaux, ornée de divers monumens, & enrichie d'une dissertation sur l'établissement des Bretons dans l'Armorique, & de plusieurs notes critiques* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Delaguette, 1750).

<sup>28</sup> A play on the Froissart phrase “courage of a man and heart of a lion,” Jean-Baptiste Lesbroussart, “Précis Historique de Jeanne de Flandres: Mère de Jean IV, Duc de Bretagne, Surnommé le Conquérant,” in *Nouveaux Mémoires De L'Académie Impériale et Royale Des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles*, (Brussels: Académie de Bruxelles, 1820), 1:241.

payments from the Crown, the name of the payee, reason, and date. Payments from the King of England or the Privy Council to Joan of Flanders' custodians appear in these records. While some of the information from the *Issue Rolls* and *Patent Letters* overlaps thereby corroborating each other, the *Issue Rolls* were solely receipts for payment made. Similarly, the *King's Remembrancer: Accounts Various* comprised payments made "on account" held by the Crown disbursed by the King's Remembrancer's Office. Those records contain a registry of payments made to Thomas de Haukeston and Godfrey Foljambe for the sustenance of the Duchess of Brittany. Not all of these records have been digitized and requests have to be made to The National Archives to obtain copies of specific memoranda.

### **Printed Primary Sources**

#### **Narrative and Literary**

Any discussion of the missing parts of Joan of Flanders' life must begin with the facts that are indisputable as reported by the chroniclers. Jean Froissart (c.1337-c.1405) was a poet and court historian. His *Chronicles*, besides their noteworthiness for their fourteenth-century chivalric accounts, remain the single most important contemporary narrative about the first half of the *Hundred Years' War*, the main subject of his chronicles. Froissart used his privileged position as scholar to Queen Philippa of England (Philippa of Hainaut) and King Edward III of England to observe the key actors and events and record the happenings first-hand. His four Books covered the significant events, i.e. battles, festivals, funerals, weddings from 1325 to 1400. "More than 150 manuscript volumes containing the *Chronicles* have survived in more than 30 different libraries across Europe and North America. Of the four

Books of the *Chronicles*, the first three exist in substantially different versions.”<sup>29</sup> Combine the differences in recorded events with the fact that some versions followed the accounts of chronicler Jean le Bel and others do not, it can be argued that the *Chronicles* are not a purely authoritative source.

Jean Froissart, not entirely unbiased given his patrons, took a favorable view of Joan of Flanders. On numerous occasions, he professed her to have the “heart of a lion” and he even stated that she orchestrated her husband’s expedient acclamation as Duke of Brittany in late May 1341.<sup>30</sup> Froissart attributed all of the success of the siege of Hennebont to Joan who, “had planned and executed this enterprise, whilst the whole of the town had not known what had become of her [and] were very uneasy....”<sup>31</sup> The *Chronicles* contain some historical inaccuracies and Froissart may have taken some dramatic license with the life of Joan of Flanders after her departure from France. Perhaps it was his admiration for Joan’s valor that encouraged his embellishment.

Adam Murimuth (1274/75- 1347) was an English ecclesiastic and chronicler educated in civil law at the University of Oxford. Murimuth’s *Continuatio Chronicarum*, which covered a forty-four year period from 1303-1347, was designed to be a continuation of other histories, including the *Annales Paulini* and *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*. Regarding Joan of Flanders, it is the latter years of Murimuth’s *Chronicarum* that are the

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<sup>29</sup> “Home,” The Online Froissart: A Digital Edition of the Chronicles of Jean Froissart, last modified December 20, 2013, accessed December 24, 2014, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/index.jsp>.

<sup>30</sup> “Upon taking counsel together, he and his wife, who had the heart of a lion, [managed] a great feat at Nantes.” Froissart recounted the expeditious manner in which John de Montfort installed himself as Duke of Brittany as soon as he heard that his half-brother, the childless Duke John III, was dead. Author will discuss the succession crisis in detail in Chapter Three; however, Froissart indicated the actions of John and Joan were swift and deliberative. Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II. to the Coronation of Henry IV.* ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), 1:253.

<sup>31</sup> Froissart, *Chronicles*, 1:303.

most relevant. In that portion, Murimuth recounted the deeds and the early campaigns of Edward III in the Hundred Year's War. Adam Murimuth's work offers more insight into Edward III's strategy in France.

The *Chronographia regum Francorum*<sup>32</sup> or the Latin chronicle of French kings (ca. 1405-29) covers the reigns of the French kings from the origins of the Franks to 1405. It references Joan of Flanders infrequently, although it buttresses Froissart's thesis that Joan of Flanders was the architect of her husband's accession to the ducal throne in 1341 and engineered the Montfortist war policy in 1342.

## **Folklore**

### **Ballads**

Born out of the chivalric tradition of Breton Romance, troubadours composed a ballad to Joan of Flanders entitled *Jean O' the Flame* (Breton **Jannedik Flamm**). Its date is unknown. French philologist Théodore Claude Henri, Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarqué (1815–1895) attributed the ballad to a wandering blind beggar Guillarm Artfol.<sup>33</sup> The ballad that Tom Taylor and Laura Wilson (Barker) Taylor have translated into English extolled the might and tour de force of Joan of Flanders, for she reduced her enemies (Gauls) to ashes.<sup>34</sup> In his introduction, Villemarqué made a notable comparison of Joan to Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa, a modern reference for his audience.<sup>35</sup>

### **Romance**

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<sup>32</sup> Henri Moranvillé, ed. and trans., *Chronographia regum Francorum* in Internet Archive (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1891).

<sup>33</sup> Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Ballads and Songs of Brittany*, eds. and trans. Tom Taylor, and Laura Wilson (Barker) Taylor (London: Macmillan and Co, 1865), 135.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Like Maria Theresa in later times, presented herself with her infant in her arms," Ibid.

The *Roman de Comtesse de Montfort*<sup>36</sup> offers a colorful account of the exploits of Joan of Flanders. Loaded with intimate details, it purports to be an insiders' perspective on the real Countess de Montfort with all the particulars that the general reader wanted. Compiled by French historian Nicolas Lenglet Du Fresnoy in 1746 in his *Recueil de Romans Historiques*, its author is anonymous. With its recounting of the private life of Countess de Montfort, the intimate goings-on in Brittany and intrigues of her *familia* while in England, it provides some context into the cult of personality surrounding Joan of Flanders.

### **Public Records**

To reconstruct, the legal and social status of Joan of Flanders and other persons subject to lordship<sup>37</sup> or royal prerogative in feudal England, i.e. women, children, and mentally incompetent, this dissertation examined medieval legal, diplomatic, and administrative records. For someone of Joan's station, these documents with memoranda about prerogative wardship, guardianship, inheritance, and land tenure, were important for their insight into the management of the vulnerable in the Middle Ages. Deservedly or not, some scholars have considered Joan of Flanders to be mentally ill. Therefore, it is important to analyze the particulars of this type of protection. Both royal officials and the courts produced summaries of cases, rulings, and administrative actions in the *rolls*. They were long sheets of parchment sewn together, kept rolled, and included those records kept by the king's itinerant Justices of

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<sup>36</sup> Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy, ed., "Roman de Comtesse de Montfort," in *Recueil De Romans Historiques*, in Internet Archives (Paris: Londres, 1746).

<sup>37</sup> Lordship, *custodia* or garde, wardship, guardianship are quasi-legal terms relating to the conservatorship or protection of certain classes of people considered to be vulnerable by law and thus subject to royal or seigniorial administration of their assets and/or person.

the Peace who presided over the traveling courts in the counties.<sup>38</sup> These summaries were categorized such that the authorities could keep track of applicable laws and case findings.

In addition to court summaries and memoranda, the rolls and letters provided important details of individual cases and the manner in which the Crown, Exchequer, and other jurisdictional bodies worked together with and informed the material parties (commissioners, sheriffs, escheators, and accused or other claimants).<sup>39</sup> The *Calendar of Fine Rolls*,<sup>40</sup> the *Calendar of Liberate Rolls*,<sup>41</sup> the *Calendar of Memoranda Rolls*,<sup>42</sup> the *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*,<sup>43</sup> and the *Calendar of Inquisition post mortem* were the most germane to this study. While the *Calendars of Fine, Liberate, and Memoranda Rolls* are more administrative in nature, the *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, and the *Calendar of Inquisition post mortem*<sup>44</sup> pertain to investigations and/or cases involving the mentally incompetent or extraordinary circumstances.

The *Letters Close*<sup>45</sup> and *Letters Patent*<sup>46</sup> were the most referenced administrative documents in this discussion of Joan of Flanders. They provide context in the form of descriptions of mental conditions, family members' and guardians' names, inventories of

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<sup>38</sup> Wendy J. Tuner, " 'Afflicted with insanity': The Care and Custody of the Feeble minded in Late Medieval England," PhD diss., (University of California, Los Angeles, 2000), 8.

<sup>39</sup> All of the court officials and their various roles will be discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>40</sup> *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227-1485*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1911-1962).

<sup>41</sup> *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1226-1272*, in Internet Archive (London: H.M.S.O., 1917-64).

<sup>42</sup> *Calendar of Memoranda Rolls (Exchequer) Preserved in the Public Record Office: Michaelmas 1326-Michaelmas 1327*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources. (London: H.M.S.O., 1964).

<sup>43</sup> *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery), Henry III- Richard II*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1916-1968).

<sup>44</sup> *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office* in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1904-1970)

<sup>45</sup> *Calendar of the Close Rolls of Edward III, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1896).

<sup>46</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1216-1509*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901).



land holdings, dates of birth and the onset of maladies that are relevant for comparative study. “The Letters Patent and Letters Close were generated when the king ordered some type of action such as an appointment, a grant, a protection, a writ, or a letter of introduction or of safe-conduct.”<sup>47</sup> Cross-referencing all of these documents developed a fuller picture of means by which the procedures and protocols of protection routinely worked and thus made Joan of Flanders’ custody more noticeable as an outlier.

Thomas Rymer’s *Foedera*<sup>48</sup> is a collection of state documents and papers that pertained to “all the leagues, treaties, alliances, capitulations, and confederacies, which had been made between the Crown of England since the Norman Conquest and any other kingdoms, princes and/or states.”<sup>49</sup> Thomas Rymer (1641-1713) was an English historiographer royal and in 1692 King William III of England selected Rymer to compile and edit all of England’s past treaties since 1066. The first volume published in 1704, the multivolume work was completed posthumously by Rymer’s successor. As this work essentially is a catalog, Rymer took no opinion of Joan of Flanders. However, the *Foedera* provides corroborating evidence in the form of dates and events that give credence to the whereabouts of the Breton ducal family and other important individuals. It is a supporting document. The *Foedera* not only relates to continental diplomacy but includes Anglo-

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<sup>47</sup> Turner, " 'Afflicted with insanity,' " 9.

<sup>48</sup> Treaties; Its full title is *Foedera, conventiones, literae, et cujuscumque generis acta publica inter reges Angliae, et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, vel communitates*.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Rymer stated the *Foedera* was to be the most comprehensive catalogue of English foreign relations.

Scottish arrangements. It contains useful background information in regards to the captivity of the Bruce women,<sup>50</sup> which was relevant for this study.

Dom Guy Alexis Lobineau (1666–1727), a Benedictine monk and Breton historian, composed his two-volume history of Brittany *Histoire de Bretagne* published in 1707 from state papers and the disparate historical documents found in Brittany, Flanders, and France. A devoted Maurist, he wrote according to the strictest ecclesiastical and historical scholarship guidelines of his order. Exaggerations and falsehoods would have been grounds for censure, reprimand, if not expulsion. After his death, his papers were placed under seal by the Parlement of Brittany and ultimately found their way into the hands of Pierre Morice, who authenticated and added to them. Lobineau praised Joan of Flanders' accomplishments, including her military skills and diplomacy and indicated that she rightfully deserved her place in Breton history, despite being Flemish.

The *Mémoires pour Servir de Preuves à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Bretagne* or the *Memoirs to Serve as Evidence in the Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Brittany* is a collection of provincial records compiled by Breton historian Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice de Beaubois. Dom Morice (1693-1750) cataloged these documents from various sources (much of them Lobineau's research) and state papers into a three-volume history published in 1742, 1744, and 1746. These folios later became the basis for his book *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Bretagne*. The memoirs offer background into the intricacies and minutia of the Breton Civil War with supporting documentation. These memoirs provide context such as the details of the broken pre-contract between Jeanne de Penthièvre, wife of the rival Breton

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<sup>50</sup> The English captivity and imprisonment of twelve-year-old Marjorie Bruce, Elizabeth Bruce, Isabel Bruce and Christian, the daughter, wife, and sisters of Robert Bruce shall be discussed in Chapter Six. The harsh treatment of Scottish heiresses was a point of contrast to the accommodations of the Duchess of Brittany.

claimant to John de Montfort, and Edward III of England's deceased younger brother John of Eltham.<sup>51</sup> If the marriage had occurred, it is questionable which side England would have supported.

In Morice's first volume of his *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Bretagne*, published the same year as his death, he took a decidedly nationalist view of Joan of Flanders. He says that "she was above her sex and yielded to no one in courage and military virtue."<sup>52</sup> Imbued with eighteenth-century French<sup>53</sup> nationalism and in the spirit of Marianne,<sup>54</sup> he refers to the Countess de Montfort as vigorous, unwavering, and with dressage and swordsmanship better than experienced men-at-arms. His partisan attitudes permeate throughout his writings as he blamed the English for Joan's summary detention. Nevertheless, both Lobineau and Morice tried to synthesize the sparse and fragmentary literary and documentary sources on the Breton Civil War from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries into scholarly *précises*. However, the authoritativeness of their histories has to be weighed against Froissart's synopsis for points of consistency

## Statutes

Medieval guardianship emanated from Roman law, and the primary existing sources of Roman law were the fifth-century *Twelve Tables*. Possibly the earliest written Roman

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<sup>51</sup> In 1334, Edward III had contracted the marriage between Jeanne de Penthièvre and John of Eltham. The contract was voided when John died unexpectedly of fever later that same year. Morice, Pierre-Hyacinthe, *Memoires pour Servir de Preuves à l'histoire Ecclesiastique et Civile de Bretagne, Tirés des Archives de cette Province, e celles de France & d'Angleterre, des Recueils de Plusieurs Sçavans Antiquaires, & mis en Ordre*, (Paris: C. Osmont, 1746), i: col. 1375.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Bretagne*, (Farnborough: Gregg, 1968), 1: 253.

<sup>53</sup> Pierre Morice empathized Joan's genealogy and French heritage through her father Count Louis Count of Nevers to the House of Burgundy. While no doubt he felt as Joan's compatriot with their shared Breton roots, the Duchy of Brittany had been unified with France since 1491 with the marriage of the last regnant, Anne of Brittany to Charles VIII of France.

<sup>54</sup> French national icon and heroine

legislation, the *Twelve Tables* reflected Classical Period attitudes about vulnerability of which mental incompetency and womanhood were both forms. As there was no differentiation in disability under the law, Roman society viewed all impairment (physical, mental, and gender) with suspicion and a need for continuous supervision. As the fifth of the *Twelve Tables* indicates, “females, by reason of levity of disposition, shall remain in guardianship, even when they have attained their majority.”<sup>55</sup> Even in the fourteenth-century, feudal law would have found justification for the constraint of women in the Roman legal tradition. Joan of Flanders’ ambiguous status in England reflected medieval English law’s interpretation of Roman law.

The sixth-century *Digest of Justinian* was the forerunner of *Prerogativa Regis*. The Digest, commissioned during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian in 533, reflected Roman concepts on disabilities but also included a provision in the law for what it called curatorship. Curators were state-sponsored guardians or cognates for the mentally incompetent and for persons who required tutelage.<sup>56</sup> The *Digest of Justinian* and similarly with the preeminent work on canon law *Decretum Gratiani* (c. 1140s), established legal precedents for the care and custody of vulnerable populations and their holdings that English feudal law sought to manage.

*Prerogativa Regis* of 1324 or royal prerogative explicitly laid out the king’s claims or rights in statute over his domains. Royal prerogative had always been implicit; however, after

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<sup>55</sup> Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, trans. and ed., *The Twelve Tables*. (Princeton: Princeton University, 1952), 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Tutela or Tutela perpetum mulierum* was the form of perpetual guardianship over women, free or slave, exercised throughout the Classical and Late Classical period. R.W. Leage, *Roman Private Law: Founded on the 'Institutes' of Gaius and Justinian*. (London: Macmillan, 1920), 139-42. *Custodia* was the medieval equivalent that medieval English legal scholars Glanvill and Braeton use in their writings. Author will discuss in detail in Chapter Two.

its codification in *The Statutes of the Realm* it was law and a legitimate means for the Crown to exert its rights over the lives, families, and property of women, minors, and the mentally ill.<sup>57</sup> *Prerogativa Regis* allowed the king to exercise his authority over heirs of his tenants-in-chief. If the tenant's heir was a minor, the king had the rights of wardship of the minor child's lands and body and if the heir was an adult, the king held the lands until the heir paid fees of tenure and swore homage to the king. The king had control over marriages of the tenant's heir and the tenant's widow. Similarly, the king had authority through guardianship over the lands of natural fools (idiots, mentally ill from birth) and lunatics (adult-onset mental illness). The king had the right, after an investigation, to appoint a guardian to administer the lands of the mentally incompetent and provide for the mentally ill person.

The procedures for prerogative wards and guardians' charges were very similar and continued throughout the Middle Ages, irrespective of the accused's station. "Since *Prerogativa Regis* lists both the king's rights over minors and his rights over idiots and lunatics, it is not surprising that the two groups were connected both in process and in treatment."<sup>58</sup> Escheators<sup>59</sup> conducted Inquisitions Post Mortem, following the death of a tenant-in chief. The inquisition's findings were the basis for the king's rights and the upholding of heir's claim, and if the heir were mentally incompetent the procedures were merged into one for the sake of efficiency.<sup>60</sup> The lynchpin for the king's claim or prerogative wardship was tenancy. The king only had the rights to the lands and minor heirs of his

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<sup>57</sup> Wendy J. Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill, Incompetent, and Disabled in Medieval England*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 40.

<sup>58</sup> Margaret McGlynn, "Idiots, Lunatics and the Royal Prerogative in Early Tudor England," *The Journal of Legal History* 26, no. 1 (2005), 4.

<sup>59</sup> Royal officials responsible for local feudal administration.

<sup>60</sup> McGlynn, "Idiots," 4.

tenants-in-chief and incapacitated tenants. As Chapter Four illustrates, Joan of Flanders did not meet the criteria.

### **Legal Commentary**

*Glanvill* was written during the reign of Henry II (1154-89) and was one of the foremost legal treatises of Angevin England that merged Roman legal schools of thought with English Common law. As education became more secular and law and medical schools replaced monasteries as the centers of learning, there was a need to regularize and clarify policies and procedures regarding royal protection. *Glanvill* expanded upon the twelfth-century English parameters of custodial care. *Glanvill*'s text does not use the term wardship, but rather *custodia* which covered the spectrum of confinement. "Royal rights, unmodified by subsequent restrictive legislation, are actually more extensive than those later outlined in the famous 'prerogativa regis.'"<sup>61</sup> *Glanvill* also does not discuss the mentally incompetent. However, since the mentally ill already met the criteria for Roman tutelage and *Glanvill* broadened the scope of the English law an accommodation for the incompetent did not need to be delineated.

The authority on medieval English law and disability was *Bracton*. An English jurist during the reign of Henry III of England (1207-1272), Henry de Bracton's (1210-1268) compendium applied the logic of the times to the care and custody of persons with various infirmities. For example, "...during their madness, for some may enjoy lucid intervals and others not, and dealings with them during the time they enjoy lucid intervals will be good, as if they were done with others, whether they feign madness or not. [However] They cannot

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<sup>61</sup> Ranulf de Glanvill, *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, ed. and trans. G.D.G. Hall, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), book vii, 12.

acquire property while they are mad, or when they are not of sound mind, because they cannot consent, nor can they alien[ate] or give what they have acquired, because they can no more consent to an alienation than to an acquisition.”<sup>62</sup> Bracton’s compendium reflected the increasing nuance and sophistication in English law and desire to make the law more relatable to England. Bracton removed overt vestiges of Roman law and like *Glanvill* referred to wardship as *custodia*.

By the end of the thirteenth century, other legal commentaries had appeared, such as the *Britton*, *Fleta*, and *The Mirror of Justices*. These were all criticisms of Bracton and out of date by 1324. Although Britton seems to have been the only one widely used, they all agreed that the Crown had jurisdiction over all forms of wardship. Furthermore, they upheld that the mentally incompetent were able to function within their own localities. Therefore, the mentally ill were capable of autonomous living, at least while lucid. Thus, custody depended upon a determination of lucidity. Despite the latitude in royal prerogative, these commentaries affirmed that wardship had to be in accordance with the law. The ambiguity in the case of Joan of Flanders tested the limits.

## **Case Studies**

Comparative study of noblewomen who faced similar constraint as Joan of Flanders brings theoretical situations to life. Adjudicated medieval guardianships, prerogative wardships, and even non-judicial detention illustrated the mechanics of custody by which scholars can assess the socio-political activity of fourteenth-century aristocratic women.

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<sup>62</sup> Henry de Bracton, *Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England*, trans. Samuel Edmund Thorne, (Cambridge (Mass.): Belknap Press, 1968: iv, 308-309.

Moreover, these cases show when the law was applied and when it was not. Thus, Joan of Flanders' case can be appraised fairly against the backdrop of the times in which she lived. Again, not all confinement was the same, nor was a captive's treatment uniform. Only by piecing together what occurred in other instances of protection, where there is more surviving documentation, can modern scholarship determine what really happened to Joan of Flanders.

The case of Emma de Beston of Bishop's Lenn, Norfolk illustrated the mundanity or ordinariness of the guardianship, particularly the competency proceedings. The guardianship process by the fourteenth-century operated rather efficiently and smoothly. Everyone involved had a specific task and there were backup or failsafe measures in case of emergency. Emergencies included: family member<sup>63</sup> guardianship disputes, third party contestation of guardianship,<sup>64</sup> sanity restoration rights, or malfeasance and/or abuse suits<sup>65</sup> against a guardian. Consequently, guardianship or prerogative wardship, as Emma de Beston's proceedings indicated, had established modes of operation, and any aberration from the normal process would have been unorthodox. Emma de Beston's case is possibly one of the best comparisons to that of Joan of Flanders, because although she was not noble she was a widow of a tenant-in-chief. Moreover, because of the abundance of surviving

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<sup>63</sup> Extended family referred to relatives through marriage that resided outside of the accused's locality.

<sup>64</sup> Third parties included petitioners that were not a seigneur or overlord to the accused, i.e. mayor or local officials in a chartered town where the accused resided. An overlord or the king's order took precedence in such cases but the all petitions were welcome.

<sup>65</sup> Guardians could be taken to court and released from their obligation (*Ejecto custodia*), if evidence came to light of physical or sexual abuse of a charge, neglect, or misappropriation of a charge's estate. "Court seems certainly to have provided effective protection for the ward in all matters of litigation [and] it did a great deal to safeguard his interests. The positive side of this protection policy appears in almost any file of pleadings in the Court... are found to have been initiated by the attorney on the ward's behalf. It was the attorney, indeed, who had the primary responsibility for seeking redress if a ward's lands were intruded upon, his woods cut down, or any other wrong done to him." From H. R Bell, *An Introduction to the History to the History and Records of the Court of Wards & Liveries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 112. The Court of Wards and Liveries, established in 1540/41, assumed responsibility for the jurisdiction of the estates for minors and the incompetent until the Court of Protection and Practice in 1960.



documentation,<sup>66</sup> Emma's case reveals a sophisticated system for the care and custody of the vulnerable quite unexpected for the Middle Ages.

Eleanor of Aquitaine's abrupt confinement by her husband Henry II of England in 1173 merits comparison to Joan of Flanders' predicament. Eleanor of Aquitaine, and to a certain extent her granddaughter Eleanor of Brittany, faced an indefinite detention without legal redress by the order of the king. Henry II had Eleanor seized and confined on account of her participation in the coup against him with their sons; however, only the female conspirators faced captivity. There was a debate among medieval legal scholars whether Henry's orders were lawful; however, Eleanor of Aquitaine's queenship did not prevent Henry from acting.<sup>67</sup> Eleanor of Brittany's case was not as clear cut. She and her brother Arthur may have been royal wards in the care of their grandmother Eleanor of Aquitaine, following the death of their father Geoffrey of Brittany in 1186. Her wardship passed from Queen Eleanor to Richard I of England to John of England and finally Henry III of England. Arthur's failed plot against King John complicated Eleanor's status, in addition to her claim to the English throne. Regardless, her comfort during her confinement of over forty years offers insight into Joan of Flanders' treatment.

The imprisonment of Marjorie, Christian, Elizabeth, and Mary Bruce from 1306 to 1314 was at the other end of the spectrum from wardship or guardianship. The female relatives of Robert Bruce were clearly considered to be meddlers in politics, and as such

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<sup>66</sup> It is very unusual to have a court record as complete as Emma de Beston's. Most court entries were summaries of decision or very brief. Emma de Beston's case spanned at least five years (1378-1383) which was not atypical but the history that survived was. See Chapter Five.

<sup>67</sup> *Glanvill* accepts that a person charged with 'the king's death or betrayal of the realm or the army' could be imprisoned on the basis of public notoriety rather than a specific accusation, but expected a degree of formality and a judicial process, while *Bracton* questions the propriety of a ring essentially acting as a judge in his own case." Seabourne p.27

King Edward I treated them as hostages and political prisoners. Although female hostage-taking, particularly, among the nobility was taboo, against codes of chivalry, and an anathema to conventional medieval sensibilities, Edward I felt justified because of these women's activities during the Wars of Scottish Independence.<sup>68</sup> Joan of Flanders was not interfering in English politics; nevertheless, she could have become a political liability for Edward III. Each of these custodial situations helps to fill in the gaps on what happened to the Duchess of Brittany.

The liberal confinement of Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, from 1106 to 1134, albeit for twenty-eight years reflected the mercurial treatment that some captives in rebellion often received. There were no set standards or rules for the accommodations and provisioning of prisoners. Some were treated more leniently with limited freedom of movement and others more harshly, especially if others considered the justification for the imprisonment to be weak. Henry I of England treated Robert Curthose "not as an enemy captive but as a noble pilgrim."<sup>69</sup> In *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe: 1000-1300*, French historian Jean Dunbabin stated that rumors of Curthose's mistreatment would have brought rebellion against Henry.<sup>70</sup> There was an attempt to rescue Joan of Flanders. With her base of popular support, one could only imagine the uproar if the news of her wrongful detention had come to light.

### **Secondary Sources**

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<sup>68</sup> Marjorie, Isabel, Elizabeth and Christian's alleged rebellion did not span duration of The Wars of Scottish Independence (1296–1328). In fact each alleged misdeed was a singular event during the war. However, how Edward I could have considered a twelve year Marjorie an active participant in the insurrection was most peculiar. See Chapter Six.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Howlett, ed., *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, (London: Longman, 1889), iv: 85-6.

<sup>70</sup> Jean Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 115.

Two theories exist as to Joan of Flanders' life after arriving in England in February 1343: Joan went back to Brittany to defend her son's claim or Joan remained in England and went mad. The traditional narrative that Joan of Flanders went back to France to defend her son's claim, which reflected Froissart's assertions, dominated scholarship until the late nineteenth century. Mixed perspectives of Joan of Flanders have endured ever since. With advances in the digital humanities and archival research, the need for a more analytical approach to Joan of Flanders' confinement has arisen.

In his "Précis Historique de Jeanne de Flandres: Mère de Jean IV, Duc de Bretagne, Surnommé le Conquérant," Jean-Baptiste Lesbroussart (1747-1818) presented a short but detailed summary of the life of Duke John IV of Brittany's mother. While it provides useful genealogical information of Joan's family, it is obvious that Lesbroussart was more interested in prose and flowery language, as he was a professor of rhetoric by training. The précis is long on elocution and short in attribution. Like Froissart, Lesbroussart is overwhelmingly complimentary of Joan of Flanders, but he offers no information about Joan's life after her son's official recognition as duke in 1365. Published in 1820 after his death by the Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (where he was a member), his affinity for Joan of Flanders was tied to her Flemish heritage and his strong desire for Belgian independence which came in 1830.

Although contemporaries, English historian Mary Anne Everett Green (1818-1895) and Breton historian Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie (1827-1901) both took dramatically different views on Joan of Flanders. While both La Borderie and Everett Green wrote during the height of the Victorian professional historian movement, La Borderie epitomized the scientific ideal of male-historical scholarship; Everett Green stands out as an exception. A

distinguished linguist Mary Anne Everett Green gained prominence for her editorial work in the Public Record Office (PRO),<sup>71</sup> calendaring of over forty-one volumes of the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series* for the reigns of Edward IV, Mary I, Elizabeth I, and James I. However, before her career in the PRO, she wrote the *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies* and a six-volume *Lives of the Princesses of England: from the Norman Conquest* because she felt that the underreported lives of women deserved not only attention but particularly painstaking documentation and scrupulous argument.<sup>72</sup> Her books applied the highest research standards of the time, each taking a minimum of four years to write.

In the *Lives of the Princesses of England* (1849-55), Everett Green references Joan of Flanders in her chapter on Mary of Waltham, the fourth daughter of Edward III and Duke John IV's first wife. Undoubtedly pro-English and sympathetic to the Montfortist cause, Everett Green extols Joan of Flanders' virtue. Like Froissart, she presupposes that Joan returned to France and to the fight, as necessity warranted.

Popular novelist Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823-1901) in her *Cameos from English History* argues that Joan of Flanders returned to Brittany. Countering the Victorian archetypical heroine, she showed Joan to be assertive and even mounting a naval attack with her husband's cousin Robert d'Artois<sup>73</sup> off of the island of Guernsey in the English Channel.

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<sup>71</sup> The Public Record Office is the same agency to which the author refers in the text of the dissertation that housed such documents as the Calendar Rolls and was the national archiving service for the United Kingdom from 1832-2003. It no longer exist and The National Archives now houses the public records and documents for the United Kingdom.

<sup>72</sup> Christine L. Krueger, "Why she lived at the PRO: Mary Anne Everett Green and the profession of history," *The Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 01 (2003), 67.

<sup>73</sup> John de Montfort and Robert d'Artois were first cousins as they were both grandchildren of John II of Brittany and Beatrice of England, daughter of Henry III of England and his wife. See Table 3: Breton Ducal Family.

Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie's multi-volume opus the *Histoire de Bretagne* has held itself up as the definitive exposition of Breton history until the last half of the twentieth century. Regarded as the father of Breton historiography, La Borderie wrote with certitude and confidence that his positions were accurate. Through an appraisal of the public records pertaining to Joan of Flanders' confinement and Occam's razor,<sup>74</sup> La Borderie insists that Joan went mad and was confined in England. In a paternalistic tone, reflecting the male superiority of nineteenth-century professional historical scholarship, he emphatically asserts, "Pauvre Jeanne! on se la passait de main en main, presque comme un colis."<sup>75</sup> Despite his tone, his methodical approach and extensive survey of the record made his hypothesis seem valid. His perspectives on the Duchess of Brittany still influence scholarship.

Writing just forty years later, French historian and archivist Eugène Déprez (1844-1933) already displayed the changing attitudes towards Joan of Flanders. Trying to find a consensus between the extremes, in his "Une Lettre Missive du Prétendant Jean de Bretagne, Comte de Montfort" and "La Querelle de Bretagne de la Captivité de Charles de Blois à la Majorité de Jean IV de Montfort" he lets the evidence speak for itself. In a straightforward way without much opinion, Déprez recounted the events of the Breton Civil War without speculation as to what happened to Joan. He was more interested in historical fact than in supposition. His coup was discovering a letter in the documents of *Ancient Correspondences* purportedly sent by John de Montfort to Edward III after his departure from England in June 1345. As the authenticity of the missive itself is uncertain, it certainly adds some context to the personal relations between John de Montfort and Edward III of England.

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<sup>74</sup> The adage that all things being equal, the simplest answer is the best.

<sup>75</sup> "Poor Joan! Passing from hand to hand, almost like a package." La Borderie, Louis Arthur Le Moyne de. *Histoire de Bretagne* (Rennes: J. Plihon & L. Herve, 1896.), vol. 3, 491.

## Breton Ducal Family <sup>76</sup>

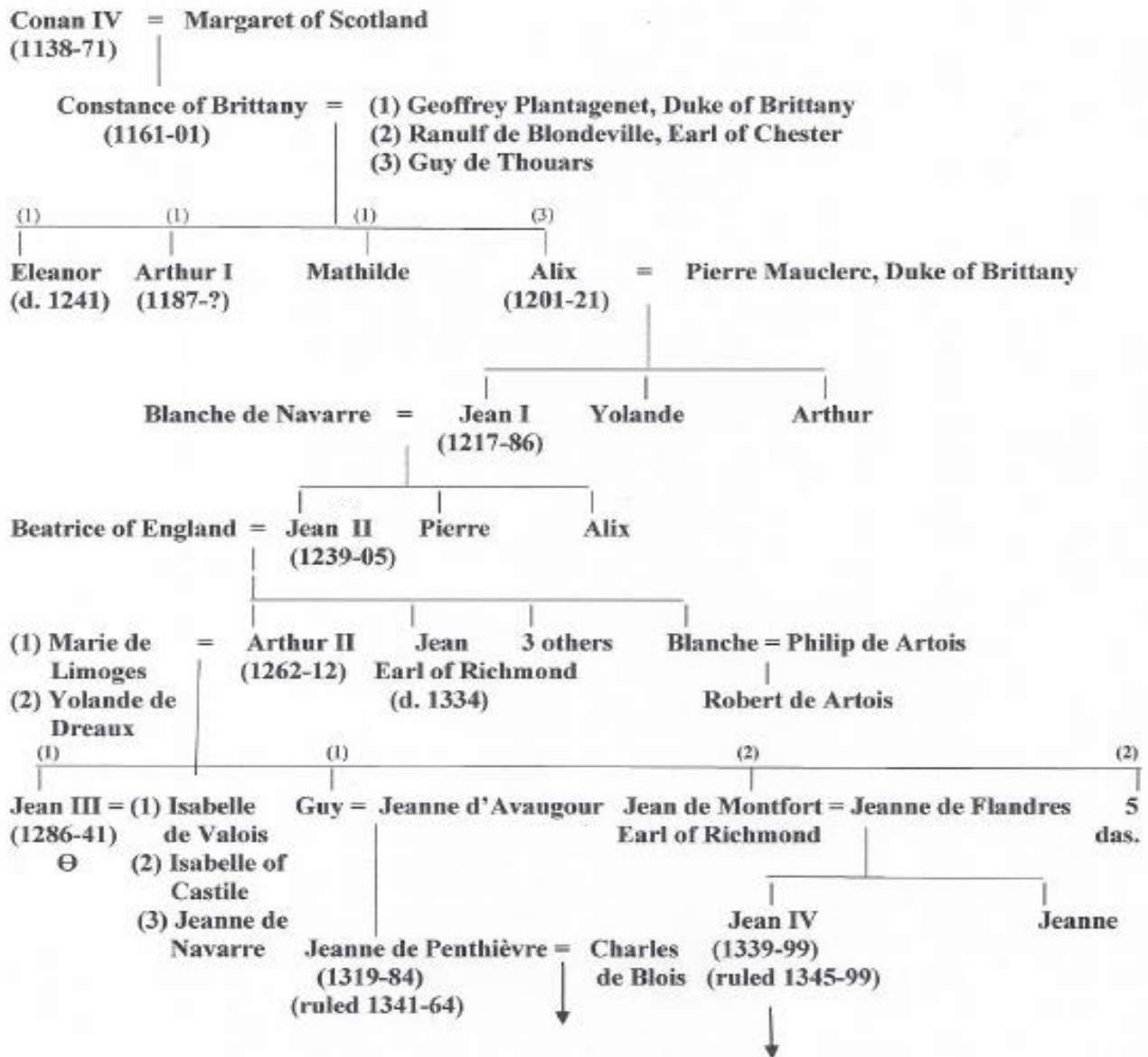


Table 2. Breton Ducal Family 1138-1399

<sup>76</sup> Table 2, Breton Ducal family. Dates of rulers provided and Jean, Earl of Richmond.

British historian Michael Jones (b. 1940) has been the resident expert on Brittany since the 1970s. Throughout all of his books, Jones maintained that Joan of Flanders' captivity was extra-cautionary, but like Déprez, Jones does not speculate as to her mental state. Jones provides detail and information regarding Edward III's "Grand Strategy" regarding France and the role Brittany played in the Hundred Years War. In his monographs the *Creation of Brittany: A Late Medieval State* and *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany*, he gives context as to the diplomatic relations between Brittany and England and placed Joan's detention into the perspective in a larger framework of fourteenth-century European politics.

Judge and medieval historian Jonathan Sumption, Lord Sumption (b. 1948) contributed to the discourse on Joan of Flanders, whom he calls the Countess of Montfort, in his history of the Hundred Years' War in three volumes *The Hundred Years War I, II, and III*. Despite writing a very detailed and meticulous history of the war, over 2000 pages, Sumption, like Jones, attempts to thread the needle as to the mystery of Joan's fate. He claims that she went mad, but it was kept secret. Sumption's evidence for her madness is negligible, but his information and source material regarding the Breton Civil War is significant.

As this discussion relied heavily on medieval law and the constraint of women, scholars who have researched those topics and become authoritative on those subjects are necessary inclusions for their wealth of information. Scott L. Waugh, Wendy J. Turner, and Gwen Seabourne have all researched medieval custody and its impact on vulnerable populations. Scott L. Waugh in his monograph *The Lordship of England* has studied feudal wardship and marriage. Royal authority and its imposition on its tenants-in-chief correlated to Joan of

Flanders' perceived status under English law, despite being a foreigner and duchess in her own right.

Wendy J. Turner has extensively surveyed medieval guardianship in England. In *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom, Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill, Incompetent, and Disabled in Medieval England Medicine and the Law in the Middle Ages*, and *Disability and Medieval Law: History, Literature, Society*, she examines the institution of protection for the mentally incompetent, from the medieval cosmology of sanity, to the authorities' initial contact with the accused, to adjudication process, and management of estates. As she states, "medieval society considered women incapable simply because of their gender, they could not, or were not allowed, to function fully as independent individuals.... Society considered the feeble minded incapable for the same reason; [and therefore] they could not function independently."<sup>77</sup> Edward III cloaked Joan's confinement under the purview of prerogative wardship; however, there were well-established guidelines and procedures that were at odds with Edward's actions.

Gwen Seabourne briefly discusses Joan of Flanders in her 2013 monograph on the custody of medieval women, *Imprisoning Medieval Women*. Seabourne analyzes varying types of custody and when kings justified one form over another. Judicial and non-judicial confinement had to conform and operate within established social norms, values, and mores. The church and other kingdoms could and did intrude into English domestic affairs when it involved their subjects or canon law. Edward III successfully managed Joan of Flanders' confinement, like most autocrats.

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<sup>77</sup> Turner, " 'Afflicted with insanity,' " 23.



Benevolent protection designed to affect eventual rehabilitation (lunacy) or sustain prolonged care (idiocy) had the potential to become equally as traumatic as penitentiary confinement, although no one can say for certain, the subjective impact of protracted captivity upon Joan of Flanders. Considered resilient by most in her lifetime, the loss of her voice in the fight changed the course of Brittany in the civil war and the way historians have viewed female martial valor. I will show that the Duchess of Brittany was a loose end that Edward III of England had to sew up after the death of her husband in 1345. Referring to her indefinite detention in England was more than a distinction without a difference, as it gave Edward the cover he needed against rebellion. The irony lies in the similarity between confinement and guardianship as both are state-imposed, depersonalizing, and indeterminate. How does the story of Joan of Flanders begin? For that answer, one must start with her origins in Flanders.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Jeanne la Flamme: Her-story, Hennebont, and Her Son**

She was a complete stranger to Brittany, but in her brief career as a war leader, she inspired the same extravagant loyalty from her followers as Charles de Blois could do on his side.<sup>1</sup>

This statement applies to Joan of Flanders and her relationship with her adoptive home of Brittany during the early days of the Breton Civil War, where she accomplished as much for the Montfortist Dukes, as they ever did for themselves. However, being a foreigner could have applied to her relationship to her native land of Flanders, where she was as equally unfamiliar. Let us look at her home of Flanders, her ancestors and progeny, and greatest triumph at Hennebont.

It is important to understand the roots of Joan of Flanders' tenacity and strong sense of heritage with which she identified. Although Joan of Flanders did not grow up in Flanders, she definitely inherited the fortitude and courage of her Flemish ancestors. Her actions and wondrous deeds at Hennebont are a testament to her character and resolve. Even though she was not with her children during their formative years, she imbued them with the toughness of their forefathers. Both her son and daughter would have opportunities to prove the mettle.

Flanders a province in medieval Europe, roughly about the size of the US State of Delaware, by 1341 had not known a sustainable peace for more than a half-century. Politically, with its dense population, high urbanization, and proto-mercantile economy, Flanders' advantages outweighed its topographical shortcomings. In the fourteenth century, Flanders stretched south to the Aa River, east to the Lower Scheldt and Dender Rivers (areas

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 374.

in dispute with the Dukes of Brabant and the Counts of Hainault) and north to Scheldt estuary. However, geography had only exacerbated Flanders' problems. Being a French fief located in continental Europe along the coast of the North Sea and the English Channel with few, if any, discernable borders to the Holy Roman Empire made it a ripe for disputes between the medieval hegemonies of England and France and prone to rivalries between Germanic princes. Far from being backward or unsophisticated, the commercial centers of Flanders (Bruges, Ghent, Ypres) represented the wealthiest districts in medieval Europe rivaling only Florence, Venice, and Naples.<sup>2</sup>

The Counts of Flanders navigated complicated political waters: being a French province since 862, before Count Baldwin I eloped with Judith of West Francia, and dependent on the wool trade with England for economic security. Like the Guyenne, Flanders was an autonomous feudatory but its independence was conditional, as long as Flemish interests did not conflict with the interests of and their obligations to the Capetian kings. Moreover, by the Late Middle Ages, as evidenced by the creation of the County of Artois as a buffer state between the two in the twelfth century, French control of Flanders was problematic, near impossible.<sup>3</sup>

As happened in Brittany, the growth in the political might of the Capetian Kings over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries increasingly encroached upon independent territories and left little space for self-determining sovereigns like Flemish counts to rule. First, the counts began to lose their territorial possessions, such as Vermandois which was less than twenty

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<sup>2</sup> William H. TeBrake, *The Plague of Insurrection: Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323-1328*: (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>3</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 16.

miles from Paris and a harbinger of things to come.<sup>4</sup> Then, the Franco-Flemish tensions diffused into aspects of domestic affairs, most importantly trade, and led to a ban on English wool imports in 1273. As it became obvious that poor relations with England would be devastating for the Flemish economy, Flanders became polarized along the lines of social order with the older patrician families seeking the support of the French king and everyone else rallying around the count and England.<sup>5</sup> However, the *Franco-Flemish War* which had started in earnest in 1297 would have lasting ramifications for count and cotter (peasant) alike.

The century between 1270 and 1385 was a period of nearly constant turmoil with foreign attacks and internal violence reoccurring on an annual basis.<sup>6</sup> When Count Guy de Dampierre, no longer able to tolerate King Philippe IV of France's attempts to undermine his comital authority, renounced his allegiance to the King and sought an alliance with England, hostilities began. His strategy backfired when Walloon Flanders (Lille, Douai, Orchies, Béthune),<sup>7</sup> despite being English allies, decided to forgo that commitment and along with the Flemish nobility sided with the French.<sup>8</sup> Not that all of the Flemish aristocracy were solidly behind Philippe IV, nicknamed 'the fair.' The 'Lily' (*Leliaarts*) so called because they supported the French, derived their name from the *fleur-de-lis* on the French coat of arms, comprised the upper nobility. While the 'Claws' (*Klauwaarts*), derived from the Flemish lion, supported the count and included patrician personal opponents of the Lilies and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Prevenier, "The Low Countries, 1290-1415," In *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 6, 1300-1415*, ed. Michael Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000), 574.

<sup>6</sup> David M. Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, (Routledge: New York, 2014), 210.

<sup>7</sup> Modern Day Picardy, France.

<sup>8</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 31.

guildsmen.<sup>9</sup> However, most Flemings could ill afford to refuse to collaborate with King Phillippe le Bel, as any rebuke would have meant certain confiscation of their property after the presumed French invasion, which finally occurred in June 1297. After initial success and seizing Walloon Flanders and much of the territory along the coast, Philippe IV entered into a negotiated truce with Count Guy. However, the peace lapsed in January 1300 and Philippe IV resumed fighting. By the end of May, Flanders was completely overtaken by the French, occupied, and incorporated into the French royal domain.<sup>10</sup>

As the prolonged conflict gradually aroused nationalistic sentiment, especially among the peasantry, those who rallied around the count and ultimately prevailed. On July 11, 1302 at the Castle of Courtrai, what came to be known as the *Battle of Golden Spurs* occurred in which the French forces, considered the finest fighting men in Europe at the time, suffered a total defeat by the Flemish urban militia. The entirety of Western Flanders took up arms and crushed the French army; the Flemish lost a few hundred men, but the French lost 1000 including nobles.<sup>11</sup> It was humiliating to have the flower of French chivalry defeated by bands of peasants with pitchforks; however, Phillippe IV would have his revenge. Despite a truce made in 1302, the peace did not last, and the French mounted another attack on Flanders two years later. The French won a partial victory at Mons-en-Pévèle and negotiated better terms for themselves with the new Count Robert III (1249-1322) and his son Louis I, Count of Nevers (1272-1322), Joan of Flanders' father. Louis of Nevers was not a signatory to the agreement concluded at Althis-sur-Orge in June 1305 but swore along with his wife

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 190.

<sup>10</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 32. Note 57. Maurice Vandersen Note p.405-9

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France: 987-1328*, (New York: Longman, 2001), 281. Robert II, Count of Artois died in this battle fighting for the French his grandson Robert III would die forty years later fighting with Edward III's forces in support of the Montfortist cause in Brittany.

that they and their descendants would uphold it in Paris in that same year.<sup>12</sup> Louis of Nevers not only swore that he and his heirs would honor the Peace of Althis-sur-Onge, but he affirmed that his father, brother, the Flemish nobles, and townspeople would honor the terms as well.<sup>13</sup> This action did not engender any loyalty among the Flemings for Louis of Nevers. Count Louis pledged his French fiefs of Nevers, which he inherited from his mother Yolande, Countess of Nevers and Rethel that he acquired through marriage to Jeanne, Countess of Rethel as guarantees of his observance of the treaty, which as articulated by the terms of the Treaty of Althis-sur-Onge, he would soon regret.<sup>14</sup>

The onerous terms of the *Treaty of Althis-sur-Onge of 1305* led to reverberations that impacted not only the Flemish economy but the House of Dampierre for generations to come. The peace treated the victors of the Battle of Courtrai, the Flemish, as though they were the vanquished without merit. It reestablished Flanders as a semi-autonomous principality of France, ruled directly by its restored counts with Count Robert III, Robert de Béthune, as the rightful heir of his father who died in 1305.<sup>15</sup> Ever since Guy de Dampierre's imprisonment in 1300, French governors had been the day-to-day administrators of Flanders. However, from that point, the treaty's conditions got precipitately worse. Count Robert III had to pay homage to King Philippe IV and an indemnity to compensate the king for his loss in revenue. This debt amounted to an initial lump sum payment of £20,000 and with an additional sum of £400,000 to be paid in four large installments from 1306 to 1309, allegedly to come from

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<sup>12</sup> Henry Lucas, "The Low Countries and the Disputed Imperial Election of 1314," *Speculum* 21, no. 1 (1946): 80.

<sup>13</sup> Thierry Limburg-Stirum, ed. *Codex diplomaticus Flandriae, inde ab anno 1296 ad usque 1325; ou, Recueil de documents relatifs aux guerres et dissensions suscitées par Philippe-le-Bel, roi de France, contre Gui de Dampierre, Comte de Flandre*, (Bruges: A. de Zutere, Imprimeur de la Société d'Emulation, 1879), ii : 349-351.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 383-84

<sup>15</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 34.

those who opposed the French.<sup>16</sup> The comital family members were not alone in their sworn oaths to Phillippe IV for all Flemish over the age of fourteen had to swear eternal fidelity to the King of France and promise not to enter into an alliance that would jeopardize this bond.<sup>17</sup> Bruges had to send 3000 of its residents on pilgrimage for its role in the ‘Matins of Bruges’-a massacre of the French in May 1302.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, until the obligations of the treaty were met, the castellanies of Lille, Douai, Béthune, Cassel, and Courtrai were to remain under French control. Any noncompliance, including the refusal to raze town walls or compensate Leliaart supporters, was considered grounds for royal interdiction, reoccupation, and papal excommunication, all of which Philippe IV would do over the next seven years.<sup>19</sup> Despite a concession that left Count Robert III free to pursue his war against his Avesnes cousins in Hainault, there was blowback from these provisions that inordinately fell upon the backs of all Flemings.

The resentment against the treaty, the count, and king only grew as the towns refused to pay the fines or abide by the peace. “The treaty embittered the relationship of Philip the Fair with Count Robert and the Flemings, and the peace which followed was little more than a truce punctuated with manifestations of hostilities and recurrent negotiations and recriminations.”<sup>20</sup> The political tension and discord had so affected the comital family that in 1309, Louis of Nevers broke ranks with his father and publicly opposed the agreement. Two years later Louis of Nevers repudiated the Treaty of Althis-sur-Onge, and claimed that he

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 195.

<sup>18</sup> Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 281; Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 195.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 195; Limburg-Stirum, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Flandriae*, ii: 178-80.

<sup>20</sup> Lucas, “The Low Countries,” 77.

that never supported nor had any knowledge of affixing his seal to the document.<sup>21</sup> Philippe IV retaliated against Louis of Nevers by seizing Nevers and Rethel around October 1311.<sup>22</sup> In July 1312 threatened by the confiscation of his lands, Robert III managed to make peace, or capitulated, with Philippe IV and in the Treaty of Pontoise permanently surrendered Walloon Flanders (Lille, Douai, Orchies, Béthune) to the French Crown.<sup>23</sup> However, the situation was not resolved. In 1314, Philippe IV again sent forces into Flanders on a fools' errand to quash a rebellion. It achieved nothing and negotiations again ensued between the principles, Philippe IV's heirs and the Flemish Counts.

Flanders at the turn of the fourteenth century was unrecognizable to Joan of Flanders not so much due to the devastation from the years of warfare and French occupation, but because she was not reared there. Born around 1298, there is no reason to believe that she had ever seen Flanders. All of these diplomatic events and military exploits would have been recounted to Joan of Flanders from within the confines of her French nursery in the County of Nevers, where she, her brother, Louis de Crécy, and parents formally resided during much of her youth. The Count and Countess of Nevers and Rethel were in attendance at the French Court in 1305 and during this period on friendly terms with both King Philippe IV and the French nobility.<sup>24</sup> Countess Jeanne's (1277-1328) French inclinations were understandable:

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Histoire de Flandre: Époque Communale, 1304-1384*, (Bruxelles : A. Vandale, 1847), iii: 569-72, 576; Limburg-Stirum, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Flandriae*, ii: 175-76

<sup>23</sup> Lucas, "The Low Countries," 77.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 81.



it was her homeland and Rethel, her birthright;<sup>25</sup> was a *tenant in capite* of the French king.<sup>26</sup> However, it was quite odd that Louis of Nevers would have had the same fondness for his ancestral nemesis. Following the signing of the Treaty of Althis-sur-Orge, both Louis of Nevers and Countess Jeanne lived in France full time and Louis of Nevers, for all appearances, regarded Nevers as his home rather than Flanders.<sup>27</sup> According to the fourteenth-century *Annales gandenses* (Annales of Ghent), all his possessions and men were “*in comitatu suo* (in his county) in France where he remained.”<sup>28</sup>

Sometime after 1311, when Louis of Nevers had a change of heart and decided to move their children from Nevers to Flanders, Countess Jeanne publicly opposed it. Tired of her husband’s antics Countess Jeanne welcomed an opportunity to humiliate her husband and appealed directly to Philippe IV to halt their relocation.<sup>29</sup> Jeanne, Countess of Rethel, as well as others, saw Louis of Nevers’ actions as a purely political ploy, since he had been in disagreement with King Philippe IV for quite some time and his reputation, not without justification, was in poor standing within French society.<sup>30</sup> It is unclear as to how much of Joan of Flanders’ early years in France either in Paris or Nevers were by choice or under duress, tied to the obligations of her father for his fiefs of Nevers and Rethel or other coercions. Louis of Nevers’ rapprochement with Philippe IV was certainly over by 1311 and

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<sup>25</sup> Jeanne Hugo, Countess of Rethel was her father’s, Count Hugh (Hugues) IV of Rethel, only child and his heir; Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300*. (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2007), 252.

<sup>26</sup> The Counts of Rethel exercised a form of subinfeudation, where Rethel was a fief of the Counts of Champagne who were French Peers. Léon-Honoré Leband et al, ed. *Rethel, Trésor des Chartes du Comté de Rethel* (Monaco: Imprimerie de Monaco, 1916), 1:208; Theodore Evergates, ed. and trans., *Feudal Society in Medieval France Documents from the County of Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 80.

<sup>27</sup> Lucas, “The Low Countries,” 81.

<sup>28</sup> Franz Funck-Brentano, ed., *Annales gandenses*. (Paris: A. Picard, 1896), 62.

<sup>29</sup> Lucas, “The Low Countries,” 82.

<sup>30</sup> “[La Comtesse de Rethel] Et de son mari se complaint,” Geffroi de Paris, “Chronique rimée attribuée à Geffroi de Paris,” in *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France. Rerum gallicarum et francicarum scriptores*, eds. Natalis de Wailly and Léopold Delisle (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1865) xxii: 129.

his son, Louis de Crécy, at some point became a royal hostage. Louis de Crécy, like his sister, had spent his youth at the French court, but he had become a hostage to ensure his father's compliance with the terms of Althis-sur-Orge.<sup>31</sup> In March 1308, there were formalized negotiations for a marriage between Louis de Crécy and Isabella de Valois, niece of King Philippe IV, and despite a financial settlement, the contract was never honored.<sup>32</sup> However, there was a marriage in 1320 between Louis de Crécy and Marguerite, daughter of King Philippe V of France forged out of diplomatic expediency more than anything else, after a failed Flemish incursion into France. Arbitrated by his grandfather Robert de Béthune, rather than his father Louis of Nevers, the heirs of France and Flanders agreed to marry and Louis de Crécy would pay homage to Philippe V of France for Flanders.<sup>33</sup>

The politics of the conflict between Flanders and France directly affected comital family relations and tore at its fabric and cohesiveness. The *Annales gandenes* attributes Louis of Nevers' misfortune to his father's tense relations and brinkmanship with the Kings of France not over Flanders but claims to Holland and Zeeland. The conflict between Count Robert III (Dampierre) and William I of Hainault (Avesnes) was bitter, long-standing, and necessarily bled over into Franco-Flemish relations as Philippe IV, despite being Count Robert III's overlord, supported Hainault.<sup>34</sup> In 1311, tensions flared again, and Louis of Nevers in support of his father mustered a considerable army in France to fight with them in Flanders against Hainault, thereby, placing himself and his family in a precarious situation.<sup>35</sup> Despite being moments away from combat, Count William and Count Robert decided against

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<sup>31</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 209.

<sup>32</sup> Limburg-Stirum, ed. *Codex diplomaticus Flandrae*, ii :83-85. Later repudiated, Ibid., iii: 222.

<sup>33</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 47; Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 284.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 156-97; Lucas, "The Low Countries," 81.

<sup>35</sup> Hilda Johnstone, ed., *Annales gandenes: Annals of Ghent* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 98-100.

it and were able to come to an agreement. However, Louis of Nevers had gone a bridge too far and made himself *persona non grata* in the eyes of Philippe IV.

Albeit being decidedly pro-French, many of the surviving sources have cast Louis of Nevers in an unfavorable light. However, his blighted reputation was not unwarranted, as he found himself permanently barred from the Flemish succession and imprisoned not once, but twice. The peace in 1320 between Flanders and France that granted the marriage of Louis de Crécy and Marguerite I of Burgundy removed Louis of Nevers from the succession making Count Robert's heir, his grandson. On May 5, 1320, the Treaty of Paris, besides renewing the fidelity of Robert de Béthune to the French Crown, stipulated that Louis de Crécy was to be the "désigné comme héritier de Robert de Béthune."<sup>36</sup> As Louis of Nevers was so disliked in French and Flemish circles, historian David Nicholas has argued that his brother engineered his second imprisonment to prevent Louis of Nevers from assuming the comital throne. By 1320 Robert de Cassel, "who now opposed all compromise with France, persuaded his father to imprison Louis. He [Louis] died in exile in France on July 22, 1322, shortly before his father."<sup>37</sup> Louis of Nevers did not merit this injustice, being wrongfully detained and having his patrimony vacated, but his artlessness and disagreeable nature did him no favors.

Louis of Nevers had become so unpopular that his avaricious brother could take advantage of their elderly father without any resistance. He was not a careful person,

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<sup>36</sup> Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, (Bruxelles: H. Lamertin, 1902) ii: 7; Hallam and Everard, *Capetian France*, 287; Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 197

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 210; James M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.

## Flanders and France Before the Hundred Years' War<sup>38</sup>



Map 1. Map of County of Flanders and Kingdom of France

<sup>38</sup> Map 1, Map of Flanders and France including Rethel and Nevers (outlined), Courtesy of Ramsay Muir, *Muir's Historical atlas, ancient, medieval, and modern*, (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1873), 20.

considered immoral for his numerous affairs<sup>39</sup> and had mounted a futile campaign to become Holy Roman Emperor in 1313 following the death of Emperor Henry VII, Henry of Luxembourg. Without any base of support, Louis of Nevers' nomination for Emperor was rebuffed. His self-serving motivations were clear to all of the electors. First, he had launched his campaign out of spite and vindictiveness, having resented the confiscation of his fiefs and despising Philippe IV and his ministers.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, he knew that his accession to Flanders would be challenged and had hoped "to use imperial resources to redress the unfavorable balance that political events had forced upon Flanders."<sup>41</sup> Lastly, in his position as emperor, Louis of Nevers could rule in favor of Flanders in its bitter struggle with the Avesnes dynasty of Hainault by imperial decision.<sup>42</sup> Having these considerations in mind Louis of Nevers put forth his candidacy that summer.

However, having friends neither at court nor the Curia, Count Robert had been excommunicated in 1312 and the Pope now resided in Avignon, France, Louis of Nevers' application was dismissed and Louis the Bavarian became Holy Roman Emperor in October 1314. "His [Louis of Nevers] messengers appeared in Germany, but seem to have made little impression upon the electors as the Archbishop of Cologne wrote to [Pope] Clement V on January 15, 1314."<sup>43</sup> Even if Louis of Nevers had been Count of Flanders, his resources and

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<sup>39</sup> "primogenitus Roberti comitis Flandrie, homo male morigenitus et plurimum luxuriosus." Gilles le Muisit, *Chronique et Annales de Gilles Le Muisit Abbé de Saint-Martin de Tournai (1272-1352)*, ed. Henri Lemaître, (Paris: Renouard, 1906), 81.

<sup>40</sup> Lucas, "The Low Countries," 84.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Limburg-Stirum, ed. *Codex diplomaticus Flandrae*, ii: 264-78.

influence were so limited that it would not have mattered; the electors paid scant attention to his candidacy, and the entire fiasco was another disappointment for him.<sup>44</sup>

To call Louis of Nevers imprudent would not be wrong. Diplomatically and personally his reputation suffered; however, his most impactful event upon the impressionable Joan of Flanders had to have been his one veritable coup--escape from French prison in 1312. About fourteen years old, Joan of Flanders would have been of an age to know the details surrounding her father's incarceration and would have experienced repercussions from it. After 1305, Louis of Nevers began to repudiate publicly the Treaty of Althis-sur-Orge. With little patience for Louis of Nevers' antics nor those of his father, Flanders and France were in hostilities again. King Phillippe IV confiscated Nevers and Rethel and seized his children whom Louis of Nevers was trying to smuggle into Flanders.<sup>45</sup> After failing to appear before the court, Phillippe IV ordered Louis of Nevers arrested.<sup>46</sup> Following his arrest and transfer from a more secure prison at Monthéry Castle, allegedly for dishonorable captivity, to a private residence in Paris,<sup>47</sup> Louis of Nevers managed to escape house arrest by plying his noble custodians with strong wine. He eventually fled to Flanders where he continued his railings against France.<sup>48</sup> It is unclear whether he saw either of his children again.

Whether Joan of Flanders saw her father's escape as his vindication, the one instance where he bested the King of France; or the bane of her existence before her long-awaited marriage, is unknown; however, surely during her long captivity in England she would have recalled her father's adventure and devised her own method of escape. It is doubtful that at

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<sup>44</sup> Lucas, "The Low Countries," 87.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>46</sup> Limburg-Stirum, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Flandrae*, ii: 213-16.

<sup>47</sup> Geffroi de Paris, "Chronique rimée," xxii:129-30.

<sup>48</sup> Gilles le Muisit, *Chronique et Annales*, 81-82; Lucas, "The Low Countries," 84.

fourteen, she realized how complicated her father was and fully appreciated the adverse effect Flemish relations had upon her the early years, but the legacy of Louis of Nevers was enduring upon her and her brother.

Joan of Flanders' brother Count Louis I of Flanders, Nevers, and Rethel (1304-1346) aka Louis de Crécy's, "Frenchness" impeded his ability to rule Flanders. He assumed the comital throne at the age of eighteen in September 1322 without having lived in Flanders nor had any knowledge of the language. His unfamiliarity with Flemish politics, which could have confounded experienced sovereigns, should not solely be attributed to youth, as he was ignorant of recent events. "He did not seem to be aware of the efforts of his grandfather and immediate predecessor, Robert de Béthune, or the efforts of his own father, Louis I of Nevers, who had risked both possessions and reputation in opposing French designs on Flanders."<sup>49</sup> Oblivious to the stealthiness of Flemish diplomacy, he set upon a course of pro-French policies that destabilized the economy by seeking to uphold Althis-sur-Onge, undermined relations with England, and antagonized the urban elites. Unwittingly repeating the past mistakes of Louis I of Nevers, he turned to *leliaart* families for support and called upon the French kings to put down rebellions in 1328 that laid the foundation for repression, resentment, and sparked future revolts.<sup>50</sup> Louis I of Flanders lost all credibility. More significantly with the advent of England's war with France, he induced Edward III to strike at Flanders by stopping exports of English wool and grain in 1336.<sup>51</sup> Flanders found itself trapped in a dynastic cycle of crisis that Count Louis, despite his naivety, was doomed to repeat.

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<sup>49</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 47.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Prevenier, "The Low Countries," 574.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

## The Counts of Flanders and Dukes of Brittany<sup>52</sup>

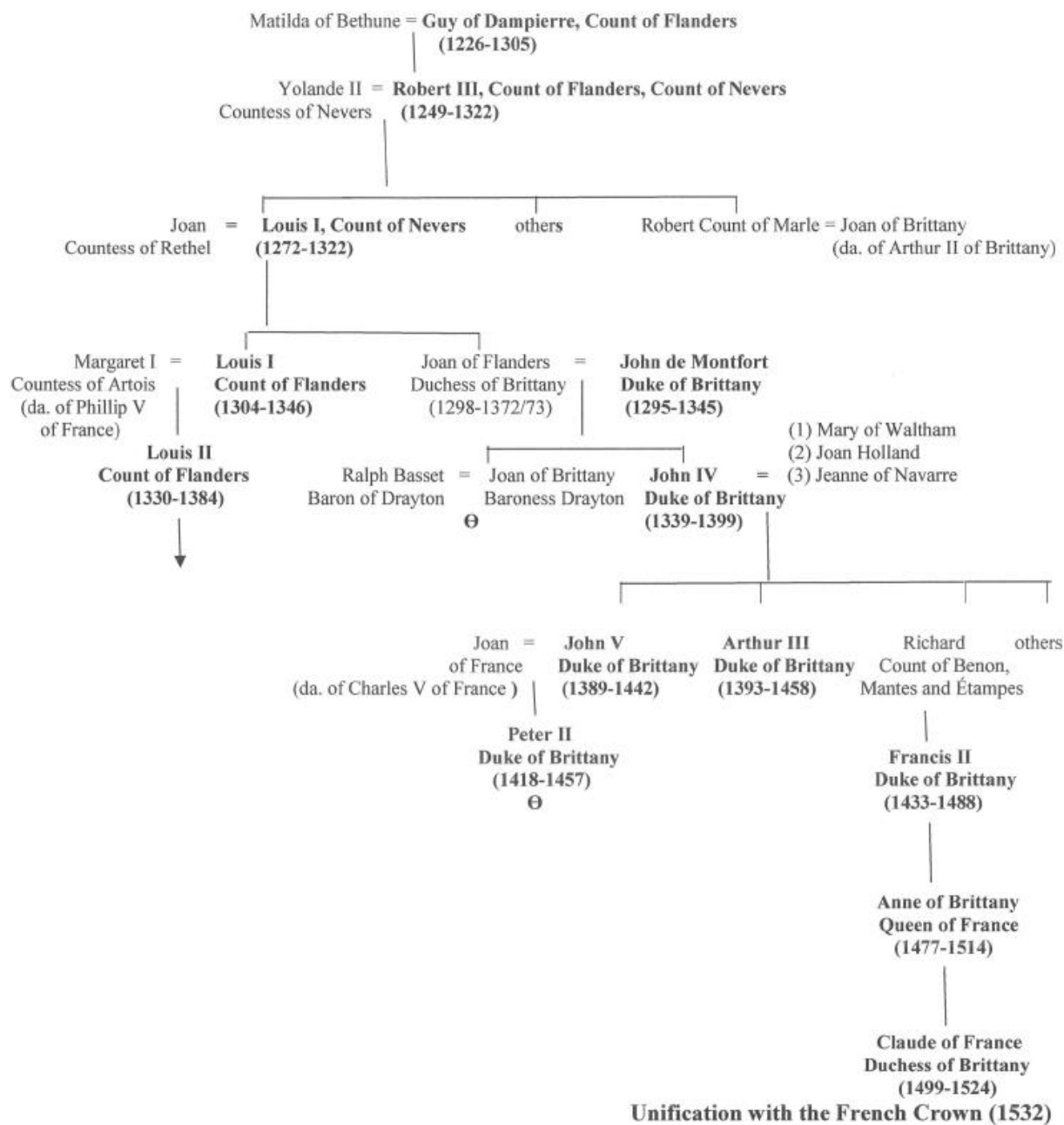


Table 3. Counts of Flanders with the Dukes of Brittany 1226-1532

<sup>52</sup> Table 3, Genealogy of the Houses of Dampierre and Montfort with rulers in bold



With all these events swirling, one might ask when did Joan of Flanders marry John de Montfort? Could the machinations of Franco-Flemish affairs have had any adverse effects on her marriage prospects? She does not reappear in the historical record until 1328 when she would have been about thirty, well-above marriageable age for medieval nobility. Was she a less desirable match or was there an administrative impediment? Her brother's marriage contract to Isabella de Valois was repudiated shortly after being drafted in 1308 by Isabella's father, Count Charles de Valois.<sup>53</sup> However, that arrangement was quite confusing as Charles de Valois in 1317 reaffirmed the 1308 commitment and the conjugal conventions indicated that Louis de Crécy could have his choice of Count Charles' daughters in marriage.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps this back and forth denotes the fluidity of favor and gamesmanship in medieval European high politics. Animosity and bad blood between the Kings of France and Counts of Flanders delayed Joan of Flanders marriage until she had: an acceptable champion (brother) to represent her interests in Nevers and Rethel, a suitor worthy of her inheritance (John de Montfort, son of the Duke of Brittany and heir to Montfort l'Amaury), and all royal fiefs were in good standing with France.

The marriage arrangement between Joan of Flanders and John de Montfort was more about French relations and consolidation of feudal power than Breton-Flemish affairs. In 1328 Brittany was stable and Duke Jean III of Brittany, despite having no children legitimate or otherwise, had his younger full-brother Guy de Bretagne as his heir apparent. The Duke of Brittany, like the Count of Flanders, was on friendly terms with the new King Philippe VI of France. Philippe VI had just brutally put down a peasant rebellion in Flanders at Cassel that restored Louis I to his throne, after fleeing to France, and transferred authority of Flanders

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<sup>53</sup> Lucas, "The Low Countries," 85.

<sup>54</sup> Limburg-Stirum, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Flandrae*, ii: 295.

back to the count with an ominous warning that if he ever needed to be rescued again that Flanders would be incorporated into France.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, “the change in royal dynasty in 1328 [Valois accession] was helpful to the Breton cause. In the same year Jean III fought personally in the French victory at Cassel over the Flemings in revolt. A grateful Phillippe VI confirmed the concessions made by his Capetian predecessors.”<sup>56</sup> In the late 1320s, John de Montfort was in a precarious situation as he had felt slighted by his brother Duke Jean III who had insufficiently endowed both him and his mother with his father’s vast estates. Consequently, John de Montfort “became a life-long seeker after land, exploiting to the full whatever rights he possessed thanks to complex ties formed by endogamic marriage patterns among the higher nobility of northern France.”<sup>57</sup> In May 1329, John de Montfort began to use the avenues available to him. At the Cathédrale de Notre Dame de Chartres with King Philippe VI in attendance, John de Montfort married Joan of Flanders, sister of Louis I of Flanders; more importantly for him she was the daughter of the late Count of Rethel and Nevers, whose brother promised as her dowry certain lands in those counties.<sup>58</sup> Following the nuptials, a bitter dispute ensued between John de Montfort and Louis I of Flanders over the non-payment of the aforementioned dowry.

The dispute over Joan of Flanders’ dowry was yet another controversy that dragged on and spilled over into relations between England and France. John de Montfort was so involved with the recovery of his wife’s patrimony that he spent little of his time in Brittany

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<sup>55</sup> TeBrake, *Plague*, 124.

<sup>56</sup> Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones, *The Bretons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 205.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>58</sup> Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne: Composée sur les Titres & les Auteurs Originaux*, in Hathitrust Digital Library (Paris: F. Muguet, 1707), 1: 306; John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 21.

and more of it in Paris trying legally to resolve the matter. He had claimed Nevers and Rethel on Joan's behalf and since he possessed the County of Montfort, John de Montfort was attempting to consolidate his interests around Paris where he was *persona grata*.<sup>59</sup> Louis I of Flanders refused to comply with the terms of his sister's marriage contract because her dowry allocated to her among other assets 3000 livres from the County of Nevers and 200 livres from the County of Rethel; however, both counties were to remain in possession of the Count of Flanders.<sup>60</sup> Louis I of Flanders refused to pay and never complied even with the judgment of the Courts of France.<sup>61</sup> Thus began a legal odyssey lasting more than thirty years, passed on to the litigants' descendants. Neither John de Montfort nor Joan of Flanders ever received any compensation from these lands in their lifetimes, probably because her brother needed that income when he fled Flanders again in 1339 for Paris, before the English victory at Sluys.<sup>62</sup> With Duke John IV resuming the legal challenge on behalf of his mother once he assumed the throne, the matter continued to be a nuisance for France, Flanders, Burgundy (Louis I's wife was Marguerite I of Burgundy) and a cause célèbre for England (inserted clause regarding these lands in Treaty of Brétigny) and Brittany.<sup>63</sup> When Duke Jean III of Brittany died in 1341 with no direct heir, John de Montfort had been embroiled with the settlement for over ten years in comparison the issue of the Breton succession, initially, looked like it would be easy to rectify.

The *War of the Two Joans* had its dramatic twists and turns but it forged Joan of Flanders and it was at the siege of Hennebont that she proved her metal. At Hennebont, she was the

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<sup>59</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 215.

<sup>60</sup> Barthélemy Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, "Philippe le Hardi et Jean IV (1364-1404)" in *Deux Féodaux: Bourgogne et Bretagne; 1363-1491*, (Paris: Bolvin, 1935), 24.

<sup>61</sup> Lobineau, *Histoire*, 1: 306.

<sup>62</sup> Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, 22.

<sup>63</sup> Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, "Philippe de Hardi," 24.

right person, at the right place at the right time. She assumed the mantle of leadership from her grand-father and great-grandfather. Singularly focused on victory, like Count Guy Dampierre with his son, she had her son in her arms and successfully routed the French. How did it happen? Following the imprisonment of John de Montfort in December 1341, hope seemed lost for the Montfortist cause in Brittany. Town after town fell to the Blois-Penthièvre forces. Following the capture of Rennes, the second-city of Brittany, with all of Gallo-Brittany securely in his hands by Spring 1342, Charles de Blois commenced to seize ‘Bretagne Bretonnante,’ or Western Brittany with its principle cities of Nantes, Vannes, and Hennebont.<sup>64</sup> Charles de Blois had managed to capture Nantes even before he had wrested full control of Rennes and was on track to have the south and west coasts of Brittany under his command by July or August. With the exception of Vannes and Hennebont, which had natural defenses as well as powerful man-made fortifications of ditches, palisades, and towers dating from the twelfth century.<sup>65</sup> Joan of Flanders was at Hennebont and there she made her stand.

According to chronicler Jean Froissart, after Charles de Blois captured the city of Rennes in early May, “he was advised to set out for Hennebont, where the Countess of Montfort [Joan of Flanders] lived; for now that the Count was in prison the war would be at an end once the countess and her son could be captured.”<sup>66</sup> Following her husband’s imprisonment, she with her infant son at her side visited all of the towns and fortresses that were loyal to the

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<sup>64</sup> Jules Viard and Eugène Déprez, eds., *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1904) i: 270; Émile Molinier, ed., *Chronique Normande du XIVe Siècle* in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1882), 53; Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Year War I: Trial by Battle*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, 389.

<sup>65</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 377.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicles*, ed. and trans. John Jolliffe (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), 122.

Montfortist cause shoring up support and rousing them by every means in her power.<sup>67</sup> As Hennebont was now home for the Montfortists, she was going to defend it mightily. Therefore, upon the approach of Charles de Blois, she ordered the alarm bells rung and commanded everyone to arm themselves for the defense of the town.<sup>68</sup> Day after day Blois-Penthièvre forces were unable to pierce the town walls and were forced to retreat to their encampments. To rally the townspeople, Joan of Flanders, clad in armor and astride a horse, rode through the streets ordering women to throw stones and pots of quicklime from the ramparts. To watch her troops, she would climb a tower and from there she could survey the landscape and assess their progress. When she noticed that the Blois-Penthièvre commanders had left camp unattended, according to Mary Anne Everett Green paraphrasing Froissart: “she collected three hundred horsemen...rode out of the gate, at the head of her men, and galloped up to the tents and lodgings of her attackers, and cut them down and burned them with impunity....When the French saw their camp on fire, and heard the hue and cry, they ran back astounded, crying ‘We are betrayed!’ so that the assault on the town was called off.”<sup>69</sup> However, the siege was far from over.

Joan of Flanders had entreated her supporters to be resolute. She had been awaiting English reinforcements for months, since she and Edward III signed agreements.<sup>70</sup> As previously mentioned Sir Walter de Mauny and his *coup de main* contingent of archers, men-at-arms, knights and squires did not reach Hennebont until May, despite being dispatched in March. There had been numerous delays and difficulties in shipping compounded by a strike

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<sup>67</sup> Mary Anne Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), 3: 268.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>70</sup> Letters exchanged in November 1341, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, in Medieval Genealogy Resources (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901), 1340-1343, 333.

in Southampton that embargoed his vessels.<sup>71</sup> Joan of Flanders begged her nobles to be patient and wait three days more days for help to arrive and it was precisely at that moment that her prayers were answered. From a window looking out at the sea, she cried with delight: ““I can see the relief coming that I have longed for so dearly!’ She repeated this shout, and everyone in the town ran to the windows and battlements; and they could clearly see a great number of ships both large and small approaching Hennebont. They were much comforted by this, for they had rightly assumed that it was the fleet from England that had been held up for two months by contrary winds.”<sup>72</sup> Joan of Flanders reportedly greeted the English contingent warmly and after a day’s rest, the fighting resumed.

However, the French offered little resistance. With Sir Walter de Mauny, the Montfortists managed to subdue the Blois-Penthièvre forces decisively. “The attackers, seeing that they were having the worst of it and losing men to no purpose, retired, and afterwards the troops from the town re-entered it and dispersed. The countess was to be seen coming down from the castle and kissing Sir Walter and his companions two or three times, each in turn, the valiant lady that she was.”<sup>73</sup> Charles de Blois abandoned Hennebont to seek victory in less implacable towns. He captured Vannes, but could not capitalize on this success. For when Edward III arrived in October, the Blois-Penthièvre forces were driven out of Rennes, Nantes, and Vannes. King Philippe VI did not come to the aid of Charles de Blois as he wisely realized that he had more to lose than he had to gain in Brittany. After the armies dispersed pending a truce, King Edward III took shelter with Joan of Flanders for a

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<sup>71</sup> Michael Packe, *King Edward III*, ed. L.C.B. Seaman (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983), 125.

<sup>72</sup> Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicles*, 125.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

month in Hennebont and on February 22, 1343 he sailed home for England taking with him Joan of Flanders and her children.<sup>74</sup>

In short order, Hennebont, the implacable firewall for the Montfortists, would become synonymous with the heroic and steely determination of its defender Joan of Flanders. Largely because of the sensational depiction in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*, whose near-contemporaneous account has been followed with few reservations by all subsequent scholars.<sup>75</sup> As Hennebont and Joan of Flanders became inexorably linked, historians Flemish and French alike would evoke the name Joan of Flanders when discussing not only the siege, but the Montfortists sustainability during this early phase of the Breton Civil War. Moreover, scholars, farther removed from the events, lavishly built upon Froissart's narrative. Hennebont would have fallen into the hands of its enemy, if it had not been for the virtues of Joan of Flanders, overcoming her sex and her unfortunate circumstances with raw courage that propelled one forward against all odds.<sup>76</sup> Surrounded by the enemy, "an amazon did not appear so virtuous", having made an achievement of the greatest boldness that even a blind man could see."<sup>77</sup> Although grandiose, the praise is warranted because she did save Brittany from falling into the hands of Charles de Blois and spared the Bretons the anguish felt by the Flemings under repeated French occupations. Therefore, it is right to attribute the Montfortist Brittany's survival to Joan of Flanders. For she put up the resistance

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<sup>74</sup> Packe, *King Edward III*, 130.

<sup>75</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 218.

<sup>76</sup> Jean-Baptiste Lesbroussart, "Précis Historique de Jeanne de Flandres: Mère de Jean IV, Duc de Bretagne, Surnommé le Conquérant," in *Nouveaux Mémoires De L'Académie Impériale et Royale Des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles*, (Brussels: Académie de Bruxelles, 1820), 1: 242.

<sup>77</sup> Bertrand d'Argentré, *L'Histoire de Bretagne, des rois, ducs, comtes, et princes d'icelle, depuis l'an 383 jusques au temps de madame Anne Reyne de France dernière Duchesse. Troisième édition revue et augmentée par messire Charles d'Argentré*, ed. Charles d'Argentré, (Rennes: Vatar et Ferré, 1668), 280.

## Jeanne la Flamme and the English Approach to Brittany (1342)<sup>78</sup>



Figure 1. Joan of Flanders spotting the English off the coast of Brittany

<sup>78</sup> Figure 1, Guizot's depiction of Joan of Flanders spotting the English reinforcements of the coast of Brest, François Guizot, *A Popular History of France, from the Earliest Times*, (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1869), 2:283.



that slowed the French advance and negotiations with the English torpedoed King Philippe VI's hope for a quick resolution to this dispute.<sup>79</sup>

If Hennebont was about defending her husband's interests, what would be Joan of Flanders' life's work after the siege? She would have the same mission: preserving the Montfortist hereditary line and amassing power through political marriage alliances--in other words securing the heirs of Brittany. When Edward III departed Brittany for England in late February after finalizing of the Truce of Malestroit with France on January 19, 1343, the Duchess of Brittany and her children left with him.<sup>80</sup> Joan of Flanders' children stayed with her throughout 1343; however, when she departed for Tickhill Castle in Yorkshire on October 3, 1343,<sup>81</sup> John (1339-1399) and Joan (1341-1403), the Infants of Brittany, did not accompany her.<sup>82</sup> Initially, they resided in the Tower of London, which was a royal residence and not a prison, in the royal nursery in the care of William de Wakefield, until permanent placements were made.<sup>83</sup> Having undisputedly assumed the role as guardian for both children in 1345 following the death of their father, King Edward III made all future decisions as to their welfare and education until their majority.<sup>84</sup> Taking full advantage of both of their parents' absence, Edward III placed the Infants of Brittany in Queen Philippa's

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<sup>79</sup> Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*. In Adae Murimuth *Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed by Edward Maude Thomson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 129, 134.

<sup>81</sup> London (Kew), The National Archives, Pipe Rolls, E 372/203, October 3, 1343, Account of William Fraunk (Frank) for keeping the Duchess of Brittany, October 3 1343- November 19, 1346.

<sup>82</sup> London (Kew), The National Archives, Issue Rolls, E 403/311, m. 17; For Joan of Flanders' captivity, see Chapter Seven

<sup>83</sup> TNA, E 403/329. m.32, 34; E 403/330, October 11, 1343; E 403/331 m. 9 and m.23; Children in Tower of London, see Chapter Five

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica inter reges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes vel communitates ab ingressu Gulielmi I in Angliam, a. d. 1066 ad nostra usque tempora habita....* eds. Robert Sanderson, John Caley, Frederic Holbrooke and Adam Clarke (London: Eyre & Strahan, 1825), 3.1: 63.

charge,<sup>85</sup> where John of Brittany remained until he became of age for military training<sup>86</sup> and Joan remained until marriage.<sup>87</sup>

How did Joan of Flanders' children fare without her? Less is known about her daughter Joan of Brittany (Joane de Bretagne), Lady Basset, Baroness Drayton, particularly in her early years. As a youth, she seemed to have been well provisioned and was reared in a similar fashion as the Queen Philippa's daughters, with personal attendants and receiving regular subsidies into adulthood.<sup>88</sup> While young John of Brittany was precontracted to marry Princess Mary of Waltham, daughter of King Edward III and Queen Philippa from her birth in October 1344, Joan of Brittany remained unmarried into her late twenties possibly early thirties.<sup>89</sup> John of Brittany, as Duke, had proposed marriage between his sister and the hostage Jean de Blois, heir of his rival Charles de Blois as part of the first Treaty of Guérande in 1365.<sup>90</sup> It would have united both factions of the ducal family and healed divisions within the Breton nobility; however, it never materialized either due to the Black Prince's disapproval or Blois' usefulness as a captive.<sup>91</sup> Duke John IV, heavily indebted to the English for his throne, with Edward III's advancing age increasingly turned to the king's presumed successor for guidance and policy advice.

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<sup>85</sup> CPR, 1345-1348, 74; Michael Jones, *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399: Relations with England and France During the Reign of Duke John IV* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1970), 16.

<sup>86</sup> V. H. Galbraith, *The Anonimale Chronicle*, 1333 to 1381, From a MS. Written at St Mary's Abbey, York. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), 48, 72.

<sup>87</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 607.

<sup>88</sup> Payments to Demoiselle/Domicella (Lady) Perota de Britannie for the Infants of Brittany, TNA, E 36/205, p. 14 (1349-50); Payments for Queen Philippa for the maintenance of the Infants of Brittany, E 403/422, May 6, 1365; E 402/425, December 4, 1365.

<sup>89</sup> Mary Anne Everett Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849) 3: 272.

<sup>90</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 20.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*; Jean de Blois was not released until January 1388, *Ibid*, 106; See *Chapter Six*.

By 1376,<sup>92</sup> Joan of Brittany had married Ralph Basset, 4<sup>th</sup> Baron of Drayton (1335-90) the scion of a longstanding Staffordshire family with tenancies dating back to the Norman Conquest.<sup>93</sup> As Orderic Vitalis noted in the twelfth century, the Bassets had a proclivity for exaltation “above other earls and other eminent men;” consequently, they sought social advancement through political marriages and land tenure.<sup>94</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> Baron of Drayton had fought alongside the Black Prince at Poitiers in 1357 and as a member of the Lords’ Committee to the Commons was a part of the Lancastrian inner circle.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, when Joan of Brittany’s marriage to Jean de Blois fell through, Ralph Basset capitalized on the situation. Upon his death in 1390, Lady Basset became a propertied woman in her own right for she had: an assignation of the Lordships of Olney and Pattingham, and for her dowry a third part of the Manors of Shiringham, Gretewell (Greetwell), Ratcliff-upon-Soar, Rakedale, Willows, Radcliffe-on-the Wreake, Colston-Basset, Sherington, Tawstock and a fourth part of the Manor of Barrow-upon-Soar in the counties of Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Devonshire and Buckinghamshire.<sup>96</sup>

The matter of the Honour of Richmond was never settled with the Montforts and even Joan of Brittany factored into the matter. She had inherited the litigious nature of their father and sued her sister-in-law, Jeanne de Navarre, Duchess of Brittany over a bill for wine in 1390,<sup>97</sup> which to her death was unresolved, and tenants for unpaid rents.<sup>98</sup> When Duke John IV raised the issue of the Earldom of Richmond with King Richard II, Lady Basset managed

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<sup>92</sup> CPR, 1374-1377, 358.

<sup>93</sup> Battle Abbey and Bernard Burke. *The Roll of Battle Abbey, Annotated*. (London: E. Churton, 1848), 17

<sup>94</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 6:16.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Frederick Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England, The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals* (Manchester: At the University Press, 1928), 3: 315.

<sup>96</sup> William Dugdale, *The Baronage of England*, (London: Roper, Martin & Herringman, 1675), I: 381-82.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, SC 8/332/15776.

<sup>98</sup> CPR, 1396-1399, 132.

to obtain a grant of Custodian of Richmond Castle along with Anthony de Rise and Nicholas Alderwych.<sup>99</sup> When she became Constable in 1398, Richard II released (*acquietantia*) her brother of all Richmond issues and arrears due to the king.<sup>100</sup> She was never the Countess of Richmond, a title afforded to the consort of Duke of Brittany and upon brother's death in 1399, Richmond definitively reverted to the crown.<sup>101</sup> Joan of Brittany is presumed to have died on Thursday, November 8, 1403,<sup>102</sup> and like her mother, there is a discrepancy in the historical record. Dugdale dates her death as the Thursday before Martinmas<sup>103</sup> in 1403;<sup>104</sup> however, patent roll membrane *14 IV Henry IV* dated May 31, 1403 states that her possessions in the realm already had been taken into the king's hands due to her death.<sup>105</sup> Her death, either to age or illness, must have been anticipated,<sup>106</sup> since arrangements had been made on June 8, 1399 for the grant of Olney Manor in Buckinghamshire to Edmund, Duke of York to be conferred upon her death. Per the terms of her will dated March 27, 1402, she was buried at Lavendon Abbey near Olney.<sup>107</sup>

John of Brittany, Duke John IV of Brittany, received all of the blessings of his heritage and the curses of his nurture. More equipped than his uncle and grandfather to govern their domains; nevertheless, it would take Duke John IV years to throw off the English yoke. Duke John IV's government had three distinct phases: minority, exile and recovery. Each was a

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>100</sup> John Rickard, *The Castle Community: The Personnel of English and Welsh Castles: 1272 – 1422* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 492; Release of Richmond reliefs, TNA, E 30/332; Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 144.

<sup>101</sup> George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*. (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 10: 824.

<sup>102</sup> Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta Being Illustrations from Wills, of Manners, Customs, &C. As Well As of the Descents and Possessions of Many Distinguished Families: from the Reign of Henry the Second to the Accession of Queen Elizabeth* (London: Nichols & Son, 1826), i: 157.

<sup>103</sup> Feast of St. Martin of Tours, November 11

<sup>104</sup> Dugdale, *Baronage*, III: 381.

<sup>105</sup> *CPR, 1401-1405*, 247.

<sup>106</sup> *CPR, 1399-1401*, 400.

<sup>107</sup> Nicolas, *Testamenta*, 157; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 2: 259.

consequence of the other with John of Brittany's success not guaranteed, but reflective of his inheritance of his mother's political deftness.

Edward III took a keen interest in the development of his ward, John of Brittany, and as with his children he endowed the young Duke with personal servants and gifts for income. He spent his childhood in the household of Queen Philippa with her coterie of young royals until he became of age to join Henry Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster's charge for military training.<sup>108</sup> As the revenue from Richmond was not available to John of Brittany for expenses, he was dependent upon Edward III for his sustenance and the security of his country.<sup>109</sup> Being so obligated to Edward III for years, in 1361 John of Brittany renounced his ducal claim to the Earldom of Richmond, one that years later he repudiated.<sup>110</sup> Aside from Edward III's flirtations with a truce between England and the Blois-Penthièvre faction in 1350's, his treatment of John of Brittany and concern for his interests was fair and protective. Gradually albeit grudgingly, Edward III relinquished control of Brittany to his protégé. John of Brittany assumed the titular lordship of his ancestral lands of Guérande in 1358. Although absent from the Reims campaign in 1359-60, he was present for the Saint-Omer negotiations over the Breton succession in April 1361<sup>111</sup> after recuperating in summer of 1360 with his mother.<sup>112</sup> They briefly spent some time together in July 1360 at Chester Castle before he returned to the continent. By 1362, he was the nominative ruler of Brittany with the Treaty of Brétigny-Calais (1360) having concluded hostilities between England and

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<sup>108</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 16; Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.1: 335.

<sup>109</sup> TNA, E 403/408, July 10, 1361, September 13, 1361.

<sup>110</sup> *Calendar of Close Rolls of Edward III, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1360-1364*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1896), 250-51.

<sup>111</sup> TNA, E 403/405, February 20, 1361; Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 608, 612; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 15, 40.

<sup>112</sup> TNA, E 101/393/11, fol. 63r, See *Chapter Six*

France.<sup>113</sup> However, Duke John IV was not emancipated from England nor would he be for several years.

Edward III had assured the alliance between England and France with the marriage of Mary of Waltham to Duke John IV on July 13, 1361 at Woodstock Palace, Oxfordshire.<sup>114</sup> Despite Duchess Mary's death only thirty weeks later,<sup>115</sup> the bonds between Duke John IV and Edward III were so strong that they outlasted her death, an indication of the esteem, if not, the importance that each attached to the other. Advisedly, Duke John IV would not remarry without King Edward III's consent and remained in close ties with the English court even after returning to Brittany in 1362.<sup>116</sup> Beyond the personal admiration, there were, "a number of political, financial, and legal ties; a treaty of alliance (which conformed to the terms of Brétigny-Calais); an acknowledged debt of 64,000 nobles to Edward, and the handing over of two castles as surety for this sum and [lastly] a renewed promise not to marry without Edward's consent."<sup>117</sup> Duke John IV's ties to England and loyalty to Edward IV insured that he would pursue pro-English policies that complicated his relations with the Breton nobles and jeopardized his rule for the years to come.

Breton politics was a hornet's nest, before the civil war. Gallo-Brittany, primarily the francophone regions in the North and East, consisted of great magnates with French loyalties and feudal dependence. Alternatively, Breton-speaking Brittany was primarily a region of

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<sup>113</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 17.

<sup>114</sup> TNA, C 81/1334/16; *CPR, 1361-1364*, 29, 32

<sup>115</sup> Thomas Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliæ, Ab Anno Domini 1328 Usque Ad Annum 1388 Auctore Monacho Quodam Sancti Albani*. Ed. Edward Maunde Thompson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19.

<sup>116</sup> W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, 431; Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 662.

<sup>117</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 18.

little harbors and minor seigneuries without cohesion or obvious natural alliances.<sup>118</sup> In 1362, John of Brittany did not have a natural base of support within Brittany when he established his rule. After defeating his rivals Jeanne de Penthièvre and Charles de Blois on September 29, 1364 at the Battle of Auray, Duke John IV had achieved the decisive victory for which the Montfortists had longed but immediately put forward pro-English diplomatic policies. When King Charles V of France recognized John of Brittany the rightful Duke and successor to Duke Jean III of Brittany in the Treaty of Guérande (1365), he had anticipated Duke John IV performing homage to him in return for Brittany. After dithering over the entire ceremony for more than a year, Duke John IV finally acquiesced, performing simple rather than liege homage<sup>119</sup> and promptly returned to the bosom of Edward III spending the coming hunting season with him.<sup>120</sup> Further asserting his independence of Valois suzerainty and pledging mutual support for Plantagenet primacy, in the spring of 1366 Duke John IV married the Black Prince's stepdaughter Lady Joan Holland<sup>121</sup> and with that gesture the Anglo-Montfortist alliance reached its apex and would have reverberations for the rest of Duke John IV's reign.

The years from 1365-1373 were a disaster for Duke John IV. He remained out of touch with the rank and file of the Breton nobility and made a series of miscalculations. He maintained a vague relationship with France, renewing his father's claim in the French court

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<sup>118</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 376.

<sup>119</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 753; Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, Gallica Bibliothèque nationale de France digital archive (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742), i: 1607-13; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 19.

<sup>120</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 432.

<sup>121</sup> *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, eds. William Henry Bliss and Jessie Alfred Twemlow, (London: H.M.S.O., 1893), iv: 54.

for rents and dominion over the Counties of Rethel and Nevers.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, he persisted in pro-English policies that exacerbated the old divisions among the Breton aristocracy, i.e. the continued English occupation of Brest and western peninsula of Brittany (Finistère).<sup>123</sup> At this point in the late 1360s, Duke John IV had yet to realize that Brittany's interests necessarily would have to diverge from those of England and France, especially if their antagonisms resumed.<sup>124</sup> Having not sired an heir and with the possibility of Jeanne de Penthièvre reigniting her claim to the ducal throne, Duke John IV's position became more perilous and the resumption of Anglo- French hostilities in 1369 drew him back into their fight. The final straw for King Charles V occurred on July 20, 1372, when Edward III restored Duke John IV to the Honour and Earldom of Richmond thereby entering into another alliance that included freedom of commerce and common currencies in Brittany and the Guyenne.<sup>125</sup> As a result, in 1373 following an invasion by French forces into Brittany, he and Duchess Joan were driven into exile in England, much like his uncle Count Louis I of Flanders in 1339.<sup>126</sup>

While in exile Duke John IV made repeated efforts to recover his domain; however, it would be the misjudgments of the French that led to his restoration. In England, Duke John IV and Duchess Joan stayed in good favor, by all means at their disposal, with a loyal coterie of supporters most notably King Edward III.<sup>127</sup> Contrastingly, King Charles V of France

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<sup>122</sup> Bretagne, Duc Jean IV. *Recueil des actes de Jean IV, duc de Bretagne*, ed. Michael Jones (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1983), ii: (203), 215.

<sup>123</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 164-70

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>125</sup> Alliance, TNA, E 30/262; Proclamation of alliance, TNA, E 30/269, Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.1: 206-08; Richmond, Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.2: 953-56; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 822-23.

<sup>126</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 235.

<sup>127</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 183; Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War III: Divided Houses*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 214; Christopher Michael Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 21.



overplayed his hand and on December 18, 1378 he condemned Duke John IV in absentia of treason and pronounced Brittany forfeit and ceded to the demesne of France.<sup>128</sup> However, there was angst and uproar throughout the Breton nobility against Charles V's unprecedented seizure of Brittany (blatant power grab) and its ramifications for the succession. The loudest of these opponents was Jeanne de Penthièvre who was outraged that the confiscation decree not only nullified Duke John IV's claim but that of her son Jean, still incarcerated in England, as Duke John IV's heir presumptive. While displeased with Duke John IV's English proclivities, the Breton aristocracy had no desire to see Brittany "go the way of Normandy," absorbed into the administrative and fiscal regime of France.<sup>129</sup> In what Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones referred to as "one of the most defiant steps ever taken to defend Breton political interest in the Middle Ages," a coalition of Breton lords, clerics and townsmen appealed to Duke John IV to return in 1379 to prevent French annexation.<sup>130</sup> Wiser and more confident, Duke John IV returned that very year.<sup>131</sup>

The following year, the death of King Charles V of France and minority of Charles VI provided opportunities for Duke John IV to broach a peace with France on his own terms. Duke John IV now shrewdly distanced himself from King Richard II and avoided any policies that would be seen as obviously pro-English. "On April 6, 1381 a second treaty was ratified at Guérande,<sup>132</sup> which brought warfare to an end and restored legal relations with France. The duke formally renounced his alliance with Richard II of England...performed

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<sup>128</sup> Morice, "Chronicon Briocense," in *Memoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, Gallica Bibliothèque nationale de France digital archive (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742), i: 49; Roland Delachenal, ed., *Les Grandes Chroniques de France. Chronique des règnes de Jean II et de Charles V* (Paris: Renouard, 1910), ii: 349-59; iii: 213-19.

<sup>129</sup> Sumption, *Divided Houses*, 354

<sup>130</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Breton*, 235.

<sup>131</sup> Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliæ*, 234-35.

<sup>132</sup> Morice, *Preuves*, ii: 298-301; Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 236.

homage to Charles VI (September 1381), and came to terms with his domestic enemies.”

Like his uncle Duke Jean III, he provided service to Charles VI against Bishop Despenser's army in Flanders in 1383, earning remission from financial penalties imposed in 1381.<sup>133</sup>

While Duke John IV established more normative relations with France along the traditional patterns of Franco-Breton diplomacy, King Richard II was personally offended. The proverbial volleyball, Richard II revoked the Earldom of Richmond from Duke John IV.<sup>134</sup>

Moreover, the return of Duchess Joan Holland to Brittany was delayed until 1383, after it was determined that she was dying. Her death in November 1384<sup>135</sup> removed an important link with the Plantagenets and liberated Duke John IV in a way that he had not been previously.

The marriage of Duke John IV to Jeanne de Navarre on September 11, 1386<sup>136</sup> and the birth of the long-awaited heir, on December 24, 1389 assured the security of Montfort dynasty.<sup>137</sup> With the arrival of his son, styled as Count Jean de Montfort, Duke John IV had averted another succession crisis as Jean de Blois was no longer the presumptive heir to Brittany nor the great magnate that his mother had been. Duke John IV would spend his final years avoiding pitfalls, and carefully straddling both fences with loyalties to England and obligations to France, as the previous dukes had done. To harmonize relations with France, he precontracted Count Jean de Montfort to marry Jeanne de France, daughter of King

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<sup>133</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 93.

<sup>134</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 823.

<sup>135</sup> La Borderie, Louis Arthur Le Moine de. *Histoire de Bretagne* (Rennes: J. Plihon & L. Herve, 1896.),4: 136 ; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 99.

<sup>136</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 4: 136.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

Charles VI,<sup>138</sup> with the nuptials taking place seven years later in July 1397.<sup>139</sup> Also, Duke John IV's accepted French compensation to release the Montfortist claim to Rethel and Nevers.<sup>140</sup> As for England, Duke John IV proposed the marriage of his daughter Marie to Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt and future Henry IV of England, with a dowry of Brest and some castellanies in northwestern Brittany. However, the negotiations fell through and Duke John IV widow, Duchess Jeanne de Navarre, eventually married King Henry IV of England in 1403.<sup>141</sup> While Duke John IV recovered the Earldom of Richmond, after his death in 1399, it was permanently ceded to the English Crown.<sup>142</sup> His reign, ducal authority and preservation of the Montfortist line were testaments to the skills that he had inherited from his mother.

The nature of the relationship between Joan of Flanders' children and their Flemish cousins is unclear. Joan of Flanders' children did not grow up on the continent and likely felt more English than anything else. Nevertheless, Duke John IV was in communication with his only first cousin, Louis de Mâle, Count of Flanders, upon his return to Brittany in 1360. Joan of Flanders' brother, Louis I of Flanders had died at Crécy in 1346 and his teenage son Louis II or Louis de Mâle (Louis of Mâle) was now sovereign.<sup>143</sup> The surviving letters from Duke John IV to the Count of Flanders are not wholly determinative of genuine affection, as they contained the usual salutations and graciousness. In a letter dated April 21, 1364

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<sup>138</sup> Bretagne, Duc Jean IV. *Recueil*, ii: (799), 503; Marcel Thibault, *Isabeau de Bavière, reine de France* (Paris: Perrin & Cie, 1903), 312; Léon Mirot, "Isabelle de France," *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* xvii, (1904):560-62; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 134. Maurice Rey?

<sup>139</sup> Maurice Rey, *Les finances royales sous Charles VI; les causes du déficit, 1388-1413* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1965), 338, 341-42.

<sup>140</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 140.

<sup>141</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:824; Alison Weir, *Britain's Royal Families: The Complete Genealogy* (London: Bodley Head, 1989), 129

<sup>142</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:824.

<sup>143</sup> Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 224.

acknowledging his reasons for further military action against Charles de Blois, Duke John IV referred to Count Louis de Mâle repeatedly as “ ‘trescher cousin,’ whom the Holy Spirit has in his grace and from whom he would like to hear.”<sup>144</sup> A second letter from the Duke to the Count dated October 8, 1364 after the defeat of Charles de Blois contained similar pleasantries.<sup>145</sup> However, more can be gleaned from Duke John IV sojourn with his cousin in 1373. After a failed attempt to recover Brittany, Duke John IV withdrew to Flanders to the court of his cousin Louis de Mâle.<sup>146</sup> Louis de Male was harboring a fugitive and King Charles V of France, his overlord, could have charged him with treason. However, Louis de Mâle, who was said to have good judgment unlike other Dampierre men, obviously knew what he was doing and periodically acted as mediator between his cousin and King of France, as he “could pacify their differences.”<sup>147</sup>

Joan of Flanders or Joan the Fiery, a product of her circumstances as much her family, exceeded all expectations. She had the ability to read a situation and use it to her advantage. During times of war, people were often called to do more and take on more responsibility. In 1374, Duchess Joan Holland was left to defend the English fortresses in the Finistère after Duke John IV fled Brittany in 1373.<sup>148</sup> All Duchess Joan Holland had to do was to follow the textbook example of her mother-in-law thirty years earlier, alas she was not as capable. Having been captured in 1372, Duchess Joan Holland had divulged the treaty between Edward III and Duke John IV necessitating her husband’s exile.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, unlike her

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<sup>144</sup> Roland Delachenal, ed., *Histoire de Charles V* (Paris: A. Picard, 1916), iii: 542-43.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 549-550.

<sup>146</sup> Jean Froissart, *Chroniques de Jean Froissart publiées pour la Société de l'histoire de France par Siméon Luce*, eds. Siméon Luce, Gaston Raynaud, Léon Mirot, and Albert Mirot (Paris: Mme. ve. J. Renouard, 1869), 8: 212-13; Sumption, *Divided Houses*, 238.

<sup>147</sup> Morice, *Preuves*, ii: 233-35; Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V*, v: 266-73.

<sup>148</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 4: 40; Sumption, *Divided Houses*, 213.

<sup>149</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 4: 21-22.

mother-in-law, she was not able to secure Brittany and the Duke and Duchess had to seek refuge in England for the next several years.<sup>150</sup> Joan of Flanders was the exception to the rule, among men and women. It was at Hennebont, that famous siege, where she received the name “Jeanne la Flamme” the driving force behind the rout of the French.<sup>151</sup> As Les Broussart eloquently says, “For her courage, she deserves to be placed beside the greatest men and included with the brightest in the history of Flanders.”<sup>152</sup> Now let us turn to *Chapter Three, the Hundred Years War and Breton War of Succession* that catapulted Joan of Flanders onto the stage.

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<sup>150</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:823

<sup>151</sup> Jeanne Coroller-Danio and Jeanne Malivel, *Histoire de Notre Bretagne* (Dinard, Bretagne: À l'enseigne de l'hermite, 1922) 73-74.

<sup>152</sup> Lesbroussart, “Précis Historique,” 247-48.

### **Chapter Three**

## **Something Between the Cousins: Hundred Years War and the War of the Two Joans**

The Countess de Montfort needed all her heroic firmness to defend herself. Rennes had surrendered to the French and they had advanced to Hennebont, the residence of the countess, hoping to terminate the war at once, by obtaining possession of her person and that of her son. On the news of their approach, the countess rang the alarm-bells and ordered the whole town to arm for the defense; and when the siege was actually commenced, she rode up and down the place, mounted on a war steed and clothed in armor, encouraging the inhabitants to an honorable defense, and stimulating the ladies and women to unpaved the streets and hurl the stones down from the ramparts upon the foes beneath.<sup>1</sup>

If Joan of Flanders was afraid, she did not show it. Confident in her resolve, as she is portrayed in this romanticized passage, nevertheless it exemplifies the steely determination of the Duchess of Brittany upon the French approach to Hennebont in Spring 1342.

By its geography, 97 nautical miles across the Channel from England and proximate to France, Brittany would necessarily find itself drawn into entanglements between those two powers throughout the Middle Ages. Hence, the fact that Brittany was pulled into the latest skirmish between England and France was not in and of itself surprising. However, that civil war in Brittany played such a prominent role in the Hundred Years War and that its preeminent belligerents were both female were most unusual.

The French assault and siege of Hennebont occurred in late May/June 1342. Robert d'Artois, Lord of Conches-en-Ouche and cousin of John de Montfort, may have received some aid from England for a campaign to Brittany in late 1341, but he was captured in Nantes on November 20, 1341 and did not return until August 1342 with Edward III.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Anne Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), 3: 268-9. Paraphrasing Jean Froissart's Account of the siege of Hennebont. See Chapter Two.

Finally, the English reinforcements had disembarked off of the coast of Brest.<sup>2</sup> Smaller English expeditions under Sir Walter de Mauny also had done little to counter the French. While the Crown provided 100 men-at-arms for Sir Walter de Mauny expedition to Brittany in March 1342, there were unforeseen events, including desertion, that impeded supplies and assistance throughout the Breton campaign of 1342-43.<sup>3</sup> Now it was June and the Earl of Northampton, William de Bohun had just landed. Moreover, King Edward III of England, himself, was in progress to Brittany with enough men that the French would easily be beaten back.<sup>4</sup> At this moment, Joan of Flanders could hardly imagine the importance of this place in her life. For on the verge of her greatest success in 1342, in a twist of fate three years later at this very same spot her husband, John de Montfort would meet his untimely death.<sup>5</sup>

The *Breton Civil War* (1341-65) transpired against the backdrop of the *Hundred Years' War* (1337-53) and although they were two separate events, it is difficult to discuss the former without examining the later. *The Breton Civil War*, *The War of Breton Succession*, or popularly called *The War of the Two Joans*, that began in earnest on April 30, 1341 with the death of Duke Jean III of Brittany, provided yet another playing field for England and France to intermeddle. The roots of the animus between England and France in the fourteenth

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742) 1: 1429; Eugene Déprez, "La Mort de Robert d'Artois," *Revue Historique* xciv (1907), 63-6.; Michael Jones, "Sir John de Hardreshull, the King's Lieutenant in Brittany 1343-5," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 31(1987), 83-84. There were delays in the arrival of aid for the Duchess of Brittany, despite an agreement for support finalized in February 1342, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901), 1340-1343, 380. Going forward referred to as *CPR*.

<sup>3</sup> Kew, The National Archives (United Kingdom), E 36/204, fols. 105v-6r; Timothy Runyan, "Ships and Mariners in Later Medieval England," *Journal of British Studies* 16, no.2 (Spring 1977): 10.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, E 36/204, fols. 37-41v, 72v, 73 Edward III engineered three expeditions to Brittany in 1342: Sir Walter Manny in March 1342, William Bohun in July 1342, and Edward III landed in at Brest in October 1342 with 5000 men. Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones. *The Bretons*, (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1991), 222.

<sup>5</sup> John de Montfort died in Hennebont of fever on September 26, 1345. Morice, *Memoires pour servir de Preuves*, 1: 113; George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*. (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 10: 820-21.

century were hundreds of years old, but the origins of the *Hundred Years' War* trace back to the fallout of the Treaty of Paris of 1259. The treaty itself was not as much of a problem as was its interpretation and the complex tangle of disputes that emanated from its signage.<sup>6</sup> It was increasingly problematic for the king of a sovereign country to be a vassal to another monarch where each had interests independent of the other.

The Guyenne or Aquitaine was the epicenter of the diplomatic discord. Although the Guyenne had been a secure possession of English since the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry of Anjou, Henry II of England in 1152, its sovereignty had reverted to France. Per the terms of the Treaty of Paris, Henry III of England agreed to permanently renounce dynastic claims to lands already lost to the French including Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Poitou, and in return he rendered liege homage to Louis IX of France for his sole remaining continental possession, the Duchy of Aquitaine.<sup>7</sup> As a concession, Louis IX expanded the traditional boundaries of the Guyenne, including territories in Saintonge and Agenais, Limoges, Cahors, and Périgueux. The terms of the treaty were to be a source of constant frustration for England, as Aquitaine had always been a political and economic asset for the English. The Gascons were skilled fighters and crossbowmen who found placements in English armies as mercenaries. Moreover, by the fourteenth century, Bordeaux was exporting more than 80,000 tons of wine annually of which a quarter landed in England, making it quite wealthy and a source of contention for revenues and privileges.<sup>8</sup>

However, at the heart of the matter, besides the impracticality of enforcement, there was the issue of the fealty that the King of England now owed the King of France. The treaty

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<sup>6</sup> Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones, *The Bretons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 204.

<sup>7</sup> W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Year War I: Trial by Battle*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 69-70.



changed the nature of the relationship between them and caused an imbalance in power. As Jean de Joinville, counselor and confidant to Louis IX, attributes to him, ““He [Henry III of England] was not my man before, now he has entered into my homage.””<sup>9</sup> Despite good intentions on the parts of both kings, Henry III as Duke of Aquitaine acknowledged that Louis IX was his overlord and sovereign, and that dynamic posed practical problems for the governing of their respective kingdoms that ultimately proved insoluble by diplomacy.<sup>10</sup> The arrangement was doomed to fail almost as soon as they finalized it.

Less than a hundred years later, the relations between England and France were beyond repair and their ensuing plans for war had ramifications for Brittany. For the past eighty years, it had been easier to redistribute lands than loyalties, as aggrieved parties often sought restitution in various courts for offenses that pitted various law codes and jurisdictions against the other and ultimately became matters of state. A dispute in 1261 between the Bishop, Abbot, and Viscount of St. Martial in Limousin over the judicial authority of Limoges with their split allegiances between the King-Duke and the French Crown led to a revolt. As provincial officials increasingly were drawn into the fracas based upon ancient rivalries and grievances, the quarrel became too distracting for England and Edward I abandoned his fief to the French king in 1274.<sup>11</sup> This situation repeated itself throughout the English possessions in France, especially as the French Crown began to assert more of its power in its backyard.

Therefore, in 1328 when Charles IV of France, the youngest son of Philippe IV of France, died without a male heir, Edward III of England voiced his claim to the French

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<sup>9</sup> Jean Sire de Joinville, *Histoire de St. Louis*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1874), 539.

<sup>10</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 204-5.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Paul Trabut-Cussac, *L'administration Anglaise en Gascogne sous Henry III et Édouard I de 1254 à 1307*, (Genève: Droz, 1972), 32-4.

## Map of France in 1259<sup>12</sup>



Map 2. Map of France in 1259, with French and English Possessions

<sup>12</sup> Map 2, Earle W. Dow, *Atlas of European History*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1907, Plate 12<sup>1</sup>.

throne as the nearest male relative to Philippe IV.<sup>13</sup> French nobles failed to consider seriously Edward III's claim due to his minority and the fact that his mother Isabella, daughter of Philippe IV of France, was having an affair with Roger Mortimer and would have acted as regent. Salic Law, the French law code, had no provision for female succession, and it was unclear whether precedence could pass through the female line.<sup>14</sup> The irony of Edward III's claim cannot be lost here, as he would take the opposite stance in 1341 in his support of John de Montfort's claim against Jeanne de Penthièvre for the ducal throne of Brittany.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the probability of Edward III's claim, there were reasons to favor Edward III including: his Capetian heritage, the fact that he spoke French, and was a French peer as Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Ponthieu; yet, the French nobles denied his candidacy.<sup>16</sup> According to the *Chronographia regum Francorum*, the decision against Edward III came down to his age. Although Edward III was the grandson of Philippe IV of France, the French peers selected Philippe de Valois of a cadet Capetian branch because they felt his majority would make him a more fitting king.<sup>17</sup> Of the contenders in 1328 Edward III was fifteen, Philippe de Evreux (husband of Jeanne de Navarre, daughter of Louis X of France) was twenty-three, and Philippe de Valois was thirty-five by far the more senior of the group. Moreover, Valois had been the acting regent and thought to be "in command of the

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<sup>13</sup> Jules Viard, ed., *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* (Paris: Societe de l'histoire de France, 1939), ix:72-3.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War, C. 1300-C. 1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 10; W. M. Ormrod, "A Problem with Precedence: Edward III, the Double Monarchy, and the Royal Strife," in *The Age of Edward III* ed. J.S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, York Medieval Press, 2001), 134, n.4.

<sup>15</sup> Jeanne de Penthièvre (1319-84) was the niece of the late Duke Jean III (1286-41) of Brittany. She was the daughter of his younger full brother Guy, unlike John de Montfort who was a half-brother to the late duke. John de Montfort's claim was not as strong as that of Jeanne de Penthièvre. Further discussion later in this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> John Le Patourel, "Edward III and the Kingdom of France," in *Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet*, ed. Michael Jones (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 175.

<sup>17</sup> Henri Moranvillé, ed., *Chronographia regum Francorum*, in Internet Archive (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1891), i: 292.

situation.”<sup>18</sup> There is no reason to doubt the pro-French *Chronographia*, in this instance, although, Edward III’s accession would have united the two crowns and could have avoided conflict, at least in the short-term.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Edward III acquiesced and performed liege homage to King Philippe VI for Aquitaine.<sup>20</sup> While Edward III’s homage to Philippe VI was considered as tacit approval of their feudal relationship, in hindsight this action was not considered an impediment to Edward III’s claim in 1340. As Edward III’s claim was meritorious for he was the son of Isabella, daughter of Philippe IV, and the son of a king, while Philippe VI descended from Charles de Valois, son of Philippe III of France, but a count.<sup>21</sup> However, in 1337 Edward III resurrected his claim to the French throne, publically proclaimed himself King of France three years later,<sup>22</sup> and set upon a course of war that would change the face of Western Europe.

So when war broke out in 1340, hostilities between England and France would necessarily impact Brittany. While tensions had been escalating between Edward III and Philippe VI, Brittany had been facing pressure from increasing French encroachment. As in the Guyenne, Brittany had seen its ducal authority undermined by France. Brittany was a French province but had autonomy from the French Crown.<sup>23</sup> Following the collapse of the old Angevin Empire, the French crown began to assert itself in all matters of Brittany both

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<sup>18</sup> Le Patourel, “Edward III,” 175.

<sup>19</sup> Breton historian Michael Jones refers to the *Chronographia regum Francorum* as the fullest expression of Valois propaganda, Michael Jones, “The Breton Civil War,” in the *Creation of Brittany: A Late Medieval State*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1988), 209.

<sup>20</sup> In 1329, Edward III was sixteen at the time of this action and could not consent.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England: 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 304-307.

<sup>22</sup> In the Ghent marketplace on January 26, 1340 Edward first formally proclaimed himself King of France and styled himself as such. Ormrod, *Edward III*, 212; Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c.1300-c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13; Historians have considered the timing of the proclamation as a ploy to assuage the Flemish nobles to shift sides and align with Edward III.

<sup>23</sup> Jean II of Brittany (1238-1308) formally became a peer in 1297. Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 198-99; Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier. *Histoire des institutions françaises au Moyen Age*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1957), i : 276.

civil and administrative. The marriage of Pierre Mauclerc to Alix of Brittany was the first part of the French pivot towards a direct expansionist Capetian policy throughout their kingdom. The marriage of Pierre Mauclerc, second son of the Count of Dreux, to Alix of Brittany in 1212 was a watershed moment in Franco-Breton relations, as it highlighted the French Crown's intentions to link the duchy more closely to the Crown. Moreover, the judicial processes between Brittany and France became closely tethered, and there was evidence of their cooperation in their respective courts. Litigants, not exhausted by their appeals, could go directly to the French courts; similarly, those who had circumvented the proper appellate process altogether and gone directly to Paris saw their cases returned to the Breton judiciary.<sup>24</sup> Although Duke Jean III of Brittany obtained a charter enshrining Breton administrative autonomy and clearly delineating the circumstances on which the French could intervene in Brittany, by 1328 French hegemony had gone too far in Brittany and confrontation was evitable.<sup>25</sup>

Duke Jean III had tried to walk a fine line and be conciliatory to the French, to shield Brittany from outright aggression. At the risk of losing his English possession of the Honour of Richmond, he fought alongside the French in the Battle of Cassel in 1340 against Edward III in the Flemish revolt. However, Edward III did not remove the earldom from Jean III. As an olive branch, Edward III renewed Jean's grant of the Honour of Richmond, fully with the status of *comitatus* and even exempted Brittany from French tariffs.<sup>26</sup> Whether it was the pressure of the looming war or the dissatisfaction of the Breton nobles with escalating French hegemony and the attempts of France to incorporate Brittany, diplomacy no longer worked

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Jones, "Brittany in the Middle Ages," in *Creation of Brittany*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Comitatus or Earl with all the rights of tenant-in-chief to the castles, lands and tenements within the Richmond domain. *Calendar of Close Rolls of Edward III, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1339-1341*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1896), 450, referred to going forward as the *CCR*; *CPR, 1340-43*, 450

and by 1341 Breton interests became incompatible with those of the French Crown. The succession crisis of 1341 became the right opportunity for the English to exploit.

England had a long-standing relationship with Brittany and traditionally Brittany was part of the Anglo-Norman World. Richard I, Duke of Normandy's daughter Hawise (Havisa) married Geoffrey I, Duke of Brittany in 996 and Duke Richard's son Richard II married Judith of Brittany, Geoffrey's sister in.1000.<sup>27</sup> Ever since Alain le Roux, "Alan the Red" son of Odo (Eudes) Count of Penthièvre, fought alongside William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, the Breton ducal family had held the Honour of Richmond. William I of England invested his kinsman with this tenancy and all of the Breton dukes and duchesses regnant held the title Earl, Count or Countess of Richmond.<sup>28</sup> In 1160, Duke Conan IV of Brittany married Margaret of Scotland which he most certainly did with the approval of Henry II of England. Six years later in 1166 Henry II arranged the marriage of five-year-old Constance of Brittany, Conan IV's heir, to Henry II's son Geoffrey Plantagenet. Their marriage, which did not take place until 1181, resulted in issue; although, neither Eleanor nor her brother Arthur succeeded to the ducal throne. Furthermore, after the accidental death of Duke Geoffrey in 1186, Henry II arranged the less than successful remarriage of Duchess Constance to Ranulf de Blondville, Earl of Chester.<sup>29</sup> However, the King of England did not arrange Duchess Constance's third marriage. Frustrated by the stifling Angevin control of the

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<sup>27</sup> Keats-Rohan, Katharine, "The Bretons and Normans of England 1066-1154," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36, no.1 (1992): 47.

<sup>28</sup> E.B. Fryde, D.E. Greenway, S. Porter and I. Roy, eds. *Handbook of British Chronology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 478; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10:820-21.

<sup>29</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 176.

duchy, her children, and her personal captivity by Richard I of England,<sup>30</sup> Duchess Constance turned towards France for support and began to align with the French King Philippe Augustus and married Guy de Thouars in 1199.

Besides the shared heritage and blood connections, England had always been aware of Brittany's strategic importance. Brittany was one "the main lines of communication between England and Guyenne. Indeed this factor had been constant in English foreign affairs ever since 'the sea route from London and Southampton to Bordeaux and Bayonne came to have some importance for the kings of England.'"<sup>31</sup> Commercial trade and transport were less secure over land than sea. Since amicable relations between Brittany and England were imperative, especially with an ascendant France, the Richmond lands became the carrot in Anglo-Breton relations, to be dangled in front of the Breton dukes to keep them in line. "Their need to maintain a friendly Brittany is well shown in the use which John, Henry III, and Edward I made of the earldom of Richmond, traditionally a possession of the ducal House of Brittany."<sup>32</sup> Henry III of England married his daughter Beatrice to Duke Jean II of Brittany in 1260 and their younger son John (Jean), who spent most of his adulthood in the English service, later became Earl of Richmond.<sup>33</sup> The bestowing or withdrawal of favors and privileges, such as Richmond, was a common tactic of monarchs to exert diplomatic pressure or reward loyalty. Following the death of John de Bretagne in 1334, it seemed that

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<sup>30</sup> Richard I of England, in concert with her husband Ranulf, imprisoned Duchess Constance of Brittany in the castle of Saint-James de Beuvron from 1196-97 act an of defiance against the Breton nobles who were in rebellion against England. Judith Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins Province and Empire, 1158-1203* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 156-66.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Jones, "Edward III's Captains in Brittany," in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittan* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 103; wine and sea routes, Richard Vernier, *The Flower of Chivalry: Bertrand Du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 35-36.

<sup>32</sup> La Patourel, "Edward III," 186.

<sup>33</sup> Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 814-0.

Richmond might become extinct, as he was unmarried and had died without heirs. However, Edward III invested Duke Jean III of Brittany with Richmond and granted him marks of signal favor.<sup>34</sup> Duke Jean III held Richmond continuously from 1334-41 during the early days of England's war with France, despite his French sympathies. Therefore, when the duke's prospects for a legitimate heir looked bleak in the mid-1340s and a succession crisis loomed in Brittany, the diplomatic overtones unavoidably drew Edward III into the matter. With an opportunity to influence the outcome in the high-stakes theater of war, neither England nor France could not help themselves.

It was inevitable that there was going to be a succession crisis in Brittany in 1341, when Duke Jean III died with no direct heir. The civil war that ensued held a central position in affairs of the kingdoms of France and England for the next two hundred years and is worthy of a complete exposition.<sup>35</sup> There had been a long history of bad blood between Duke Jean III and his half-brother John de Montfort that predated the events of 1341, stemming back to the rights of their respective inheritances.<sup>36</sup> The previous Duke of Brittany, their father Arthur II (1261-1312), had been married twice: first to Marie, Viscountess of Limoges and second Yolande de Dreux, ex-Queen of Scotland and Countess of Montfort-l'Amaury.<sup>37</sup> Duke Arthur II had three sons by his first marriage, the eldest Jean being his heir, and one son and five daughters by his second marriage, the union producing John de Montfort. After their father's death, Duke Jean III tried to have his stepmother's and father's marriage annulled, because he felt slighted in his portion of the patrimony and profits respective to

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<sup>34</sup> CCR, *1339-1341*, 450; La Patourel, "Edward III," 186.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 104; Le Patourel, "Edward III," 186.

<sup>36</sup> Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris: J. Plihon & L. Hervé, 1899) 3:400.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



those of his half-siblings.<sup>38</sup> Duke Jean III's half-siblings never forfeited their inheritances, because the King of France Philippe le Bel (the Fair) interceded on Dowager Duchess Yolande's behalf to Pope Clement V, as she was a Capetian princess and the French did not want to see her dishonored.<sup>39</sup> This incident accentuated the fractiousness within the ducal family and set the scene for the events that were to occur in 1341.

Duke Jean III was facing a succession crisis, as early as 1330. He had been married three times in 1309, 1310, and 1329 and had no direct heirs. His younger full-brother Pierre had died in 1312 which left his only surviving full-brother Guy de Bretagne. Always crafty, Duke Jean III had taken steps in March of 1314 to invest Guy with the privileges and prerogatives of Viscount of Limoges which they had inherited from their mother. There was some snafu and that peerage was no longer available, so Duke Jean III conferred the Honour of Penthievre upon his brother and the County of Tréguer.<sup>40</sup> These endowments elevated Guy in status relative to their brother John de Montfort.<sup>41</sup> Guy died in 1331, leaving as his heiress his twelve-year-old daughter, Jeanne. Therefore, Jeanne de Penthievre became Duke Jean

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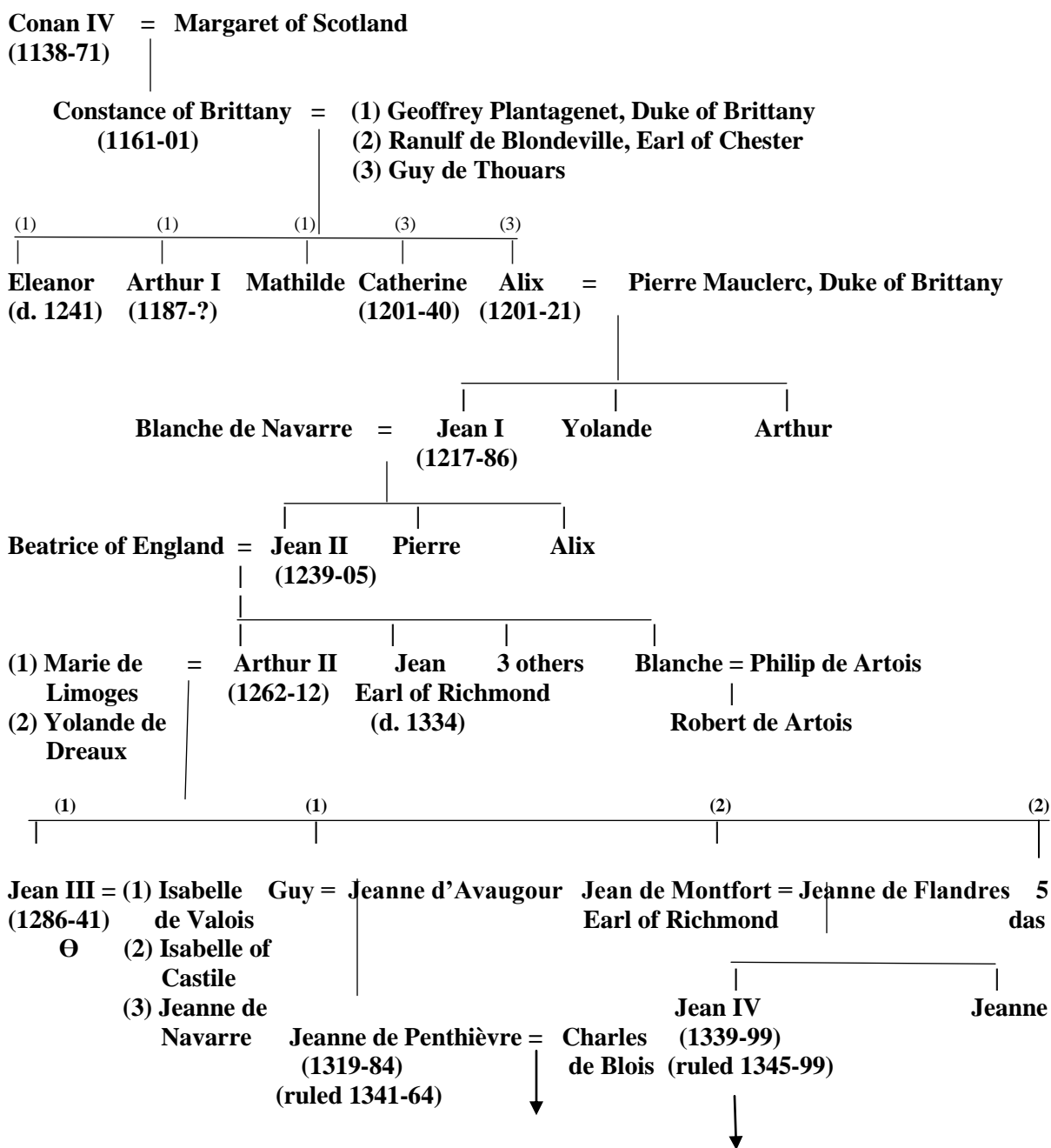
<sup>38</sup> John de Montfort was granted an annuity and income from areas of the duchy including Argentré and Guérande. Yolande held 8000 livre annuity for her daughters and another 7000 livres rent for her dower rights. La Borderie, *Historie de Bretagne* (Paris: J. Plihon & L. Hervé, 1899) 3:400; Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de Preuves*, 1:1233

<sup>39</sup> Allegedly, Duke Jean III claimed that Duke Arthur and Countess Yolande had never received a dispensation to marry, being cousins within the fourth degree of consanguinity. La Borderie indicates that Duke Jean III's claim was valid, regardless, Pope Clement did not rule on the matter. La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:401, n. 1.

<sup>40</sup> La Borderie explains the problem as a simple memory lapse and Duke Jean III had forgotten that he had invested someone else with the title Viscount of Limoges. La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:402; Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de Preuves*, 1:1243.

<sup>41</sup> Guy de Penthievre already had precedence over his younger brother, plus the title Count of Penthievre held an elevated rank in Brittany. La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris: J. Plihon & L. Hervé, 1899) 3:402; Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de Preuves*, 1: 1269, 1273.

## Breton Ducal Family<sup>42</sup>



*Table 4. Breton ducal family from 1138-1399*

<sup>42</sup> Table 4, The Breton Ducal Family with names in French. Also found in Chapter One.

III's heir presumptive<sup>43</sup> (juvenile niece) rather than John de Montfort (adult half-brother). The situation was ripe for conflict.

Both England and France were well aware of the troubles in Brittany and had made contingency plans to capitalize on the situation. Not about to let the Richmond lands slip through the Crown's hands again, Edward III proposed the marriage of Jeanne de Penthièvre to his brother John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall and began negotiations in 1335.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately for England, talks fell through when John of Eltham unexpectedly died in 1336. The French, well aware of the importance of Brittany, quickly sought to take advantage of Edward III's misfortune and neutralize the English. As Jean Le Bel attributes to King Philippe VI, "he [Edward III] could do no more damage to France than to enter by this way, obtaining the provinces and fortresses of Brittany."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, all parties were well aware of the mercurial nature of Duke Jean III. In fact, the duke had proposed in 1334 to disinherit both John de Montfort and his niece and remove them from the succession entirely.<sup>46</sup> King Philippe VI quickly arranged the marriage of his nephew Charles de Blois of the House of Châtillon to Jeanne de Penthièvre in 1337 after Eltham's death.

It is unclear how much of this entire problem Duke Jean III caused. He certainly did not manufacture his childlessness, but by 1337 he knew England and France were at war. He was

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<sup>43</sup> Jeanne de Penthièvre became Duke Jean III's heir presumptive, rather than his heir apparent because her accession was not certain. Had she been Duke Jean III's only legitimate child, she would have been his heir apparent. However, her father Guy for as long as he lived because of precedence was Duke Jean III's heir apparent.

<sup>44</sup> *CPR, 1334-38*, 191, 245, 412; La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:405-6; Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 105.

<sup>45</sup> Jules Viard and Eugène Déprez, eds., *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1904) i: 264.

<sup>46</sup> Duke Jean III did not want John de Montfort to inherit the crown and was supposedly afraid of a civil war should a female inherit the throne. Supposedly, the duke considered selling the succession to the King of France, but the Breton nobility vehemently opposed and derailed his plan. La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris: J. Plihon & L. Hervé, 1899)3: 405-8; Jones, "The Breton Civil War," 211; Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 371.

in service with Breton sailors in 1339 and fought with the French army in 1340.<sup>47</sup> He knew that Brittany was likely to be a pawn in the conflict between both countries. Because of his temperament, the instructions regarding his succession were not resolute and that led to ambiguity in the inheritance. Even to his dying breath, he was obstinate and refused to offer any clarification on the matter. He was recorded to have said ‘For God’s sake leave me alone and do not trouble my spirit with such things.’<sup>48</sup> By the time of his death upon his return from the Siege of Tournai,<sup>49</sup> a succession dispute involving both John de Montfort and Charles de Blois was a foregone conclusion.

Before discussing the sequence of events that brought Joan of Flanders into prominence, there needs to be a brief examination of the facts of the case, as the arguments of each claimant impacted Breton politics, the Hundred Years War, and would transform the role of the Duchess of Brittany. The roots of the civil war, which would tear Brittany apart for the next half century, were a result of a rancorous family quarrel and the archaic Breton succession law, *Coutumes de Bretagne*. Which claimant was right? What was the nature of claims? Charles de Blois, as guarantor of his wife Jeanne de Penthièvre, apparently had become the heir presumptive to Duke Jean III shortly after their marriage via court order.<sup>50</sup> Without the consent of the Breton nobility, this investiture was extra-judicial and may not have been the intent of the decision. Documents referred to Charles de Blois only as the

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<sup>47</sup> Jones, “The Breton Civil War,” 211

<sup>48</sup> Michael Jones, “Some Documents Relating to the Disputed Succession to the Duchy of Brittany, 1341” *Camden Miscellany XXIV*, no.9 (1972): 52. Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 371.

<sup>49</sup> Siege of Tournai followed the English naval victory at the Battle of Sluys on June 24, 1340. Tournai which was initiated at the request of Edward III’s Flemish allies was a draw and hostilities ceased on September 25, 1340, concluding with the Treaty of Esplechin. Michael Jones, “Some Documents,” 52.

<sup>50</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 371

Seigneur de Penthievre rather than as Lord and Successor to the Duchy.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Charles de Blois' claim was: as the succession representative of his wife, who was the succession representative of her late father (Duke Jean III's full brother), the ducal crown should default to him as his wife was closer in blood relation to the late duke. The Blois-Penthievre claim was based upon Breton customary law that had a provision for female succession, and Jeanne de Penthievre took precedence over John de Montfort as the daughter of the consanguineous younger brother of Duke Jean III.<sup>52</sup>

John de Montfort based his claim upon Salic Law, French Law, as Brittany was a province of France. Salic Law did not provide for female succession, and therefore any decisions about the succession of Brittany should not have rested with the wishes of the late Duke Jean III, but the statutes of the Kingdom of France. "Female succession was inadmissible because, so it was argued, the peers followed the same successorial laws as the king. The implications of this argument together with the very good recent precedents for the exclusion of females from [French] royal succession in 1316 and 1322 formed the most forceful and original contribution of Montfort and his lawyers."<sup>53</sup> At this point in Spring 1341, John de Montfort argued for French sovereignty of Brittany, but by that Fall he would change his loyalties and seek support from the English.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 à 1300, avec les continuations de cette Chronique de 1300 à 1368*, eds. Jean, and Hercule Géraud, in the Internet Archive (Paris: J. Renouard, 1843) ii: 144. Charles de Blois may have read more into this action than was the original intent. Jones, "Some Documents," 42, n. 95.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, "Some Documents," 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.; For a complete exposition of the legal arguments of Charles de Blois and John de Montfort, La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:410-15.

Shortly after the death of Duke Jean III, Edward III was in contact with John de Montfort making overtures of English congeniality should his claim be invalidated.<sup>54</sup> The judicial hearing for Charles de Blois' and John de Montfort's claims was scheduled for August 27, 1341 in Paris in front of the French Parlement.<sup>55</sup> Not waiting for the outcome, which was a foregone conclusion, Edward III through his representatives put his clandestine plans for Brittany into effect over the summer.<sup>56</sup> It was not a secret that the King of France favored his nephew; therefore, if John de Montfort could turn to Edward III on "general grounds" and persuade Edward III to grant Richmond to him, the increased support and revenue would be welcome.<sup>57</sup> Their negotiations resulted in an alliance in which England would dispatch armed aid to Montfort and a provisional grant of Richmond, which later would be a source of contention.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, John de Montfort had little time to act on the renewed bond of friendship, for he was imprisoned by the end of the year with his wife Joan the titular head of the Montfortist faction.

While scholars have discredited John de Montfort's marauding blitzkrieg around Brittany, the premise of Joan of Flanders being the cornerstone of her husband's contingency from the moment of his capture endures. The existing record does not substantiate Jean Froissart's version of the events that have John de Montfort and his wife frantically raiding

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<sup>54</sup> Edward III's initial contact with John de Montfort in July 1341 in Nantes, Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 220.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War of Succession in Brittany (1341)," in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 7.

<sup>56</sup> TNA, E 372/189 m.48. commission to Richard de Swaffham and Gavain Le Corder to go to John de Montfort dated June 6, 1341; Particular of Account (Swaffham), E 101/602/8; *CPR, 1340-43*, 210.; "secret negotiations" Eugène Déprez, "Une lettre missive du prétendant Jean de Bretagne, Comte de Montfort," *Annales de Bretagne*, xxxiv (1919), 59.

<sup>57</sup> Le Patourel, "Edward III," 187.

<sup>58</sup> Whether John de Montfort was the Earl of Richmond or a Count, holding it only in compensation for his attained possession in France and Brittany is unclear, See *Chapter Five, CPR, 1340-43*, 291; (called both Earl of Montfort and Richmond); *CPR, 1340-43*, 333; *CPR, 1340-43*, 380.

castles throughout Brittany during the late summer of 1341. The recorded dates for events, where John de Montfort would have presumed to have been present, do not correlate with Froissart's account. According to Froissart, following the death of the duke the Count and Countess de Montfort hurried to Nantes and had themselves crowned,<sup>59</sup> raced to Limoges to seize the ducal treasure;<sup>60</sup> along the way Montfort abandoned his wife and led a raid at Brest,<sup>61</sup> and then traveled to England.<sup>62</sup> Keep in mind, these events all occurred in the span of five months according to Froissart. As Michael Jones states, "this hectic schedule poses problems of interpretation-Froissart's geography is hopelessly inaccurate and his chronology is too tight."<sup>63</sup>

However, the facts not in dispute are as follows: both John de Montfort and Charles de Blois had to appear in Paris for a judgment of their claims, in August 1341, and on September 7 the Court of Peers of France ruled for Charles de Blois.<sup>64</sup> John de Montfort already had fled (probably sensing that the decision was a foregone conclusion) and was captured in Nantes by the French on November 18,<sup>65</sup> in December he was taken back to Paris, and imprisoned in the Louvre.<sup>66</sup> If the French thought that it would be business as

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<sup>59</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II. to the Coronation of Henry IV*, in the Medievalist Educational Project, ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), i: 253

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 264. Thomas Johnes acknowledges in his notes that Froissart must have confused the timing of the homage John de Montfort performed before Edward III which actually occurred on May 20, 1345. Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica inter reges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes vel communitates ab ingressu Gulielmi I in Angliam, a. d. 1066 ad nostra usque tempora habita....* eds. Robert Sanderson, John Caley, Frederic Holbrooke and Adam Clarke (London: Eyre & Strahan, 1825), 3.1: 39.

<sup>63</sup> Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War," 6.

<sup>64</sup> at Conflans, Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10: 820; Jones, "Breton Civil War," 197: Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War," 9

<sup>65</sup> Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10: 820; Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 388.

<sup>66</sup> Émile Molinier, ed., *Chronique Normande du XIVe Siècle* in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1882), 51-53; La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:440-41; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10: 820.

usual in Brittany while John de Montfort was in prison, they were sorely mistaken for they had not encountered his lionhearted wife.

Joan of Flanders, Countess of Richmond and Montfort, assumed her role as Duchess of Brittany and began to negotiate agreements with England. All hopes for peace in Brittany were cast aside, once Joan of Flanders was in charge. She voided an initial truce that would have pardoned her husband, returned their confiscated lands outside of Brittany, and financially compensated their son for possessions lost according to the terms of the will of Duke Jean III.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore from 1342, she refused any agreement with France, despite her husband's continued imprisonment. By that time, she had newfound support from Edward III. Negotiations, now in her son's and her name, ensued with England and produced two agreements in February and March of 1342; whereupon for military aid, Brittany formally recognized Edward III as King of France and suzerain of Brittany.<sup>68</sup> More importantly to Edward III was his newfound ability to collect ducal taxes and levies on the castles, ports, and towns under Montfortist control or those villages in need of his help.<sup>69</sup>

However, it was Joan of Flanders who was directing all of the players at this critical juncture. As Michael Jones recounts, "in describing the feats of the countess of Montfort under the year 1343, there is a magnificent description of a naval battle in which she valiantly fights, fully armed at the head of forces in an engagement."<sup>70</sup> This event likely

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<sup>67</sup> Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War, 11; Michael Jones. *Recueil des actes de Charles de Blois et Jeanne Penthievre, duc et duchesse de Bretagne (1341-1364): suivi des, Actes de Jeanne de Penthievre (1364-1384)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 1996), no. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Agreement on February 20, 1342, *CPR, 1340-43*, 380; Agreement on March 1, 1342, *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227-1485*, in *Medieval Genealogy Resources* (London: H.M.S.O., 1911-1962), 1337-1347, 270; Going forward as *CFR*. Le Patourel, "Edward III," 187.

<sup>69</sup> Earl of Northampton had the initial commission to act as magistrate for Brittany, Rymer, *Foedera*, 2.4: 121; *Ibid*, 2.4: 112; Compulsory taxation in "ransom districts," Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 224-26.

<sup>70</sup> Jones, "Breton Civil War," 202; This incident allegedly occurred in route to England, but Joan of Flanders did not travel to England before 1343.



never occurred because of the odd timing and other improbabilities; however, because of the greatness of Joan of Flanders it was not out of the realm of possibility.<sup>71</sup> Unlike her rival, Jeanne de Penthièvre whose deeds historians have largely overlooked. Jeanne de Penthièvre's comments stiffening the resolve of her husband before his defeat in the Battle of Auray in 1364 were the first ones recorded by Froissart.<sup>72</sup> From the beginning of her marriage to Charles de Blois, she seemingly receded into the background, not taking an activist military role, nor seizing the imagination of the chroniclers as Joan of Flanders most certainly did.

From a secure position in Brest<sup>73</sup> Joan of Flanders, like a general, was directing the Montfortist war effort. So successful were her endeavors after Hennebont that by the time Edward III arrived, the Bretons, along with the expeditionary forces under Sir Walter de Mauny and William Bohun, Earl of Northampton, had established Anglo-Breton control of much of the exposed coastline of Brittany from Morlaix round to Guérande and the mouth of the Loire.<sup>74</sup> Edward III's aims were closer to reality than he could have imagined. For in a few short years he would be the guardian of the Montfort heir, governor of the duchy, and have a civil administration in power in Brittany full of his men. Edward III could not have foreseen his plans going so well, but the stars aligned for him, especially after John de Montfort's incarceration and Edward III was able to get Joan of Flanders and her children out of Brittany and into England.

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<sup>71</sup> Communications between the Duchess of Brittany and King of England 1341-1342 through emissaries, Sir Amaury de Clisson and Walter de Wetewang, TNA, E 101/25/21, E 403/328 m. 12 and m. 33.

<sup>72</sup> Froissart, "*Sir John Froissart's Chronicle*," 3:177.

<sup>73</sup> Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 106, note 26.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid; For an accounting of the English forces, see note 27.

To understand Edward III's agenda in regards to Brittany, specifically Joan of Flanders and her family, it is important to understand his intentions regarding France. While it was not a priority in 1342 to relocate Joan of Flanders, she always had the potential "to go rogue" and would need to be contained, if Edward III's efforts were to be successful. The tug of war for control of Brittany was more than a simple power grab by England against France. A hegemonic shift of power had been taking place in continental Europe for at least a hundred years, with France coming into its own and beginning to consolidate its power. France had been trending towards royal centralization since the twelfth century: with the development of a French state, administration, army, budget, and emphasis on monarchy.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, Brittany became a part of Edward III's "grand strategy" to counter-balance an insurgent France by reasserting English dominance on land and sea.

Juxtaposed against the over-arching strategy were Edward III's specific objectives for Brittany. His aims were "to maintain a strong military foothold there, sufficient to give confidence and security to the supporters of John of Montfort who recognized him as king of France and suzerain of Brittany, to encourage their loyalty and to win new adherent by grants, castles and revenues."<sup>76</sup> Edward III had taken a similar approach in the Low Countries and the Guyenne. In Flanders in 1340, he "agreed to announce himself King of France, and thus feudal suzerain of Flanders, in order that the men of Ghent, Bruges and Ypres might argue the justice of their cause against the Valois regime and escape the penalties that might otherwise befall them for making an act of rebellion against a superior lord."<sup>77</sup> Edward III's sons, Edward, Prince of Wales (the Black Prince) and John of Gaunt,

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<sup>75</sup> Allmand, *The Hundred Years War*, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Le Patourel, "Edward III," 187.

<sup>77</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 214.

pursued similar strategies in Normandy, Spain, and Aquitaine with great success at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356.

Equally as important for Edward III was securing a safe trade route from Flanders to Aquitaine. Brittany's Finistère peninsula was central to this effort because it offered a better guarantee of safety for English shipping, around the coastline rather than overland.<sup>78</sup> Edward III's approach to warfare in Brittany reflected this strategy, securing the coastline first rather than aggressively attacking the Blois strongholds inland to the East.<sup>79</sup> Fear of a lack of revenue, particularly in wartime, compelled Edward III; therefore, it was vital to keep commercial activity going through trade and taxation. As an August 10, 1348 commitment to Sir Thomas Dagworth indicated for him to deliver in the name of John de Montfort the younger: "wine in the parts of Gascony to hold and control for as long as the profits be in the king's hand by reason of the wardship of John."<sup>80</sup> Money flowing into England was increasingly important, as war was an expensive endeavor.

Edward III also had a targeted "provincial strategy"<sup>81</sup> as coined by John Le Patourel, in which Brittany was key. Edward III wanted to establish friendly, client states through a series of dynastic marriages and alliances that would neutralize France. These territories would encircle France and by geography be an extension of English dominion. As John Le Patourel states:

Edward was doing in Brittany just what he was doing in Flanders, Normandy Aquitaine, and elsewhere-gradually extending the 'area of recognition', bidding for the allegiance of seigneurs and towns-it assumes as much importance as any part of Edward's war. Indeed, it is beginning to appear that this competition for

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Jones, *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399: Relations with England and France During the Reign of Duke John IV* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1970), 10.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>80</sup> *CFR, 1347-1356*, 93.

<sup>81</sup> Le Patourel, "Edward III," 179-89.

provincial allegiances, with its often sordid trade in ‘confiscations’, represents the way in which the war was being waged quite as much as the campaigns and the battles, and that many campaigns were designed to impress provincial opinion and provide ‘confiscations’ for distribution.<sup>82</sup>

Alternatively, redistribution as cases played out rather like moving pieces on a chessboard throughout the balance of the Hundred Years War.

Nevertheless, the provincial strategy was to be a priority of Edward III’s throughout the remainder of the war. Out of his large family, he sought to marry sons: Lionel of Antwerp to Elizabeth of Ulster, Edmund of Langley to Margaret of Flanders, John of Gaunt to Constance of Castile; and daughters Joan of England to Peter of Castile and Mary of Waltham to John IV of Brittany. Not all of these marriages came to fruition; however, every betrothal was about Plantagenet expansion. Every decision that Edward III made was a calculated risk to advance this goal. While he immediately could not realize all of these goals, he waited until the time was right as in the case of Brittany when the civil war created an opportunity for him to gain a foothold in the duchy. As W. Mark Ormrod states:

The Breton civil war of 1341-2 marked the moment at which Edward began to realize that dynastic claim, taken up in highly pragmatic fashion as part of his diplomatic maneuvers with the Flemings in January 1340, might also provide the basis for interventions in the other great principalities of France...this began a diplomatic course that would, over the following twenty years, lead Edward to assert his suzerainty of not just over Flanders and Brittany but also over Normandy and Burgundy as well. Viewed from this perspective, the intervention in Brittany in 1342 can be seen as one of the major turning points in the Hundred Years War.<sup>83</sup>

Not to say that defeating the Blois-French faction in Brittany would be easy, things went very wrong very quickly. After the unfortunate capture of John de Montfort in 1341, the Montfortist faction was at a loss. However, it quickly rebounded with Joan of Flanders at the

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>83</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 250.

helm. She guided their supporters throughout 1342, until Edward III could secure the Anglo-Breton stronghold along the Western coast of Brittany and install captains and lieutenants including Sir John Hardreshull to manage local affairs.<sup>84</sup> The day-to-day administration of Brittany subsequently fell to Edward III's military officers and would remain that way for seventeen years, until John of Brittany came of age. During the early years under English administration, from 1343-45, there were no serious gains or losses. While his wife and children were safely in England and frustrated by the inertia on the ground, John de Montfort decided to make a move and break parole.

In an effort befitting the frenetic Breton crisscrossing of Froissart, John de Montfort escaped French imprisonment outside of Paris, traveled to England, and was dead in Hennebont in the span of six months. He fled Valois custody in March 1345,<sup>85</sup> as he had been released from the Louvre in September 1343<sup>86</sup> and was on house arrest,<sup>87</sup> and slipped away to England. He performed liege homage to Edward III as King of France and conferred the guardianship of his children to Edward III on May 20, 1345.<sup>88</sup> Montfort quickly departed England and died in Brittany at Hennebont on September 26.<sup>89</sup> In the hearts and minds of Bretons from that moment onward Joan of Flanders, in the name of her son, was the ruler of Montfortist Brittany, albeit residing now in England. Whether Edward III and his Council

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<sup>84</sup> Sir John Hardreshull was Brittany's first royal lieutenant, (1342-45). Subsequent lieutenants were: William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton replaced him (1345-47), Sir Thomas Dagworth (1347-52), Sir Walter Bentley (1352-56), Henry Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster replaced him (1356-61) and lastly William lord Latimer (1361-62). John of Brittany took over in 1362. Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 112; Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 224-27.

<sup>85</sup> Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*. In *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed by Edward Maude Thomson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 164; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:820; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 263.

<sup>86</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:820; Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 106, n.26.

<sup>87</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:440-1 ; Jones, "Edward III's Captains," 106, n.26.

<sup>88</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.1: 39; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:821; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 263.

<sup>89</sup> Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de preuves*, 1:113 ; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:821

liked it or not, they had to deal with her and would have to for a while, as her children both were under the age of seven. How would the story end? Both Joan of Flanders and Edward III were such formidable personalities with competing agendas.

By all accounts, Edward III was as much impressed with Joan of Flanders as was everyone else. Her reputation preceded her and by the time of their first meeting, Edward III must have known that she would be no pushover. “Edward III’s decision to press on with an expedition had something of a chivalric adventure to it; the bravery of the bereft Countess Jeanne had struck his imagination, and he would do his very best, against all the odds, to rescue and restore her.”<sup>90</sup> Rescuing Joan of Flanders’ was part of Edward III’s plan, restoration not likely. It was Edward III who after the reception of Joan of Flanders and her children in England thought that the situation in Brittany was too dangerous for the young heir to return to Brittany; however, John of Brittany’s mother could have returned to vindicate his rights to the throne.<sup>91</sup> Not that Edward III wanted misfortune to befall Joan of Flanders, but the king was politically expedient in all matters. Even before the birth of Mary of Waltham in 1344, Edward III must have had plans for young John of Brittany.

As previously stated, England’s foreign relations increasingly accommodated the personal ambitions of the king, as well as his destiny for the next generation of Plantagenet princes.<sup>92</sup> Through marriage John of Brittany was destined to be a Plantagenet prince. Joan of Flanders would have been relieved as much for her son’s good fortune, as much as for Brittany’s.

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<sup>90</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 249.

<sup>91</sup> This never happened. It is part of the fictional account this time attributed to Jean Le Bel; however, it provides insight into Edward III’s character. Viard and Eugène Déprez, eds., *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ii: 7-8 ; Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses*, 3: 271.

<sup>92</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 255.

## Brittany During the Civil War<sup>93</sup>



Map 3. Map of Brittany during the civil war showing the major strongholds

She had done an excellent job at this thus far, and her husband's imprisonment had done nothing to daunt her courage. However, the protracted civil war further divided loyalties, led to dual governments in Brittany for the next twenty years, and a stalemate where neither side

<sup>93</sup> Map 3, The Anglo-Montfort support in the West and along the coast and the Blois-French support in the East. Courtesy of The History of England.com, "Topography of Brittany, Civil War in Brittany," *The History of England.com*, last modified September 9, 2013, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://historyofengland.typepad.com/blog/2013/09/103-the-war-in-brittany.html>.

made serious headway on the ground. Not only was the chasm geographic, but Breton society had been split in two, socially, by the events of 1341 with the greater seigneurs supporting Jeanne de Penthièvre and the lesser supporting Montfort.<sup>94</sup> The influential Clisson family that initially had supported Charles de Blois immediately changed sides when Philippe VI summarily executed Seigneur Olivier III de Clisson in 1343 for treason after which they fled to England.<sup>95</sup> Edward III used the posturing to his advantage, as many localities waived in their commitment to either side based upon the fortunes of war and nobles changing sides was not uncommon for reasons less than the penalty of death. Loyalties were sometimes strong and sometimes fluid. Even Joan of Flanders' brother, Louis I, Count of Flanders, had supported the French.<sup>96</sup> However, Joan of Flanders' fidelity to the Montfortist cause and Edward III had been strong. If only for the sake of the prospects of her small son, rather than for her luckless husband's plight in Paris.<sup>97</sup> She had been vital to the survival of Montfortist cause up to this point, because she had held her ground in the northwestern regions of Brittany.

Yet, Edward III only ever intended to manage Joan of Flanders. Most Bretons were not privy to Joan of Flanders' sequestration, nor Edward III's role in it. However, it must have become obvious very soon for the Montfortist faction that she was not returning, as Edward III pressured the Breton Montfortist supporters into receiving the homage of the Earl of

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<sup>94</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 11.

<sup>95</sup> Philippe VI executed Olivier III de Clisson to make an example to others that he believed were collaborating with the enemy. His family that remained in Brittany engaged in piracy against the French and his young son grew up in England and was friend to young John of Brittany. Ormrod, *Edward III*, 263.

<sup>96</sup> Louis I, Count of Flanders was considered a pensioner to Philippe VI. He likely had preformed some military service for or obligation to the French crown in a similar capacity as Duke Jean III of Brittany. Michael Packe, *King Edward III*, ed. L.C.B. Seaman (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983), 124.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



Northampton that October in the names of Edward III and John of Brittany.<sup>98</sup> Only one month after the Count de Montfort's death, Edward III skillfully crafted the new symbol of Montfortist Brittany as young John de Montfort with his protector, the King of England and not his mother. Regardless of the symbolism and artifice, it was apparent well into the 1350s that Brittany was a tactical impasse and that breaching the stalemate depended more upon the political fortunes of the contending sovereigns than on the unaided efforts of the candidates.<sup>99</sup> Once Joan of Flanders was at Tickell Castle, there was little that she could do.

The outcome of the Breton Civil War, which now hinged upon Edward III's success in his war with the French, became a twenty-three-year standoff of competing interests and hidden agendas. While a settlement as early as 1341 would have allowed the compensation of John de Montfort for his relinquishing of his claim, it was rejected by the Montfortist faction principles of Edward III and Joan of Flanders.<sup>100</sup> It had been John de Montfort's unexpected capture that had brought Joan of Flanders into prominence, but the fate of the duchy throughout the 1340s and into 1350s rested squarely in the hands of Edward III.<sup>101</sup> In fact from 1347-56, Edward III had the three of the principles within his dominion in England: Joan of Flanders in residence in Yorkshire, John of Brittany in royal wardship, and Charles de Blois in custody in the Tower of London.<sup>102</sup> Edward III had little incentive to wrap things up in Brittany, the English claimant was a minor, and the war was lucrative. Furthermore, the Breton gentry, the base of Montfortist support, saw the war as an opportunity in enrichen their coffers at the expense of the Blois-Penthièvre great magnates. For these lesser nobles,

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<sup>98</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 470-71; Murimuth, *Continuo Chronicon*, 189.

<sup>99</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 220.

<sup>101</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 14.

<sup>102</sup> Charles de Blois was captured on the battlefield at *La Roche-Derrien*, June 20, 1347.

whose economic needs were more urgent, military employment had a certain allure.<sup>103</sup> They along with the English captains managed to elevate their status and move up the ranks of Breton society by the acquisition of lands, titles, and wives.<sup>104</sup> Although men like the Earl of Northampton and Sir Thomas Dagworth had strengthened and extended Edward III's hold on Brittany which ultimately shaped ducal administration, the Anglo-Bretons had profited from the war. It would take a tremendous effort to drive them and the French out of Brittany; thus, further campaigns in Normandy were likely a diversion designed to weaken French resources and necessarily protracted the war.<sup>105</sup>

As for the other Joan, Jeanne de Penthièvre, she was at a loss after the disastrous *Battle of La Roche-Derrien* in 1347. She knew that the Blois-Penthièvre coalition could collapse at any moment without her husband, because of the soft French support. The avalanche of English successes at Caen<sup>106</sup> and Crecy<sup>107</sup> were dispiriting to Philippe VI, and he became increasingly disinterested in Brittany. Moreover the Black Death, whose virulence to this day is undisputed, wrought such havoc on the entirety of Western Europe that all sides had to cease hostilities from 1347-49.<sup>108</sup> As with Edward III, King Philippe VI appointed a guardian, Amaury de Craon to hold the duchy that he did until 1349.<sup>109</sup> Seeing the winds of fortune turn against her, in 1353 Jeanne de Penthièvre sought an arrangement with Edward

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<sup>103</sup> Jones, "The Breton Nobility and their Masters from the Civil War of 1341-64 to the Late Fifteenth Century," in the *Creation of Brittany*, 222-25. John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 25.

<sup>104</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 14

<sup>105</sup> Le Patourel, "Edward III," 188

<sup>106</sup> July 1346, English victory

<sup>107</sup> August 1346, English victory

<sup>108</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, 3.1: 182-83, 184-85, 188; Vernier, *The Flower of Chivalry*, 40-41; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 324.

<sup>109</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War II, Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 25.

III through a payment of a ransom and marriage between their children.<sup>110</sup> Such an agreement would have released her husband, married her heir to one of Edward III's daughters, thereby strengthening her cause to the detriment of John of Brittany.<sup>111</sup> Undoubtedly, she discussed these matters with her husband when she visited him at Calais during his brief parole from captivity.<sup>112</sup> However, nothing came of this marriage alliance and it was a tactic that Jeanne de Penthievre repeatedly employed throughout her husband's captivity.<sup>113</sup> Despite Edward III's abandonment of Jeanne de Penthievre's offer, the fact that the respective parties entertained negotiations highlights the ruthlessness of Edward III and the panic in Blois-Penthievre quarters.

With the eventual release of Charles de Blois in 1356, the situation in Brittany remained stagnant: a few skirmishes and then another truce, but no further military action in Brittany.<sup>114</sup> With the successful English victory at Poitiers<sup>115</sup> and the Treaty of Brétigny<sup>116</sup> restoring English sovereignty over the Guyenne, Brittany found itself in limbo for the next few years. Because the treaty between England and France did not resolve the Breton succession, Brittany was in an interregnum: legally a fief of the King of France, but governed

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<sup>110</sup> Robert of Avesbury, *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 418.

<sup>111</sup> Edward III considered an alliance with Charles de Blois that would have ended hostilities in Brittany between the pro-French and pro-English factions with the marriage of Margaret of Windsor to Charles de Blois' heir to the disadvantage to John of Brittany. It is unclear whether Edward III eventually thought better of it or whether it foundered because of French and papal opposition to the marriage. F. Bock, "Some New Documents Illustrating the Early years of the Hundred Years War (1353-1356)," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* xv, (1931): 84-91

<sup>112</sup> Charles de Blois was paroled from captivity to France in 1351. However, unable to pay his ransom, her returned imprisonment in England. Edward III permitted Jeanne de Penthievre to visit her husband in September 1351 in Calais. Rymer, *Foedera*, iii, pt.1, 230.

<sup>113</sup> Jeanne de Penthievre tried to revive a Plantagenet-Blois marriage alliance in 1352 in return for her husband's release. The 1352 offer met with strong resistance from Montfortist supporters who would have been disenfranchised by such a treaty; Sumption, *Trial by Fire*, 134-5.

<sup>114</sup> Galliou and Jones, Jones, *The Bretons*, 237.

<sup>115</sup> *Battle of Poitiers*: September 19, 1356; Decisive English victory over the French

<sup>116</sup> Signed May 25, 1360 between Edward III of England and King Jean II of France ending the first phase of the Hundred Years' War

by the King of England in the name of his ward.<sup>117</sup> Although Brittany remained an English protectorate for another two years when Edward III surrendered the duchy to John of Brittany, it was not until John of Brittany's decisive victory over the Blois-Penthièvre faction in 1364 at the *Battle of Auray*, that things looked optimistic for the Montfortists. The Battle of Auray, September 29, 1364 saw the death of Charles de Blois and the capture of his two eldest sons; whereby, Jeanne de Penthièvre conceded defeat.<sup>118</sup> All the Montfortist faction now needed was for Duke John IV to produce a son. Under the terms of the First Treaty of Guérande (1365), Jeanne de Penthièvre retained her title as Duchess and the Penthièvre lands and rents; but, John de Montfort the younger was deemed the heir of Duke Jean III.<sup>119</sup> However if the Montforts failed in the male line, the Penthièvre claim could be reconsidered.<sup>120</sup> For all their success in 1365, it would not have been possible without his mother's stalwart efforts more than twenty years earlier.

The *Breton Civil War* was remarkable because both the leaders of the fight were women. Where normally gender would have precluded Joan of Flanders and Jeanne de Penthièvre from political affairs, they had been catapulted to the fore because of the intimate nature of the conflict, their agency, and talents. Both were considered heroic and headstrong. However, it was the Montfortist faction that prevailed, in part because of the implacability of Joan of Flanders. "It was her intransigence combined with Edward III's opportunism, who seized this chance to intervene in Brittany as a means of re-opening his war with France, that

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<sup>117</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Fire*, 459.

<sup>118</sup> Galliou and Jones, Jones, *The Bretons*, 237.

<sup>119</sup> April 12, 1365; La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 4: 9.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid; In the fifteenth century, Despite Anne of Brittany being a female heir to the ducal crown, she was allowed to succeed her father Duke Francis II in 1488. With her marriage to Charles VIII of France uniting the two counties in 1491, she was last sovereign of Brittany.

insured that there would be a ‘War of the two Joans.’”<sup>121</sup> With all of this passion and determination, how was it possible that Joan of Flanders’ mental faculties were questioned? Now we turn to the role of mental illness and emotion in the medieval world and body politic.

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<sup>121</sup> Jones, “Ancenis, Froissart, and the War,” 11.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Duchess' Privations and the King's Fervor: Madness and the Politics of Passions**

Her mind was so solid and discriminating that the most skillful diplomats, could never take her by surprise. She could discern between reality and appearance; and always gained rather than lost. It was by such qualities that she maintained the nobility, soldiers, and citizens of several towns of Bretagne in her interests.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in 1707 Breton historian Guy-Alexis Lobineau had described Joan of Flanders during the months leading up to the siege of Hennebont in early 1342, when she shouldered the responsibility of holding Montfortist Brittany together. At Hennebont, Joan of Flanders played against the archetype of gender and clearly did not display any outward signs of weakness. She was resolute in her cause and achieved her factions' goals with the retreat of Charles of Blois and the Truce of Malestroit in January 1343, the truce that paused hostilities between England and France.<sup>2</sup> Despite these efforts, Edward III cavalierly pushed her aside after his intervention in the matter. Could it have been something about Joan of Flanders' character that caused her to be relegated to the margins of political life? This chapter seeks to answer that question.

Mental illness in the medieval world was a social construct largely rooted in religious cosmology and dogma and the limitations of medical and scientific knowledge. Consequently, emotions and passions were viewed with skepticism, fear and to be avoided at all cost. Even the nobility could not avoid criticism for being in temperate. Today, the

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<sup>1</sup> Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne: Composée sur les Titres & les Auteurs Originaux*, in Hathitrust Digital Library (Paris: F. Muguet, 1707), 1: 320; Mary Anne Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), 3:267.

<sup>2</sup> It was Philippe VI of France and Edward III of England rather than John de Montfort and Charles of Blois that agreed to the Truce of Malestroit in January 19, 1343 which was effectively little more than temporary cessations in the fighting over the Winter Break, as neither side was prepared to concede the larger issues of the French crown and Angevin empire.

judgments of medieval aberrant behavior fall to modern scholarship for interpretation, understanding and context.

From what we know of her, Joan of Flanders was a formidable woman of indomitable spirit, well equipped to handle herself on a battlefield and the reins of power; then one must ask how did she become labeled as mad? Historian Michael Packe has claimed that the Countess de Montfort was “locked up in the castle of Tickhill in Yorkshire, because, always overwrought, her recent energies had swamped her reason.”<sup>3</sup> What is the evidence for this? Let us not get ahead of the story and discuss royal prerogative wardship and whether Joan of Flanders’ detention complied with the parameters of medieval nonfiduciary guardianship which is the subject of Chapter five. First, it is important to assess the role of emotion, particularly passion and anger in medieval cosmology, and whether Joan of Flanders’ behavior unwittingly contributed to her captivity. In the Middle Ages, even a sovereign’s emotions, particularly passion, were highly conventionalized and socially generated with political overtones and implications.<sup>4</sup> “He [Charles VI] is said to have been nervous and not sleeping well, urged by his doctors not to go on the campaign, and finally, by early August, exhibiting bizarre behavior.”<sup>5</sup> King Charles VI of France, whose insanity was well recorded by contemporaneous sources, had afflictions that were tolerated and concessions made for them.<sup>6</sup> However Joan of Flanders’ displays of emotion, if there were any, became politicized, associated with irrationality and a liability. In the fourteenth century,

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<sup>3</sup> Michael S. Packe, *King Edward III*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 130.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen D. White, “The Politics of Anger: In *Anger’s Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), 150.

<sup>5</sup> John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 157.

<sup>6</sup> M. L. Bellaguet, ed., *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denis contenant le regne de Charles VI de 1380 a 1422*, Editions du Comite des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris: L’imprimerie de Crapelet, 1842), 2: 22, 70; 3: 188-191; 4: 453, others

emotionalism was subject to interpretation, and there was no definitive tipping point between anger and madness.

In medieval society, as in some cultures today, temperament was a social construct. As communities established standards for emotional representation, those communities enhanced their social controls, monopolized expressions of violence, and thus became civilized.<sup>7</sup> The civilizing process affected “long-term changes in personality structure” whereupon certain feelings became acceptable and others did not.<sup>8</sup> As behaviors became normative, medieval emotions functioned as communication patterns, strategies for survival, and social acceptance.<sup>9</sup> The difficulty for medievalists when studying emotions is that scholars must rely upon contextualized-second hand observations as clinical sources.<sup>10</sup> To a fault, medieval narratives are highly-stylized, literary texts written to meet the needs of medieval audiences, conform to medieval sensibilities and social conventions, and to benefit their authors as well as those who commissioned the works. One has to keep in mind, as historian Jeroen Deploige states, “Historians studying emotions are confronted with selective and textual representations of emotion with layers of manipulations and levels of misunderstanding.”<sup>11</sup> As in the case of Joan of Flanders’ the sparse references to her emotionalism, may or may not offer modern scholars insight whatsoever into her nature, but those comments had relevance for the Plantagenet royal court.

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<sup>7</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Introduction,” In *Anger’s Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 103.

<sup>9</sup> Jeroen Deploige, “Studying Emotions: The Medievalist as Human Scientist?” in *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th-16th century)*, eds. Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 18.

<sup>10</sup> Deploige, “Studying Emotions,” 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



Nevertheless, for all of her achievements, Joan of Flanders' has become synonymous with madness and to understand this association, one has to examine the link between rationality and emotion. Impulsivity in medieval culture had a negative connotation of foolishness emanating from excessive emotion.<sup>12</sup> The character of Melibeus, made famous by Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, exemplifies the medieval view of irrational passion and impetuosity.<sup>13</sup> Upon returning home, Melibeus finds that his wife and daughter have been attacked. Melibeus' initial reaction to the incident is "to tear at his clothes, like a madman, and weep and cry" and then to retaliate.<sup>14</sup> It is not until his wife, aptly named Prudence, urges him to stop behaving like a fool that Melibeus ceases crying, decides against revenge, and sets upon a more prudent course of action to get justice.<sup>15</sup> The matter is finally resolved peaceably through wise counsel and advice. As this tale is an allegory, the moral of the story is: those who act rashly, without direction, are foolish. Despite understanding Melibeus' feelings, wise persons, or the collective, deem the immediate impulsivity of revenge as madness.<sup>16</sup> As Albertanus of Brescia stated in his 1246 legal treatise, *Liber Consolationis et Consilii*, "So I think it is useful to avoid tensions, resist their power and, those who can, manage emotion carefully, as to be accepted. Extreme

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<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Van Leeuwen, "Emotions on Trial: Attitudes towards the Sensitivity of Victims and Judges in Medieval Flanders," *In Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th-16th century)*, eds. Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 159.

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Tale of Melibee," in *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. David Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 368-76.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Leeuwen, "Emotions on Trial," 159.

emotion (*furiosus*) is potentially dangerous and can lead to madness or violence.”<sup>17</sup> As passions could have unforeseen consequences, neither anger nor grief should be expressed in a violent way; less one presume to be irrational.

Rationality in the Middle Ages was a religious determination much as a medical one. The Roman Catholic Church was the bulwark of medieval daily life and culture and the Church’s tenets influenced how medicine was practiced and care was delivered. Medical findings were not independent of the religious dogma. According to the Greek physician Galen of Pergamum, emotions or *animi affectibus* were one of the six non-naturals, those physiological, psychological, and environmental conditions that could adversely affect one’s health.<sup>18</sup> The Church believed irrational behavior emanated from “pernicious enthrallment with one or more of the seven deadly sins” which led to humoral imbalance and affected the brain.<sup>19</sup> “Wrath, gluttony or sexual vice would, for example, produce an intense level of heat and thus give rise to frenzy, while a corresponding degree of coldness was generated by sloth...this caused listlessness, the inability to concentrate and sometimes even stupor...”<sup>20</sup> The Church dictated, that as good Christians, people were not to succumb to emotions but rather fight against *animae* and keep their passions in check. According to the English cleric Alcuin of York, “Anger is one of the eight principal vices. If it is not controlled by reason, it is turned into raging fury, such that a man has no power over his own soul and does

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<sup>17</sup> Albertanus of Brescia, *Albertani Brixienensis Liber Consolationis et Consilii, ex quo hausta est fabula gallica de Melibeo et Prudentia, quam, ab gllice redditam et ‘The Tale of Melibe’ inscriptam Gulfridus Chaucer inter ‘Canterbury Tales’ receipt* (London: N. Tribner & Co, 1873), Albertano of Brescia Resource site, last modified 2000, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://freespace.virgin.net/angus.graham/Lib-Cons.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Galen, *Opera Omnia*, eds. Karl Gottlob Kühn, and Friedrich Wilhelm Assmann (Lipsiae: C. Knobloch, 1821), 1:367; Nancy G. Sirasi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine an Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 101.

<sup>19</sup> Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publications, 1995), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid; P.B.R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar’s Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 10-32.

unseemly things. For this vice so occupies the heart that it banishes, from it, every precaution in acting and in seeking right judgment.”<sup>21</sup> Physicians, such as they were in the Middle Ages, straddled the fence, tempering diagnoses and limited understanding of disease with moralization. Others would have measured Joan of Flanders’ emotional proclivities against these cultural sensibilities for their appropriateness, and her social standing would not necessarily have precluded her from criticism.

A medieval sovereign was expected to be calm and moderate in all actions, avoiding public displays of wrath. Joan of Flanders’ in her brief stint as the de facto regent of Brittany would have been no exception. The passion of a sovereign, *ira regis* or king’s fury, was dangerous because a ruler held the power of life or death in his hands. A sovereign was not to be governed by ardor, so as to render poor decisions or lose the respect of others in the eyes of the Church and kingdom. In fact, during the Early Middle Ages, especially during the Carolingian period, depictions of royal anger are hard to find. “The emotion has virtually no place in the Carolingian Annals as well as in Einhard’s Life of Charlemagne. Christian rulership virtues such as most gentle (*mitissimus*) mildest (*piissimus*), and most merciful (*clementissimus*) dominate royal portrayals.”<sup>22</sup> This moderation had as much to do with the ideal of Christian Kingship, the king as a kind and Christ-like overlord, as it did with the enmeshment between church and nobility, exemplified by the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day 800 AD by Pope Leo III. The pope’s elevation of Charlemagne to the title of *Imperator Augustus* came with the exhorted necessity of a royal

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<sup>21</sup> Alcuin, *Liber de Virtutibus et Vitiis ad Widonem Comitem*, c.31, PL 101, col. 634, Documenta Catholica Omnia Site, last modified 2006, accessed January 19, 2016, [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z\\_0735-0804\\_\\_Alcuinus\\_\\_De\\_Virtutibus\\_Et\\_Vitiis\\_Liber\\_Ad\\_Widonem\\_Comitem\\_\\_MLT.pdf.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0735-0804__Alcuinus__De_Virtutibus_Et_Vitiis_Liber_Ad_Widonem_Comitem__MLT.pdf.html).

<sup>22</sup> Gerd Althoff, “Ira Regis: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger,” in *Anger’s Past The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), 64-65.

governance based upon monastic values.<sup>23</sup> It was in the capacity of the king as a judge or lawgiver that the king's anger was unjustifiable.

A king was to be dispassionate in his administration of the law to keep the common peace. Emotional influences undermined the king's ability to effectuate good government and were closely associated with tyranny. The only external influence on the king's judgment was to be mercy. *Misericordia* prevented sentences from being too severe, because overly harsh sentences sowed discord and thereby threatened the king's peace.<sup>24</sup> "Whenever a judge passes a sentence over a criminal, he must feel compassion for his fellow Christian and pronounce the verdict with pain in his heart to be humane."<sup>25</sup> Joan of Flanders was endowed with this element of rulership, mercy. While the more animated aspects of her personality, as this chapter will reveal, are open to interpretation, Joan of Flanders in her capacity as Duchess of Brittany did shelter and place under her protection former Blois-Penthièvre supporters. Most notable of these was the young Olivier IV de Clisson, son of the Seigneur de Clisson. Olivier IV de Clisson's father Olivier III, one of the preeminent Breton Marcher lords with familial connections to both the Houses of Valois and Penthièvre, initially had supported Charles de Blois in the civil war.<sup>26</sup> When Olivier III fell out of favor with King Philippe VI of France because he could not secure Vannes against the English, he lent his support to the Montfortists.<sup>27</sup> After he had been captured and beheaded by Philippe VI for

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Hyams, "What did Henry III of England Think in Bed and in French about Kingship and Anger?" in *Anger's Past The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), 99.

<sup>24</sup> Leeuwen, "Emotions on Trial," 171.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> John Bell Henneman, *Olivier De Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 21-22.

<sup>27</sup> Alain Bouchart, *Grandes chroniques de Bretagne*, eds. Marie-Louise Auger and G. Jeannaeu (Paris: Éd. du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987), 2: 58-59; Alexandre Mazas, *Vies des grand capitaines français du moyen âge*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Paris: J. Lecoffre, 1845), 2: 124.

treason, *lèse majesté*,<sup>28</sup> Olivier III's wife Jeanne de Belleville and children were forced to abandon their possessions in Brittany (Pontchâteau, Blain, Héric)<sup>29</sup> under penalty of death.<sup>30</sup> They eventually found their way to Hennebont where Joan of Flanders took pity on young Olivier IV, "because he was the same age as her son and was too without a father."<sup>31</sup> Like other Montfortist supporters, they made their way across the Channel and Olivier IV remained in England until he was of age to reclaim the de Clisson inheritance as the surviving heir of his parents.<sup>32</sup>

It was not until the Crusades in the eleventh century that the view of the wrathful king morphed and displays of anger in a king became righteous. The angry king at war was not an unfamiliar posture in the Middle Ages, in fact royal anger was implicit during an outbreak of war. Upon hearing of the eruption of hostilities with the Romans, Attila was said: "to grow very angry."<sup>33</sup> During the fifth and sixth centuries, an indispensable talent was one's ability to react skillfully to the demonstrative anger of an opponent and defuse the situation.<sup>34</sup> However, in the later Middle Ages a specific type of anger characterized as righteous and zealous developed steeped in crusading ideology that became an essential component of Christian military disposition.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Jones, *Creation of Brittany: A late medieval state* (London: Hambledon Press, 1988), 341.

<sup>29</sup> Émile Molinier, ed., *Chronique Normande du XIVe Siècle* in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1882), 51-53; La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:482-83; Henneman, *Olivier De Clisson*, 26-27.

<sup>30</sup> Yvonne Lanthers, and Monique Langlois, *Confessions et jugements de criminels au Parlement de Paris (1319-1350)* (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N, 1971), 153-54.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Froissart, *The Antient Chronicles of Sir John Froissart of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Brittany, and Flanders and Adjoining Countries, translated from the Original French, at the Command of King Henry VIII*, ed. John Bourchier, Knight, Lord Berners (London: W. McDowall, 1814), 1: 226.

<sup>32</sup> Lobineau, *Histoire*, 1: 334; Morice, *Memoires pour servir de Preuves*, 1, col 1529.

<sup>33</sup> Althoff, *Ira Regis*, 62

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Marcel Elias, "The Case of Anger in The Siege of Milan and The King of Tars." *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 43, no.1 (2012): 42.

The eleventh-century *Carmen de bello Saxonico* (Song of the Saxon War) epitomizes the transformation or marked shift in Christian philosophy from the unjustifiable *ira regis* to an acceptance of aristocratic anger, under certain circumstances. Despite the ongoing war, Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV was only angered at the Saxon desecration of churches and graves. “Upon hearing of the crime, this mild and brave king’s heart burned, inflamed with a zeal for justice--a presumption of anger gripped him. Wild rage burned in his heart, not for their rights but that God’s rights had been violated which caused him pain.”<sup>36</sup> The severity of the crime necessitated passion not because the offense violated the king’s law, but because it violated God’s law and called for zealotry that, according to the author, was uncharacteristic of Henry IV.

“In twelfth-century ecclesiastical and biographical chronicles, a period in which the Church was seeking theological justifications for the Crusades and the use of force in the service of Christ, a model of divine wrath, present in the Bible, came to be more steadily employed as an exemplar upon which righteous approved.”<sup>37</sup> Consequently, as the conceptions of anger evolved, the perceptions of emotions came to be rehabilitated but only in the context where fervent dedication and zealous leaders were required to defend ecclesiastical interests.<sup>38</sup> In general, emotional displays were still viewed negatively in the medieval milieu. Being born at the turn of the fourteenth century, Joan of Flanders’ during her brief period as the leader of Montfortist Brittany would have had to navigate her rulership

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<sup>36</sup> “Nec mora, percepto rex magnus crimine tanto, Egregia pietate nitens, fortissimus armis, Zelo iusticiae flammato pectore fervet, Adversum tantos praesumptus colligit iras; Ignescunt animi iusto sub corde feroces; Non sua iam, sed iura Dei volata dolebat.” Oswald Holder-Egger, ed. “Carmen de bello Saxonico: accedit Conquestio Heinrici IV. Imperatoris,” in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hannoverae: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1889), 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

not only based upon Christian theology, but from the sphere of traditional views of emotion and women.

The association between madness and irrational passion in women was yet another paradigm of the Middle Ages that constrained them. While not inclined to excessive heat like men, humoral theory taught that women were colder, more phlegmatic, uncontrollable and capricious. “Mutability, fickleness and lack of purpose therefore seemed quintessentially feminine characteristics; and it was no coincidence that the moon, the planet most closely associated with water, movement and, of course, madness, appeared to be female. So great were its malign disease powers that children conceived while it [damp south wind] was blowing would almost always be girls.”<sup>39</sup> While theoretically there should be no difference between female anger and male anger, as men and women matured within the same society; however, because of socialization and cultural norms there was a sharp difference in the attitudes towards each in the medieval world.

When and by whom emotional displays were permissible was circumspect. As a child, Saint Gertrude of Nivelles, who already felt called to the religious life, grew very angry (*quasi furore replete*) at a marriage proposal to the young son of an Austrasian duke. She told her parents that “she would have neither him nor earthly spouse but Christ the Lord. The dejected little boy left confused and filled with anger [*iracundia plenus*] ...and from that day forward her parents knew what king she loved.”<sup>40</sup> While this story could be taken as a depiction of a medieval child’s tantrum or as an expression of female anger, Gertrude’s rage should also be viewed a sign of self-awareness, a well-born girl’s agency in seventh-century

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<sup>39</sup> Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society*, 172.

<sup>40</sup> *Vita Gertrudis: De Virtutibus Sanctae Gertrudis, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores regum Merovingicarum*, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1885), 2: 454-55.

Frankish society.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the importance that the *Vita*'s author places upon her angst would indicate that medieval society attributed purpose to emotion. Jean Froissart does not give the same prominence to the endeavors of Jeanne de Penthievre in her efforts during the Breton Civil War and in comparison to Joan of Flanders whom he effusively praises and lauds for her spirit and resolve. In fact, Jeanne de Penthievre in defense of her rights in 1364 and the spine-stiffing speech to her husband before his final battle are the first occasions in which she directly takes part.<sup>42</sup> The failure to mention Jeanne de Penthievre's role, in contrast to what the administrative documents otherwise indicate, reflects both prejudice on Froissart's part against the Blois-French faction and a conventional downplaying of women, unless they were exceptional like Saint Gertrude or Joan of Flanders. As such, Froissart did not deliberately or unduly falsify his narrative and even in the interest of powerful and rich patrons, when describing the events in Brittany his account seems to be fair.<sup>43</sup>

For the most part, in medieval texts which presupposed social conventions, it is only kings or other noble males that display anger, because their status entitled them to express emotion in a limited number of predictable settings as motivation for future acts.<sup>44</sup> However, these same texts more often warned against passions and extolled the virtues of moderate behavior and sober sovereigns in words and deeds, public and private. Although persons were told to avoid violent emotions, such as extreme anger and rage, the primary exhortation of the Late Middle Ages was to modulate the effects of a range emotions, such as sadness,

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<sup>41</sup> Catherine Peyroux, "Gertrude's furor: Reading Anger in an Early Medieval Saint's Life, In *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998), 41.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Jones, "The Breton Civil War," in the *Creation of Brittany: A Late Medieval State*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1988), 201.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> White, *Politics of Anger*, 139.



love, fear, and joy and to control the propensity to be generous, feel pity or seek pleasure.<sup>45</sup>

This was always the case for women regardless of status. “Greek philosophers drew a close connexion between heat and the soul (with obvious implications for women), and the female of the species was held to be additionally disadvantaged by specific spiritual and physical defects, caused by the privations which she had to endure while still in the womb.”<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, historical scholarship has presumed that Joan of Flanders’ succumbed to these same “privations” and subsequently labeled her as insane.

What are the origins of labeling Joan of Flanders’ behavior as madness? In her 1978 monograph *A Distant Mirror*, historian Barbara Tuchman says: “The blows and intrigues, privations and broken hopes of her life proved too much for the valiant Countess of Montfort, who went mad and was confined in England while Edward made himself guardian of her son.”<sup>47</sup> While the latter is true, Joan of Flanders permanently resided in England from 1343 until her death and Edward III became the guardian of her children, what is the evidence of the former? Tuchman offers no proof and writes in the preceding paragraph, “...she provisioned and fortified garrisons, organized resistance, presided over councils, conducted diplomacy, and expressed herself in eloquent and graceful letters...she devised feints and stratagems and when her husband escaped from the Louvre in disguise only to die after reaching Brittany, she implacably continued to fight for her son.”<sup>48</sup> Besides the fact that Tuchman’s timeline is incorrect and that Joan of Flanders was in England at the time of her

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<sup>45</sup> Michael R. Solomon, “Non-natural love: Coitus, Desire and Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Spain,” in *Emotions and Health, 1200-1700*, ed. Elena Carrera (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 155.

<sup>46</sup> Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*. New York: Random House, 1978, 75.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

husband's release from prison and escape from house arrest, she never returned to Brittany.<sup>49</sup> More importantly, nothing in Tuchman's words portends Joan of Flanders' emotional collapse. Therefore, what is the basis for Tuchman's argument? Similarly, in his 1970 book *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399*, Breton historian Michael Jones states, "It seems likely, too, that the privations Joan de Flandres had undergone in heroic defense of the duchy in 1342 were responsible for her breakdown of health, and for the fact that soon after going into exile she lost her reason and was handed over to the care of keepers."<sup>50</sup> Again the latter is true, but what is the evidence of the former?

Modern scholarship has wedded itself to the privations theory of the madness of Joan of Flanders. As John Bell Henneman states in his 1996 book *Olivier De Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, "Historians have long believed that she [Joan of Flanders] suffered a mental breakdown was incarcerated due to insanity."<sup>51</sup> Why? Undoubtedly the Late Victorian historian Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie was the wellspring for the emotional collapse theory of Joan of Flanders. La Borderie's comprehensive description of the Blois-Montfort dispute has influenced all subsequent generations of historians and remains the fullest account of the War of Succession.<sup>52</sup> In *Ducal Brittany*, Michael Jones referenced La Borderie's account of the fate of Joan of Flanders.<sup>53</sup> In his multi-volume work *Histoire de Bretagne* (1896-1915) from Roman Brittany until the eighteenth century, in a section entitled "The Destiny of Joan de Montfort,"

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<sup>49</sup> Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10:820-21; Jones, "Breton Civil War," 203; See Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 for timeline.

<sup>50</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> Henneman, *Olivier De Clisson*, 27-28.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart, and the War," 4.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 16.

La Borderie theorized that Joan of Flanders had a nervous breakdown.<sup>54</sup> La Borderie has been the gold standard on the Breton Civil War because of the coherency and authoritativeness of his narrative.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, how did La Borderie reach his conclusions on Joan of Flanders?

While the next chapter will examine the legal basis for medieval guardianship and confinement due to mental defect, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to the analysis of the emotional breakdown theory of Joan of Flanders. For all of his shortcomings, Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie was the first historian to appraise Joan of Flanders' administration after her arrival in England and concluded that her relocation to Tickhill Castle was for other reasons than comfort. However, his justification for Joan of Flanders' confinement is flawed. La Borderie's premise is as follows:

And really, after the enormous physical and moral excitations of 1342, despite lasting six months, Joan bore the weight [holding Montfortist Brittany]. After terrible fatigue, overwhelming emotions, the mortal anguish of the Siege of Hennebont, after the terror and suffering of the terrible storm in route to England eight days tossed about [the waves] between life and death—how astonished to see a feminine form, nervous and fragile but a necessary instrument with this great soul and heart so firm and proud, how astonished to see now one battered, broken, shattered. Was it that so many tests had reversed her intelligence and thrown her into the abyss of madness?<sup>56</sup>

La Borderie's thesis is because Joan of Flanders, "très-célèbre dame, très-célèbre duchesse," went into seclusion shortly after arriving in England she must have suffered a collapse, and thus he likens her to a poor woman now incapable of action.<sup>57</sup> This theory was La Borderie's default position: not because of an examination of the mechanics of royal prerogative

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<sup>54</sup> "La destinée de Jeanne de Montfort," La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:488-92.

<sup>55</sup> Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart, and the War," 6.

<sup>56</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:490.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 489.

wardship, but because of his cultural biases, preconceptions, and traditionalist approach to history. “Historians, like De La Borderie, tend to remain prisoners of nostalgia for the past, without trying to play the role of ‘awakener’ of the Breton people...These intellectuals have little to offer to the Bretons apart from the status quo, elaborating on a historical narrative where people are passive.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, it is not surprising, from La Borderie’s perspective, that the emotional distress just spontaneously came upon Joan of Flanders and she was a victim of circumstance. “Donc Jeanne de Flandre était devenue folle!”<sup>59</sup> La Borderie blamed, in very melodramatic nineteenth-century French, Joan of Flanders’ breakdown on the stresses of the Breton Civil War and the inherent weaknesses of the female mind.<sup>60</sup> Yet, is there evidence of Joan of Flanders’ predisposition towards emotionalism from which La Borderie could draw?

As rationality in the Middle Ages was a social construct, Arthur Moyne de La Borderie would have had to rely on the chronicles and other coeval literary sources to buttress his argument of Joan of Flanders’ breakdown. Almost synonymous with womanhood has been an unstable repertoire of emotional and physical symptoms-fits, fainting, vomiting, choking, sobbing, kissing, laughing, paralysis-and the rapid passage from one state to another with alacrity, let us see if Joan of Flanders’ behavior was indicative of inappropriate self-expression.<sup>61</sup> So what does Froissart’s *Chronicle* say about Joan of Flanders temperament?

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<sup>58</sup> Michel Denis, “Arthur de La Borderie (1827-1901) ou ‘l’histoire, science patriotique’” in *Chroniqueurs et historiens de la Bretagne du Moyen-Âge au milieu*, ed. Noël-Yves Tonnerre (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2001), 152; Tudi Kernalegenn, and Yann Fournis. “The historiography of an ‘invisible nation’. Debating Brittany.” *Studies on National Movements* no.1 (2013): 83.

<sup>59</sup> “So Joan of Flanders had gone mad!” La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:490.

<sup>60</sup> Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, John Leland notes

<sup>61</sup> Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1987), 129.

Jean Froissart has referred to Joan of Flanders as having a solid temperament and embodying marshal talents and diplomatic ability, in the Middle Ages it was called *virago*. *Virago* was used to describe noblewomen, particularly queens, who were politically, diplomatically and militarily active in the absence of their husbands the king, could deal with the day-to-day affairs and the logistics of war.<sup>62</sup> Thirteenth-century chronicler Matthew Paris writing of the late French Queen and regent Blanche de Castile, said that she had “*sexu femina, consilio mascula, Semirami*”<sup>63</sup> *merito comparanda*,” and Joan of Flanders was in the same tradition.<sup>64</sup> Pauline Stafford has referred to *virago* as a stoic ideal of politically active women in the biblical mold of Judith and Esther, queens who had fought battles.<sup>65</sup> Froissart presents Joan of Flanders as the competent leader of Montfortist Brittany, with a base of political support and militarily resourceful, and not as a fragile or overwrought flower.

Froissart’s Joan of Flanders is gracious and commanding, not weak-willed nor melodramatic or melancholic. “The Countess of Montfort came down from the castle to meet them, and with a most cheerful countenance, kissed Sir Walter Manny [Mauny], and all of his companions, one after the other, like a noble and valiant Dame.”<sup>66</sup> As previously mentioned, in the Middle Ages countenance and deportment were predictive of one’s emotional health and mental state and could be a cause for concern. The sixteenth-century

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<sup>62</sup> Margaret Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 260.

<sup>63</sup> Semiramis was a ninth-century, legendary Assyrian warrior queen, who, according to Greek historian Didorus Siculus, was famous for successfully leading her husband’s army after his death and functioning as regent from 811-806 BC.

<sup>64</sup> “Female sex, masculine constitution, and comparable to Semiramis [legendary Assyrian queen],” Matthew Paris, *Matthæi Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, eds. Roger, and Henry Richards Luard (. London: Longman & Co, 1872), 5:354.

<sup>65</sup> Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, Ga: Univ. of Georgia Press 1983), 26-30.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II. to the Coronation of Henry IV*, ed Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), 1:309.

Sir John Bouchier translation of Froissart's *Chronicle* states, "Then the countess came down from the castle with a cheerful air, and kissed Sir Walter of Manny and his companions, one after another, two or three times, like a valiant lady."<sup>67</sup> Cheerful air and kissing could have been misconstrued; however, the following line with its reference to her gallantry alludes to her behavior being appropriate. Early twentieth-century historian Pierce Butler has commented that there was nothing inappropriate in Joan of Flanders' behavior and rather glad cheer was typical of her character and enthusiasm for her cause, being a staunch warrior.<sup>68</sup> Regardless, no negative conclusions about Joan of Flanders' anxieties or well-being can be inferred from either of these statements.

Froissart has shown Joan of Flanders as being formidable and wholly capable in all situations, not easily disheartened or dismayed. In describing the feats of Joan of Flanders during a naval battle, the Thomas Johnes translation says, "The countess of Montfort was equal to a man, for she had the heart of a lion; and with a rusty sharp sword in her hand, she combated bravely."<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Bouchier translation states of the Battle of Guernsey:

Sir Robert d'Artois, earl of Richmond, and with him the earl of Pembroke the earl of Salisbury, earl of Suffolk, the earl of Oxford, the baron of Stamford, the lord Spencer, the lord Bouchier, and many other knights of England, and their companies, were on the sea with the countess of Mountfort, and at last came before the isle of Guernsey. Then they perceived the great fleet of the Genoese, whereof Sir Lois [Louis] of Spain was commander... And when the lord, knights, and squires came together, there was a violent conflict; the countess, on that day, fought like a man; she had the heart of a lion, and held in her hand a sharp broad sword, with which she fought valiantly.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Froissart, *The Antient Chronicles*, 1: 200.

<sup>68</sup> Pierce Butler, *Women of Mediaeval France* (Philadelphia: Rittenhouse Press, 1908), 298.

<sup>69</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, 2:23.

<sup>70</sup> Froissart, *The Antient Chronicles*, 1:215.

Joan of Flanders was a tenacious woman with a vitality and a take-charge attitude which is what her family and country required. While behavior can be politicized and used to shape opinion, Joan of Flanders was on the frontline with Breton and English forces and field marshals, fighting for her husband.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, she was comfortable in her role as the titular head of Montfortist Brittany and respected by soldiers and nobles in that capacity and that is the impression that Froissart imparts.

In the *Chronicles*, Froissart sought to present a colorful account that would captivate audiences and withstand several retellings; consequently, he used imaginative dialogue to evoke a response. Historians such as Mary Anne Everett Green and Pierce Butler have embellished upon Froissart's narrative and further elevated Joan of Flanders' exploits with more impassioned prose. "She had mounted a tower to see how her people fought...then she bethought her[self] of a great feat, mounted once her courser, all armed as she was, caused three hundred men a-horseback to be ready...and she her company sallied out, and dashed into the camp of French lords, cut down tents and fired on huts, the camp being guarded by none but varlets and boys, who ran away..."<sup>72</sup> Much of what Jean Froissart wrote was a veneer and historians have to drill down to uncover the essence of his account for clarity. Historians studying emotions are confronted with selective and textual representations of emotion with layers of manipulations and levels of misunderstanding, as such scholarship should be mindful.<sup>73</sup> However, Froissart was rarely prepared to sacrifice objective historical exposition just for rhetorical flourishes.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, if historians have referred to Joan of

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<sup>71</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, 2: 29.

<sup>72</sup> Butler, *Women*, 298.

<sup>73</sup> Deploige, "Studying Emotions," 20.

<sup>74</sup> Jones, "The Breton Civil War," 213.

Flanders as an Amazon or overwrought in their works, it may not be an accurate characterization of her.

As behavior is often subject to interpretation, scholars have to read between the lines for the truth. If one is to believe the emotional breakdown theory of Joan of Flanders, then something about her temperament led to her exhaustion—and Edward III's by happenstance capitalized upon her decline. "When we look to the 'symptoms' which provoked these pronouncements we can see how the very definition of madness functioned to control and arguably punish women for both enacting exaggerated form of femininity or for being 'unacceptable' contravening the ideals of femininity circulating at that particular point in time."<sup>75</sup> Eleanor of Provence, wife of King Henry III of England, was said to have a strong temperament and to be imbued with the *virago* spirit of martial competency and political acumen, and to have had a capacity for organization and readiness of action that won over her opponents.<sup>76</sup> During the *Second Barons' War* (1264-1267), Queen Eleanor's friends, like those of Joan of Flanders, took courage from her resolve and knew that she would not capitulate. Eleanor of Provence commanded respect from her contemporaries for her valiant striving, vigor and possession of male strength spirit. "For the lord the King and his son Edward, she fought bravely and manfully as *virago*, a most powerful woman, strongly laboring and assisting."<sup>77</sup> Neither commentary nor scholarship has challenged or judged Queen Eleanor for her energy and more or less accepted that she was an exceptional woman under extraordinary circumstances.

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<sup>75</sup> Jane M. Ussher, *The Madness of Women: Myth and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2011), 68.

<sup>76</sup> Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, 222.

<sup>77</sup> "libet intexere, quod domino suo regi et Edwardo filio ejus, tam strenue and viriliter, tanquam virago potentissima, succurrendum fortiter insudaverit," *Flores Historiarum*, eds. Henry Richards Luard, and Robert de Reading (London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), 2:500.



Given that medieval, aristocratic and political narratives, historical and fictitious, used an emotional vocabulary that was quite limited in range to anger (*ira, furiae, malevolentia*), grief (*dolor*), shame (*ignomina*), love (*amare*), hatred/enmity (*odium*) fear (*timor*), and joy (*gaudium*), how is a historian to deduce fact from nuance?<sup>78</sup> Rather how can scholarship discern emotionalism from such a tiny repertoire of emotional shifts?<sup>79</sup> Perhaps one should compare Joan of Flanders' alleged emotionalism to a case in which affect was not in dispute-the madness of Charles VI of France.

In Summer 1392, after an attempt on the life of the French Constable Olivier IV de Clisson, the very same Olivier de Clisson who had been reared in England with young John de Montfort, and believing that Duke John IV of Brittany (one and the same) was behind the plot, Charles VI of France convened a meeting of his counselors to discuss military retaliation against Duke John IV.<sup>80</sup> Although French military action may have been warranted against Brittany for harboring the alleged culprit Pierre de Craon,<sup>81</sup> King Charles VI's uncles were upset that they had not been consulted, for the king had been behaving nervously and acting not like himself.<sup>82</sup> The excitable young King was recovering from his last bout of illness and by late July, he was again exhibiting odd behavior.<sup>83</sup> However, Charles VI would not be deterred nor dissuaded by his uncles against an attack on Brittany

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<sup>78</sup> White, *Politics of Anger*, 134-35

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> M.L. Bellaguet, ed. *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le regne de Charles VI de 380 a 1422*, Editions du Comite des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris: L'imprimerie de Crapelet, 1840), 2: 9-11.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 8-9

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

<sup>83</sup> Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, 156; R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue: Crisis at the Court of Charles VI, 1392-1420* (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 2.

and decided to launch a campaign against Duke John IV immediately.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, the plans for an attack on Brittany proceeded.

Allegedly, Charles VI's intention was to force Duke John IV's abdication, placing Brittany under a governorship until the heirs of Brittany were of age to have the crown returned to them.<sup>85</sup> Initial reports of the expedition had Charles VI being "weak in the body"<sup>86</sup> and plagued by a "burning fever for which he was advised to change the air."<sup>87</sup> However, by August 5 after leaving camp at Le Mans his condition rapidly deteriorated, and Charles VI succumbed to the heat, aggravated by his exertions (weak, eating and drinking little), went raving mad and killed several people, before being restrained.<sup>88</sup>

The contemporaneous accounts of Charles VI's nervous condition and subsequent derangement personified medieval judgments and attitudes toward passions and unchecked emotions. According to Froissart, these are the events that transpired:

He set out from Mans between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, the lords and the others had quartered there...followed him at a gentle pace ...not suspecting the misfortune which was on point of befalling him. He should not have thus exposed himself to the heat of day but have ridden in the cool of the mornings or evenings, as the heat was much greater than he had ever known or felt in that season. The King being so near (the pages rode almost on the heels of his horse) was startled and shuttered...fancied a host of enemies were [there] to slay him. In this distraction of mind, he drew his sword, and advanced on his pages, for his senses were quite gone, and imagined himself surrounded by enemies, giving blows of his sword, indifferent on whom they fell, and bawled out, 'Advance! Advance on these traitors.' The pages, seeing the king's wrath, took care of themselves, for they imagined they had angered him, by their negligence and spurred their horses different ways.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Alain Bouchart. *Grandes chroniques de Bretagne*, 2:193-94.

<sup>85</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, 11:17.

<sup>86</sup> Jean Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicles*, ed. and trans. John Jolliffe (London: P. Harvill, 1967), 337.

<sup>87</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, 10: 357.

<sup>88</sup> Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicle*, 337; Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 2:20-21; Bouchart. *Grandes chroniques de Bretagne*, 2: 188, 197-98.

<sup>89</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, 11: 19-22.

It was a catastrophe to say the very least.

Michel Pintoin, monk of St. Denis and court historian for Charles VI, was traveling with King Charles VI and described the incident in the forest of Le Mans in dramatic terms. According to Pintoin, Charles VI's imagination had been troubling him for the entirety of the campaign and despite all efforts his senses were at a loss. Consequently, when one of the men-at-arms inadvertently dropped his sword, Charles VI went into delirium: brandishing his sword, shouting and attacking all who got in his way. "During this excessive frenzy [*hoc furore perdurante*] the king killed four men...and would have done greater harm if his sword had not broken. He was captured, lashed to a cart and brought back to camp for forced rest. Charles was so exhausted, that he lay unconscious for two days, unable to move or recognize visitors...his health worsened, his body grew so cold that his faint heartbeat was his only sign of life."<sup>90</sup> Alas, Charles VI survived and Brittany was spared his wrath. However, the episode in the Le Mans forest marked the onset of "a strange and incurable malady that often deprived Charles VI of his reason and clouded his intelligence with thick shadows" periodically until his death in 1422.<sup>91</sup>

Froissart attributed King Charles VI's fervor to divine intervention. In Froissart's opinion, Charles VI's affliction was the scourge of God, whose severity causes men to tremble.<sup>92</sup> The most obvious biblical example is Nebuchadnezzar, who at the height of power as the King of Babylonia, "the Lord of Heaven and earth decreed that he should lose both his mind and his kingdom and for seven years he remained in this condition, living on acorns

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<sup>90</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 2:20-21

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 1:560-67; Anne D. Hedeman, *Of Counselors and Kings: The Three Versions of Pierre Salmon's Dialogues* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), ix.

<sup>92</sup> Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicle*, 338.

and berries like a pig.”<sup>93</sup> Consequently, there was never any reason to be surprised by the hand of God and divine will.<sup>94</sup> Froissart’s explanation was very understandable for his audience and adhered to medieval cosmology and precepts of the Church.

According to the doctrine of Original Sin, because of the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind has been “shackled by the bond of death”<sup>95</sup> inexorably to them by their sin and, therefore, all men and women have become the reluctant heirs of suffering and mortality.<sup>96</sup> Even as late as the seventeenth century, as John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* clearly indicates, the belief that sin manifests itself through suffering was still quite pervasive. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* states the consequences of Eve’s “inabstinence” were to introduce into the world: “all maladies, or ghastly Spasm, or racking torture, qualms/ of heart-sick Agony all feverous kinds/ Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs,/ Intestine Stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs,/ Demoniac Frenzy, moping Melancholy/And Moon-struck madness, pining Atrophy...” and despair that busy the sick and those who tend them.<sup>97</sup> Suffering was not unfamiliar in the Middle Ages and given the prevailing Christian orientation would not have Froissart called Joan of Flanders’ frenzied or Godsmacked if she were? Despite her noble status, there was no reason for Froissart to gloss over Joan of Flanders’ emotionalism, if she had been truly overly emotional.

With an irrational Joan of Flanders, in her role as leader of Montfortist Brittany, the people of Brittany would have faced similar issues and concerns as those in the Kingdom of France under Charles VI. The incident in 1392 was just the first of many psychotic breaks

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 109.

<sup>96</sup> Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society*, 8.

<sup>97</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books*, ed. Merritt Yerkes Hughes (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 2003), 278.

for Charles VI, each with more devastating consequences than the previous. After this initial episode, many people tried to dismiss Charles VI's breakdown and felt that the king had been poisoned<sup>98</sup> or blamed others.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, within a year another event occurred in which Charles VI was said to be acting with unsound mind and making inappropriate gestures.<sup>100</sup> While there was no frenzy with the second episode, it lasted much longer than the previous from June 1393 to January 1394.<sup>101</sup> During a third event that occurred a year and a half later, Charles VI was unable to: recognize his immediate family members, his officers, attend councils, claimed his name was George, ran wildly through his apartments until he was physically exhausted and had to be walled inside to prevent escape.<sup>102</sup> Pintoin claimed that this episode was over by February 1396, and that Charles VI was well enough to attend mass at Notre Dame, negotiate marriage contracts between his daughter Isabelle to King Richard II of England,<sup>103</sup> and was again normal by all outward appearances.<sup>104</sup> However, Charles VI had periods of lucidity throughout his life when he was able to resume his duties. Yet, for France Charles VI's bouts of illness were a constant source of concern for the stability of the Valois regime.

The unpredictable nature of the King's fervor made Charles VI's condition a difficult and potentially dangerous problem for the government.<sup>105</sup> In the Treaty of Troyes, signed May 21, 1420, Charles VI agreed to disinherit his son the Dauphin Charles and recognize his son-

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<sup>98</sup> Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicle*, 340.

<sup>99</sup> Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 2:86.

<sup>101</sup> Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, 4.

<sup>102</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 2:404.

<sup>103</sup> Françoise Lehoux, *Jean de France, duc de Berri. Sa vie. Son action politique (1340-1416): Tome II: De l'avènement de Charles VI à la mort de Philippe de Bourgogne* (Paris: Piccard, 1966), 351.

<sup>104</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 2: 408.

<sup>105</sup> Aleksandra Nicole Pfau, "Madness in the Realm: Narratives of Mental Illness in Late Medieval France," Ph.D. dissertation. University of Michigan, 2008, 50.

in-law Henry V of England as heir to France. Thus Henry V immediately would be granted the regency, as “his cousin of France is very often taken and impeded by a contrary illness, which is grievous to say, in such a way that he himself cannot conveniently understand or attend to the needs of the realm.”<sup>106</sup> Charles VI’s cousin Philippe, Duke of Burgundy had negotiated the agreement with Henry V after Henry V’s successful military campaign in northern France and a reoccurrence of Charles VI’s malady. “The admission within the proposed treaty that Charles VI was incapable of governing his realm because of his illness created a convenient precedent for objections to the treaty on the same grounds. If the king was not fit to govern because he lacked sufficient understanding, then how much less was conveniently understand or attend to the needs of the realm.”<sup>107</sup> Similarly, if the king were unfit to rule because he lacked sufficient understanding, then how was he fit to sign a treaty that would disinherit his son?<sup>108</sup>

With the spells of Charles VI being as sporadic as they were, he was never sufficiently impaired to warrant *rex inutilis* (useless king) removal from the throne, which perpetuated instability in the realm. If Charles VI were incapacitated, he could have been removed from power and the Valois regime would have managed successfully without him.<sup>109</sup> However, Charles VI never vacated the throne and the only reference to *rex inutilis* was in regards to French troops pillaging the county of Vermandois against Charles VI’s orders. When the marauders encountered the Vermandoise, local inhabitants claimed before a Paris tribunal

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<sup>106</sup> Nicole Pons, “*L’Honneur de la Couronne de France*”: *Quatre libelles contre les Anglais (vers 1418 - vers 1429)* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1990), 136:

<sup>107</sup> Pfau, “*Madness in the Realm*,” 49.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 104

that the troops said, “Go find your idiotic, useless [*inutillis*], and captive king.”<sup>110</sup> This statement presumably would have intensified the king's anger and it is unclear whether the sentiments were, in fact, those of the troops or the Vermandoise, attempting to convince Charles VI to retaliate.<sup>111</sup> Regardless, nothing came of it. Removal of a king was always controversial and not undertaken lightly. Sovereignty was shrouded in the competing concept of sacred kingship and the belief that the king was appointed by God and that his authority came directly from God.<sup>112</sup> As the rightfully anointed king was a proxy for the biblical King David, Charles VI's contemporaries did not feel comfortable in pressing the matter, as to risk eternal damnation.<sup>113</sup> Consequently, Charles VI's counselors functioned within the letter of the law, if not the spirit, and acted in all matters in his name.

If both Pintoin and Froissart acknowledged Charles VI's affliction, would not the chroniclers have done so for Joan of Flanders if she had had one? Charles VI's condition impacted people and events, even when he was lucid.<sup>114</sup> There was fallout from the failed Breton expedition in 1392 that laid the groundwork for recrimination, reprisals and assassinations that culminated in Charles VI disinheriting the Dauphin in the Treaty of Troyes, which only collapsed because of the deaths of the principle signatories in 1422. As sovereign, the smallest details of one's life were often recorded and even more so, when during times of trouble. In the royal household accounts, it is mentioned that Charles VI threw clothing and other objects into a fire during one of his episodes.<sup>115</sup> If Joan of Flanders

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<sup>110</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, 4:452.

<sup>111</sup> Pfau, “*Madness in the Realm*,” 104-5.

<sup>112</sup> M. Cecelia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 108.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>114</sup> Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, 158.

<sup>115</sup> Auguste Brachet, *Pathologie mentale des rois de France; Louis XI et ses ascendants; une vie humaine étudiée à travers six siècles d'hérédité, 852-1483* (Paris: Hachette, 1903), 635-36.

had been unable to mount a successful defense of Hennebont, because of bizarre behavior would not that behavior had been recounted? Charles de Blois would have secured Brittany in 1342 and the course of the Breton Civil War would have dramatically changed. Given the attention of the chroniclers in recounting Charles VI's stresses, it is likely that the countess who lost Brittany would have faced the same scrutiny.

It is apparent that La Borderie's characterizations of Joan of Flanders have dominated scholarly debate since the turn of the twentieth century, as Froissart's had for earlier generations. According to Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie based in part on the vagaries of Jean Froissart, modern scholarship is to infer that Joan of Flanders, exhausted by her efforts on behalf of her absentee husband, suffered a breakdown and went into interminable seclusion.<sup>116</sup> However, is that assessment accurate? Historians have to be careful in promulgating overly simplistic interpretations of events that distort what happened.<sup>117</sup> One cannot "label" Joan of Flanders' as suffering from a personality disorder from the historical record, because of the shortcomings of the sources. Intrinsically, "medieval sources which inform us on emotions, for example documents from legal practice as well as narrative sources such as chronicles, need to be contextualized, on the first part."<sup>118</sup> Consequently, they have to be assessed according to the role they played in the environment from which they originated, who wrote them down and for what purpose in what kind of intertextual dialogues with other texts and discourses can they be situated, and furthermore how were they preserved, diffused or impacted their surroundings.<sup>119</sup> In other words, feelings, at least

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<sup>116</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 253.

<sup>117</sup> Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, 1.

<sup>118</sup> Deploige, "Studying Emotions," 22-23

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.



from a historical perspective, are intelligible only in the cultural context in which they occur.<sup>120</sup>

“Of the private character of Jeanne de Montfort we cannot speak with certainty, since the information we possess is very slight; however, of the qualities admired by chivalry she was unquestionably an extraordinary woman; courageous and personally valiant, with a head to plan daring exploits and a heart to conduct her through the thick of danger.”<sup>121</sup> According to the ethos of the Middle Ages, Joan of Flanders, unlike King Charles VI of France, cannot be considered overly emotional and strained. She behaved heroically and rationally, according to acceptable social norms. Consequently, Joan of Flanders’ exploits were laudatory. Of Froissart’s treatment of Joan of Flanders, he used a chivalric tone that elevated personal achievement because, “he imagined his words would inspire future generations of knights to behave in accordance with the strict etiquette of chivalric practice.”<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, Froissart more than any other chronicler captured the flavor of the Breton Civil War and reflected contemporary attitudes and feelings.<sup>123</sup> Froissart’s rhetoric might be hyperbolic, but that does not mean that Joan of Flanders was.

Unlike the mad King Charles VI, undeniably, Joan of Flanders was respected in all quarters, being a resolute and effective leader of the Montfortist faction in Brittany. Consequently, the feelings about her among her contemporaries was favorable. She was a woman of indomitable spirit and strongly active temperament, not likely to succumb to the adversities of life at least without a fight absent evidence to the contrary, medical or

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<sup>120</sup> Robert C. Solomon, “Getting Angry: The Jamesian Theory of Emotion in Anthropology,” in *Culture Theory: Essays in Mind, Self, and Emotion*, eds. R. Shweder and R. LeVine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 240.

<sup>121</sup> Butler, *Women of Mediaeval France*, 302-3.

<sup>122</sup> Jones, “The Breton Civil War,” 202.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

otherwise. Moreover, she would have put up a fight in court, if she had to do it. It is important to give full measure to the madness of Charles VI to contrast an obvious and well-documented case of a mentally illness in a medieval sovereign with the unsubstantiated innuendo of Joan of Flanders' privations, which this chapter attempted to do. Now we turn to royal prerogative wardship and how Edward III avoided a public showdown with Joan of Flanders.

## Chapter Five

### Stricken From the Record: The Peculiar Omission of Joan of Flanders Competency Inquisition and Justification for Feudal Guardianship

Writs to inquire concerning alleged idiocies had been directed to both escheator and sheriff and a regular system of examination instituted. If a man knew his own age and the names of his father and mother, and could tell up to 20d<sup>1</sup>, he was adjudged no idiot; by statute of Edward III... Moreover, even if idiocy were established by these tests, the chancellor was still supposed to summon the fool before him and make his own examination.<sup>2</sup>

Since the legal recognition of *Prerogativa Regis* in 1324, examinations of the mentally incompetent were regularized and a part of the judicial record, as was the case of Emma de Beston, who will serve as a comparison to Joan of Flanders. On July 25, 1383,<sup>3</sup> commissioners, duly authorized and empowered by Richard II of England, summoned Emma de Beston of Bishop's Lenn, Norfolk to appear before them to ascertain her state of mind. Escheator John Rede had previously examined Emma in 1378 and found her capable of lucidity. However, further investigation was required to determine her present condition, as she had been alienated of her lands in the escheator's bailiwick for five years.<sup>4</sup>

Medieval guardianship was a mechanism for the protection of the mentally incompetent and the preservation of the property of the afflicted. The care and custody of the bodies and

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 30.00 GBP in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> From H. R. Bell, *An Introduction to the History and Records of the Court of Wards & Liveries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 128. The Court of Wards and Liveries, established in 1540/41, assumed responsibility for the jurisdiction of the estates for minors and the incompetent until the Court of Protection and Practice in 1960. Anthony Fitzherbert's legal treatise *La Novelle Natura Brevium* summarized the late medieval basis for the determining competency, the line of questioning, and tests. "And he who shall be said to be a Sot and Idiot from his Birth, is such a Person who cannot account or number twenty Pence, nor can tell who was his Father or Mother, nor how old he is. For as it may appear that he hath no Underftanding of Reason what shall be for his Profit, or what or his Loss: But if he hath such Underftanding, that he know and understand his Letters, and do read by Teaching or Information of another Man, then it seemeth he is not a Sot nor a natural Idiot." Anthony Fitzherbert, *La Novelle Natura Brevium* (London: Tottelli, 1581), 581-83.

<sup>3</sup> Date was according to the Julian calendar, July 25, 1383 was a Sunday. Emma de Beston's second examination was on a Friday and most likely July 30, 1383.

<sup>4</sup> The case of Emma Beston, *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, iv: 1377-1388 (London: HMSO, 1957), no. 227, pg. 125; going forward referred to as *CIM*; Lenn referred to in some documents as King's Lynn or Lynn, Norfolk.

lands of the mentally ill were of utmost importance in the Middle Ages for rightful inheritance, succession and wealth transmission. When the situations arose for the law to encounter the mentally impaired, well-established procedures and protocols went into effect for the management of those persons and their assets.

Competency examinations had to be conducted by government officials, in an open forum, with witnesses and rules of evidence, and with the impaired present to give testimony. Furthermore, certain types of inquests and later courts, had sole jurisdiction over mental incompetency. “In circumstances that were not *sui generis*,<sup>5</sup> inquest juries had to contend with problems that required careful investigation of unusual situations. Questions concerning mental incompetency can be placed in that category.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike Emma de Beston,<sup>7</sup> Joan of Flanders, Duchess of Brittany never had an inquest or hearing. Absence of that fact or any medico-legal determination of incompetency undermines the validity of Joan of Flanders’ alleged guardianship, and substantiates my claim that Edward III of England wrongfully imprisoned her.

Of the recorded occurrences of feudal guardianship by mental defect, disability or incompetency in medieval England, Joan of Flanders’ case stands out for its legal anomalies. Joan’s case was the only circumstance out of the 361 verifiable cases of guardianship by a determination of sanity in England from 1200-1500, where no hearing or inquisition

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<sup>5</sup> *sui generis*, of the same order or type

<sup>6</sup> James Masschaele, *Jury, State, and Society in Medieval England* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 32.

<sup>7</sup> As previously mentioned in the introduction, Emma de Beston is one of several case studies included in this paper. The detail and documentation in her competency inquest provides significant insight into the mechanics of late fourteenth-century English guardianship.

occurred.<sup>8</sup> The Duchess of Brittany's, presumed guardianship was most unusual because hers was the only known case of competency guardianship where there was no evidence of a medical determination of sanity. The lack of judicial documentation, especially for a duchess, made Joan's conservatorship highly circumspect. Considering the circumstances of Joan's presence in England in 1343, the Breton succession and the proxy war between England and France, and the Richmond tenancy made the very nature of Joan's sequester in England all the more suspicious.

Guardianship was only valid through a legal determination of competency through an investigation. Joan of Flanders' apparent lack of an inquisition has led to more questions: How did medieval idiocy inquests work? What were the criteria for the determination of sanity?<sup>9</sup> What was the significance of Emma de Beston's inquisition and how did it relate to Joan of Flanders? What did Joan of Flanders' lack of a competency examination imply about the status of her guardianship? Through the examination of historical documents and sources, this paper will explain the mental competency process in medieval England and evaluate the omission of Joan of Flanders' inquisition from the historical record and its implications.

Inquisitions, examinations of the mentally incompetent, were central to the guardianship process because they were a means of determining sanity, without which any prerogative conservatorship arrangement was unlawful. As medieval feudal society was based upon the

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<sup>8</sup> A subset of veritable cases of guardianship by mental defect in England from 1200-1500; Veritable referring to those recorded cases which appear and can be cross-referenced in the public records: fine rolls, close rolls, miscellany rolls, post-mortem rolls, Exchequer memoranda and other court records (taking into account any duplication in the records for variations in names or psychological/medical diagnosis). Found in Wendy J. Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill, Incompetent, and Disabled in Medieval England*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 239-79.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Neugebauer, "Diagnosis, Guardianship, and Residential Care." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 146, no. 12 (1989): 1580.

preservation and stable transmission of landed wealth, the Crown was entitled to take possession of subjects and their estates to prevent harm or spoliation when found legally incompetent. Petitions for inquests first came to the attention of local authorities pursuant to problematic or contentious circumstances regarding the estates of persons believed to be incapable of managing their personal affairs. Sheriffs, escheators, commissioners, and after the sixteenth century the Court of Wards and Liveries conducted the examinations to assess whether a person met the standards for a “sound mind” through tests of reasoning and judgment. By law, the inquisitions were to be convened in “open places” by lawful escheators of good character and inheritance, and findings were to be made “without fraud or collusion above all.”<sup>10</sup> Competency hearings had to be just and impartial for the crown and the king’s subjects.

The determination of competency was an elaborate process that safeguarded the property of feeble-minded tenant holders and ensured the prerogative rights of the king as overlord or *parens patriae*.<sup>11</sup> Legally, the king’s role was ““to imitate and approach as neere, as may be, the offices and duties of a natural father.””<sup>12</sup> This paternal responsibility of the Crown under royal prerogative granted the king the rights of conservatorship or the obligation to protect minors and those who lacked the ability to manage their possessions. Royal Prerogative dated back to Roman law. The fifth- century BC legal tract *The Twelve Tables* established a custodial system for the mentally ill. “If the person shall be insane [*furiosus*], authority [*potestas*] over him and his property shall belong to [his] male agnates and [in default

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<sup>10</sup> *The Statutes of the Realm: Revised Edition, Volume 1: Henry III-James II (1235-1635)*. (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1870), 367.

<sup>11</sup> *Parens Patriae*, father of the realm.

<sup>12</sup> State Papers, Domestic, London (1612), James I: 14/69.

of these] to [his] male clansmen.”<sup>13</sup> Administration over the mentally disabled was well established in Europe by the year 1000.

In Norman England, royal prerogative existed in legal tradition rather than statute until 1324. While the Laws of Henry I stipulated that relatives should “compassionately care” for insane persons, royal prerogative was tethered to feudal arraignments and the need for a stable transmission of landed wealth.<sup>14</sup> The 1324 *Statute De Prerogativa Regis* explicitly mandated:

The King shall have the custody of the lands of natural fools, taking the profits of them without waste or destruction, and shall find them their necessities, of whose fee soever the lands be holden....[As for lunatics], their lands and tenements shall be safely kept without waste and destruction, and that they and their household shall live and be maintained competently with the profits of the same, and the residue besides their sustentation shall be kept to their use, to be delivered unto them when they come to right mind.<sup>15</sup>

The jurisdiction of minors (wardship), the heirs of deceased tenants-in-chief, and the guardianship of the propertied mentally ill rested explicitly with the king after 1324.

Although not all idiots or lunatics automatically encountered an inquisition or hearing, these were convened only for vassals or tenants of the king, nobles and aristocracy.<sup>16</sup> By discretion, the king convened a commission to investigate the competency of non-fief holding subjects; however, the disability of non-landholders was of minimal interest to the Crown. The management of non-fief holders garnered no profits. So long as a person did not

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, trans. and ed., *The Twelve Tables*. (Princeton: Princeton University, 1952), 12.

<sup>14</sup> L.J. Downer, trans. and ed. *Leges Henrici Primi*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 245.

<sup>15</sup> *The Statutes of the Realm: Revised Edition, Volume 1 Henry III-James II* (1235-1635). (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1870), 131.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret McGlynn. "Idiots, Lunatics and the Royal Prerogative in Early Tudor England." *The Journal of Legal History* 26, no.1 (2005), 4.

disturb the king's peace or break the law, the Crown did not bother determining whether non-landholders were of "sound mind."

Why was a determination of a sound mind central to feudal guardianship? The testing and observation of the accused by court officials was the basis of the legal determination of sanity. Proving sanity was the linchpin of the guardianship process. While contemporary medical ideas focused on terms such as melancholy, frenzy, lethargy or light-headedness, legal commentary associated sanity with memory.<sup>17</sup> Contextually, lawyers were not using the word memory not in a modern sense but rather as an appropriate measure of legal responsibility or the lack of it.<sup>18</sup> Without a legal finding of insanity, guardianship or prerogative wardship was the alienation of property without license and illegal. To avoid the appearance of impropriety and the invalidation of guardianship, the king sent an official to inspect the impaired. These officials asked the accused to perform simple tasks or to answer common sense questions so that they could gage the accused's mental condition. After personally examining Thomas de Grenestede the court found that, "in every way he could as to his state, and that he found him of good mind and sane memory in word and deed, counting money, measuring cloth and doing all other things."<sup>19</sup> Answers to questions, where a person had a reasonable expectation of knowledge, gave the questioners a fair indication of a person's competency.<sup>20</sup> They were designed to measure a person's intellect, proficiency at basic skills, and cognitive ability at rudimentary levels. If a person met the baseline

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> The case of Thomas de Grenestede, *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, viii: Edward III (10-20), (London: H.M.S.O., 1904-1970), no. 284, pg. 209; referred to subsequently as *CIPM*.

<sup>20</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 64.



requirement, the person was allowed to return to daily life with periodic re-evaluation. Otherwise, the person entered into guardianship.

More importantly, the examiner's selection of questions said something about medieval English society, what it valued, and how the mentally disabled factored into the community. The examiners had latitude and complete discretion in the questions they asked. As previously stated, the king was not concerned with the management of non-profitable disability cases. However, the satisfactory inquiry of an impaired landholder required a combination of witness testimony and the correct answers to a series of questions or successfully performed tasks accomplished by the infirmed in front of the examiners.<sup>21</sup> The types of questions examiners asked, i.e. the names of one's parents or children or days of the week, gave the impression that society connected intelligence and memory with stability.<sup>22</sup> More importantly, one's answers were inexorably linked with the perception of competency or reasonable expectation that could make a good decision and judiciously manage one's estate.

What did it mean to be of sound mind? A sound mind or the lack thereof, *non compos mentis*, dated back to Roman law. "*Non compos mentis* indicated those who had lost mentally capacity or generally were 'without mental health.' *Non compos mentis*, *non sane mentis*, or another variant on this theme, was somewhat more neutral as a phrase, meaning 'without sense.'"<sup>23</sup> In Rome, the term referred to a plebian or commoner, while in medieval England *non compos mentis* referred to the mentally ill.<sup>24</sup> Within the legal parameters of medieval guardianship and feudal society, the determination of a sound mind was essential for

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<sup>21</sup> Emma de Beston, CIM, iv: 1377-1388, no. 227, p.125.

<sup>22</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 64.

<sup>23</sup> Wendy J. Turner, "Defining Mental Affliction," in *Disability and Medieval Law: History, Literature, Society*, ed. Cory Rushton (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2013), 135.

<sup>24</sup> Turner, "Defining Mental Affliction," 135.

inheritance. Land was the primary source of wealth and it was vitally important that the rightful heir, by blood or marriage inherited the land for social stability and a family's income.

Under Roman law, the bedrock of English law, the foundation of medieval law and English common law, "being of sound mind" was necessary for contracts and legal agreements.<sup>25</sup> Legal precedent built upon this threshold for the continuity and preservation of estates through inheritance under feudalism and later the making of private wills. Being found not of sound mind meant that one had neither sense nor sufficient intelligence to manage oneself, one's lands or goods.<sup>26</sup> In June 1253, Johanna de la Heye was found to be, "not mentally competent (*non compos sue*)," and Henry III mandated to the sheriff of Somersetshire that he "not allow that same Johanna to alienate any of her inheritance, for the reason that future heirs would be disinherited."<sup>27</sup> As a result, the absence of a sound mind made it such that the incompetent were awarded to the king for royal protection.

Each investigation was only as good as the men who conducted it. Sheriffs, escheators,<sup>28</sup> commissioners and later the Court of Wards handled the majority of the competency inquisitions from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. Following the death of a tenant-in-chief, a complaint or land dispute, the office of the Chancery or king charged an escheator to conduct an investigation of the accused and his assets. Writs of Inquiry, *writ de idiota sua*

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<sup>25</sup> "*Mens uero alienata cum compos sui non sit, eorum, que committit, reatum non contrahit, quia facultatem deliberandi non habuit. Unde in maleficio pupillo et furioso subuenitur, ut ad penam eis non deputantur, que ex mentis deliberatione non processerunt*"; Gratian. *Decretum*. in *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. Emil Friedburg, Vol. I. (Leipzig: Berhardi Tauchnitz, 1879), c.15 q.1 d.p.c.2.

<sup>26</sup> Emma de Beston, *CIM*, iv: 1377-1388, no. 227, p.125

<sup>27</sup> The case of Johanna de la Heye, *Close Roll of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Henry III: 1251-1253 (London: H.M.S.O. 1902-38), 479; going forward referred to as *CCR*.

<sup>28</sup> Treasury investigator, taken from the term *escheat* which was the "common term for land that reverts to the treasury on the death of a tenant-in-chief without an heir related to him by blood." Richard Fitzneale, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, eds. Nigel, Bishop of Ely, Emilie Amt, and S. D. Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 176.

*inquirenda*, were directed both to the county escheator and the local sheriff to establish a regular examination schedule of the accused and a system for the submission of reports.<sup>29</sup> Some monarchs favored certain types of officials over others. Henry III preferred to use sheriffs for his inquests, and they were phased out for escheators and commissioners in the fourteenth century. However, situations beyond a sovereign's control often dictated the types of investigators. During times of plague, the central government often shut down; consequently, royal administration and the courts closed and business was much curtailed.<sup>30</sup> During the severe epidemic of 1348-49, the judicial system stopped, "in consideration of the mortal pestilence of men which lately prevailed everywhere in England to such an extent that there was no concourse of men."<sup>31</sup> Edward III had to rely upon commissioners, who at their convenience with outbreaks permitting, convened at a central location to investigate selective cases. Eventually, the Court of Wards (1540) and Liveries (1541), created by Parliament, assumed control of rights of minors, the insane, and their administration to the Crown through feudal laws.

All inquisition findings had to be recorded and certified. Reports had to be written on parchment and returned to Westminster within a month of the inquisition.<sup>32</sup> Officials had to complete the writs, which were pre-designated with the categories of *idiot* or *non compos mentis* (lunatic), on the same document. In the fourteen and fifteenth centuries, it was commonplace for the sheriffs to hold the land of the accused temporarily, while awaiting a

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<sup>29</sup> Bell, *Court of Wards*, 128.

<sup>30</sup> W.M. Ormrod, "The Politics of Pestilence: Government in England after the Black Death," in *The Black Death In England*, ed. Mark Ormrod and Phillip Lindley (Stamford: Watkins, 1996), 148.

<sup>31</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, viii. Edward III: 1348-1350. (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901), 563; going forward referred to as *CPR*.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Neugebauer, "Mental Handicap in Medieval and Early Modern England: Criteria, Measurement and Care." in *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities*, eds. Anne Digby and David Wright, (London: Routledge, 1996), 28.

decision and the escheators prepared the reports and sent them to Westminster.<sup>33</sup> Procedures and guidelines were adhered to with rigor and diligence throughout the Middle Ages. While few idiocy writs have survived prior to the thirteenth century, the records indicated that few inquisitions were conducted of the escheator's own accord or were otherwise unauthorized.<sup>34</sup> Adherence to proper protocol was vitally important to assure the legitimacy of the guardianship and to avoid contentious disputes or appeals from unhappy family members.

Considering the legalities, it was not surprising that English prerogative wardship worked quite effectively, even when challenged, as in the case of Emma de Beston. Emma's *inquisition post mortem* illustrated the sophistication of the competency process and more importantly highlighted the checks and balances that avoided conflict and social disorder. There was due process for all parties involved; hence, there was no honest reason to subvert the legal guardianship process. Emma de Beston of Lenn, Norfolk was the widow of Edmund de Beston and known to be mentally ill since birth. Following the death of Emma's husband, the Escheator John Rede of Norfolk investigated Emma's affairs; although Emma, personally, had not alienated any lands or mismanaged her estates.<sup>35</sup> Despite Emma's judicious administration of her land, John Rede found her on occasion "ensnared by evil spirits."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, John Rede advised that "Emma, her lands, and goods, be delivered during her infirmity into the guardianship of Philip Wyth of Lenne [her uncle]...until the king is informed on behalf of the said Emma that she is of sound mind...."<sup>37</sup> Emma's case gained notoriety because the Mayor of Lenn, with whom Emma now resided, challenged

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<sup>33</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Neugebauer, "Treatment of the Mentally Ill in Medieval and Early Modern England: A Reappraisal." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 14, no. 2 (1978): 161.

<sup>35</sup> Emma de Beston, *CIM*, iv: no. 227, 125-28.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

Emma's guardianship. The challenge required King Richard II to authorize a new round of inquisitions.

Politics played a part in Emma's ensuing legal proceedings. However, it was Emma's examination questioning, included in the case record, that has provided insight into the dynamics of feudalism and the importance of cognitive ability in protecting inheritance.

Henry Betele, the Mayor of Bishop's Lenn, wanted Emma to remain with him<sup>38</sup> and claimed fraud and collusion on the part of the escheator and Emma's uncle. Richard II called for another inquest of Emma by the Commissioners of Lincoln to accurately determine her mental state. In the examination dated July 25, 1383, commissioners asked Emma:

whence she came and she said that she did not know. Being asked what town she was, she said that she was in Ely. Being asked what that Friday was, she said she did not know. Being asked how many days there were in a week, she said seven, but could not name them. Being asked how many husbands she had had in her time she said three, giving the name of one only and not knowing the names of the others. Being asked whether she had issue by them, she said that she had had a husband with a son (*od filium*), but did not know his name. Being asked how many shillings there were in forty pence, she said she did not know. Being asked whether she would rather have twenty silver groats (grossos) than forty pence, she said they were of the same value."<sup>39</sup>

The commissioners concluded that Emma de Beston was not sane nor of sound mind, and moreover discerned that Emma had the "face and countenance of an idiot."<sup>40</sup> Eventually, the case was resolved and custody of Emma was entrusted to her uncle, while her lands and holdings were assigned to the burgesses of Lenn.<sup>41</sup> Personal observation and direct questioning of Emma made the difference for the commissioners and helped them decide that

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<sup>38</sup> Henry Betele claimed jurisdiction of Emma and her interests, because she was a resident of the town with lucid intervals (lunatic rather than an idiot). Under the Charter of Liberties of Bishop's Lenn, the mayor and burgesses were Emma's authorized legal guardians. Henry Betele's appeal openly contradicted the king's authority in such cases derived through *Prerogativa Regis*; Emma de Beston, *CIM*, iv: no. 227, 127.

<sup>39</sup> Emma de Beston, *CIM*, iv: no. 227, 127-28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>41</sup> David Roffe and Christine Roffe. "Madness and Care in the Community: A Medieval Perspective." *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 311, no. 7021 (1995): 1708.

Emma was not rational; nothing else was important. Even Emma's appearance and demeanor factored into their decision-making. Because the stakes were so high, as the fate of one's descendants depended upon the best judgment of these officials, the absence of intimate scrutiny of the mentally impaired indicated malfeasance or some other wrong-doing.

There simply was no justification for guardianship without a test of competency. Even when there was a guardianship award, infrequently it was challenged by an incorrect determination of insanity or prerogative, as in the situation with Emma de Beston. Emma's case illustrated the importance of jurisdiction in the custody of the mentally ill. However, without a determination of incompetency, there was no guardianship in the first place. No evidence exists that Joan of Flanders ever had one.

Joan of Flanders, regardless of her noble station, would have had to submit to an idiocy inquisition as part of the English guardianship process. Recall, Joan of Flanders, the central Montfortist figure in the War of Breton Succession since her husband's incarceration in 1341, had been residing in England since February 1343. From the *Pipe Rolls*, the change in her place of residence occurred on October 3, 1343 when she moved from London to Tickhill Castle, Yorkshire, arriving October 10, 1343<sup>42</sup> Some scholars have presumed that this relocation under auspices of Constable William Frank (Fraunk) indicated that she had a breakdown and that accounted for her absence from the political arena for the next thirty years. However, as Countess of Richmond, as her husband was the Lord of Richmond in place of his brother the late Earl-Duke, she was a tenant of the Crown and had tenurial obligations to it that were part of the common experience of feudal landholding.<sup>43</sup> After

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<sup>42</sup> TNA, E 372/203, October 3, 1343, Account of William Fraunk for Keeping the Duchess of Brittany.

<sup>43</sup> Scott L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 130.

Magna Carta and definitely by the fourteenth century, the king and landholders relied entirely on the institutions of the law and royal courts to protect their property arrangements and they identified the stability of those arrangements with the stability of seigneurial institutions, like guardianship.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the Crown had to undergo procedures if it lawfully wanted to protect property from waste or take possession of tenements, like those of John de Montfort. Moreover, Joan of Flanders, Montfort's wife and the presumed afflicted, would have had to comply.

Some historians have referred to Joan as the architect of her husband's military strategy. As Jonathan Sumption stated: "the dominant personality in his camp was not his own but his wife's. Jeanne of Flandre, Countess of Montfort was a tough and ambitious woman...and there was no reason to doubt that she was the principal author of her husband's plans in the summer of 1341."<sup>45</sup> Froissart wrote that Joan "possessed the courage of a man and the heart of a lion."<sup>46</sup> Conflict broke out in 1341 after Jean III, Duke of Brittany, died childless. He violated Salic law by leaving the duchy to his niece, Jeanne de Penthièvre and her husband Charles de Blois, nephew of Philippe VI of France. John de Montfort was the previous duke's half-brother and although the rightful heir, they had a tense relationship.<sup>47</sup> John de Montfort took up arms in the Breton capital of Nantes, after King Philippe VI of France proclaimed Charles and Jeanne the rightful heirs in Paris and provided them military support.

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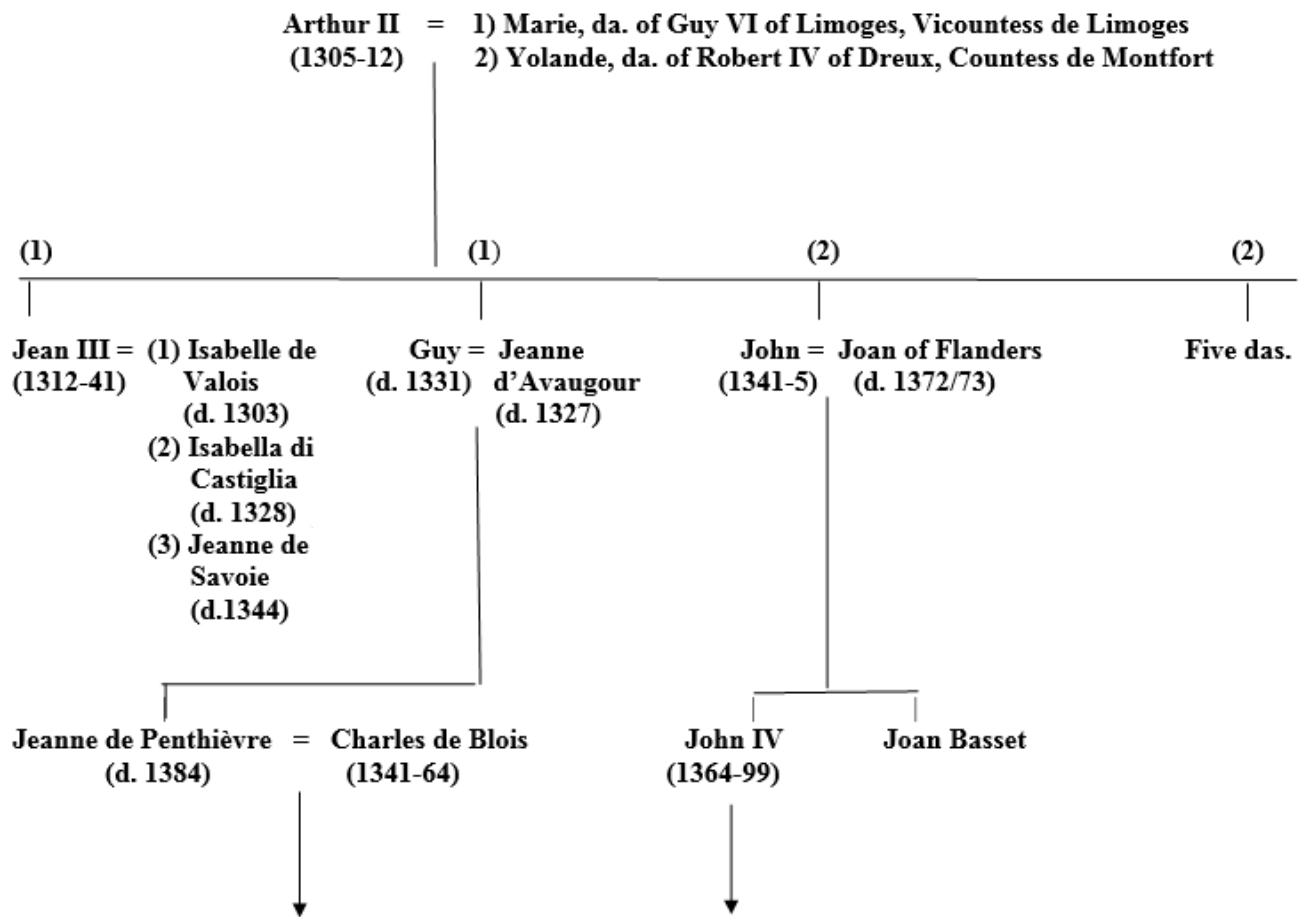
<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle, Volume I*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 374.

<sup>46</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II. to the Coronation of Henry IV.* ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), 1: 277-78.

<sup>47</sup> Although considered an Anglo-Norman possession since Conan IV, Duke of Brittany was invested with Richmond in the twelfth century, Brittany was one of the peerages of France and governed by Salic (Frankish) Law; by law women were excluded from the line of succession, by right John de Montfort was the rightful heir, as the only male candidate; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, 170-71.

## Genealogical Table of Breton Ruling House During the Civil War<sup>48</sup>



### 5. Simplified genealogical table of Breton ducal house during the civil war

<sup>48</sup> Table 5, .For Breton Succession Genealogy, Michael Jones, *Creation of Brittany: A Late Medieval State*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1988), 210.



## Honour of Richmond and Dukes of Brittany<sup>49</sup>

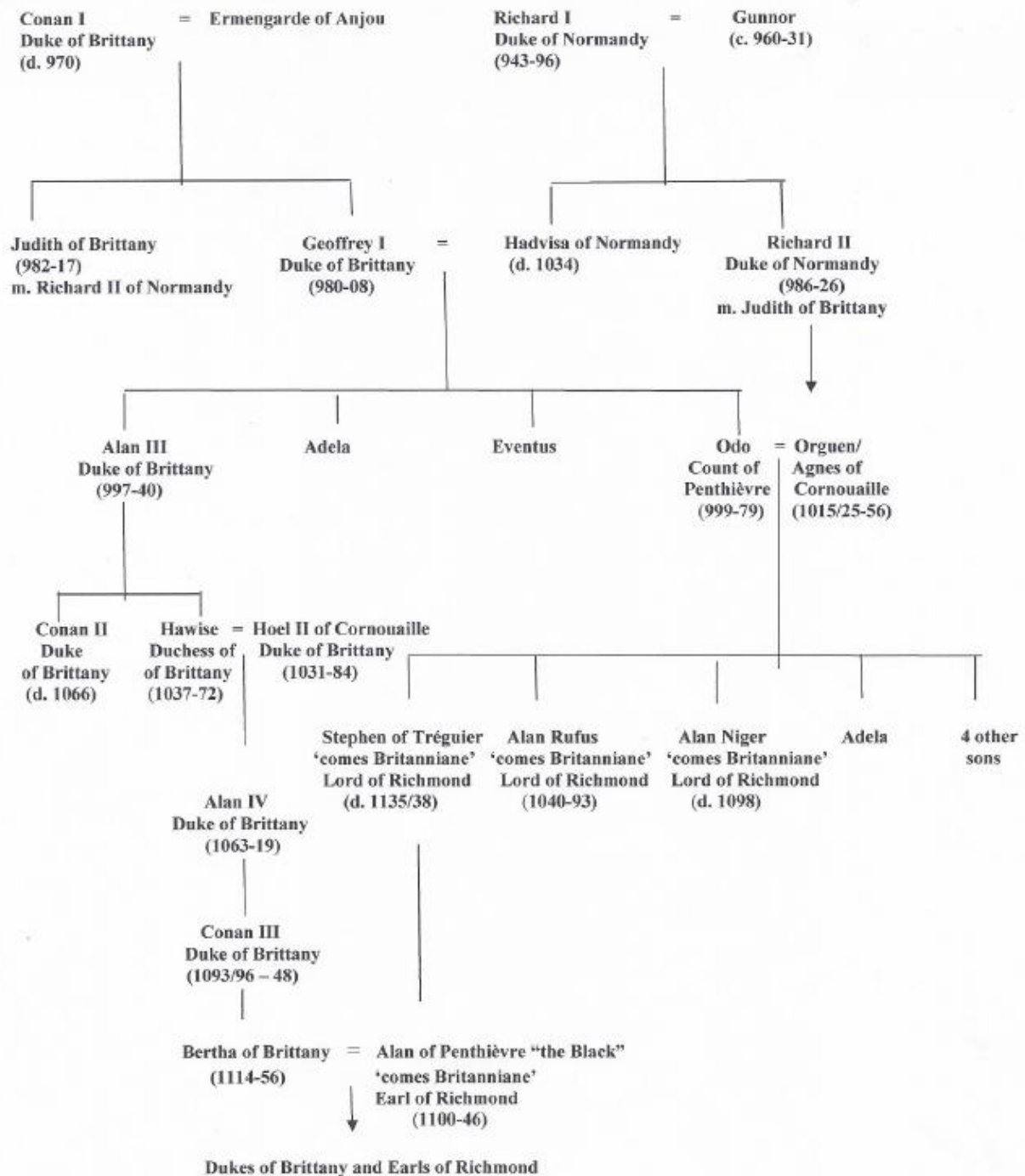


Table 6. Dukes of Brittany and Lords of Richmond from 10<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>49</sup> Table 6, The Dukes of Brittany held the Earldom of Richmond since Alan, Count of Brittany received the Honour after the Norman Conquest; however, Norman connections predated 1066.

John de Montfort naturally turned to England for support, as he was a tenant-in-chief and cousin<sup>50</sup> to Edward III of England. Brittany and Anglo-Norman England had connections dating back for 350 years. Edward III seized this opportunity to cement his control of Northern France. England and France had been at odds with one another since 1338 when Edward III declared himself King of France. Throughout the war and especially at Hennebont where Joan took up arms and led the siege that protected the city from the Blois faction and later at Brest, she was a formidable warrior. Joan clearly wielded much power and she was the standard-bearer for the Montfortist claim while awaiting English reinforcements and during her husband's imprisonment. All the more suspicious is that a woman of such talent and remarkable courage would have succumbed to some mental disease of which she had no prior history. As Gwen Seabourne stated, "in the case of the *garde* of a noblewoman an ambiguous justification for her indefinite control might sometimes be very convenient, especially if she was politically important or a dynastically threatening female."<sup>51</sup> Unlike Joan's exploits in France which were an open book, little historical evidence of her presence in England exists.

Joan of Flanders, the Duchess of Brittany as she was referred in English administrative documents, had no medico-legal determination of *non compos mentis* in any English court or by any English legal designee. In fact, Joan of Flanders' legal standing in England under feudal law was unusual, as by 1343 the Honour of Richmond had two heritable landholders entitled to privileges, a tenant of honors, *ut de honore*, and a tenant of the crown, *et de corona*. The Earldom of Richmond had reverted to the Crown in April 1341 with the death

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<sup>50</sup> Beatrice of England, daughter of Henry III of England married John II, Duke of Brittany in 1260. John de Montfort and Edward III of England were third cousin through Henry III of England.

<sup>51</sup> Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, C.1170-1509*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 59.

of Joan of Flanders' brother-in-law Duke Jean III of Brittany; subsequently, Edward III granted her husband the *comitatus* of Richmond on September 24, 1341, while he conferred the earldom upon his two-year-old son John of Gaunt.<sup>52</sup> Despite this irregularity, Joan of Flanders was the consort of the Duke of Brittany. Customarily, the English fief known as the Honour of Richmond was held by the Dukes of Brittany. Yet, since the thirteenth century, its full possession had ebbed and flowed from the ducal house as the proverbial diplomatic carrot to coerce or reward loyalty.<sup>53</sup> By statute, escheators had to submit all documents, *writs de idiota inquirendo* and *inquisitions post mortem*, about tenants-in-chief and attest to the validity of their findings.

Furthermore, only non-criminal mentally disabled persons without an inheritance were precluded from guardianship administration. Mentally incompetent individuals with property were of interests to their families, neighbors, local magnates, the Crown and even some foreign governments, and could not avoid being a part of the public record.<sup>54</sup> Emma de Beston's case illustrated that legal protocol had to be followed before guardianship was awarded. However, none of these were done in the case of Joan of Flanders, for whatever reason. As historian Kenneth Alan Fowler stated: "Joan of Flanders, had been brought to England by Edward III in March 1343 [even though Richmond reverted to the Crown in 1341], but in [October] of that year she had been put under close guard in the castle of Tickhill in Yorkshire, where she remained for the rest of her life, generally presumed to have

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<sup>52</sup> George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*. (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 10:821-824.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Jones. *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 106.

<sup>54</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 141.

been mad-though this is by no means certain.”<sup>55</sup> At the very least records have been ambiguous. Documents indicated that Joan was held in Tickhill Castle, sometime after 1343, but the purpose was unclear.

A detailed analysis of the content and context of the existent patent roll entries pertaining to Joan of Flanders must be conducted to evaluate the nature of her custodial circumstances. Most of the entries and memoranda pertain to payment arrangements to the castle constables for the Duchess of Brittany and her household while in residence at Tickhill Castle. For thirty years or more from 1343-1373/4, Joan of Flanders and her attendants remained in England. Edward III subsidized their stay through stipends to the constables of castles.<sup>56</sup> It remains unclear when the last of the payments occurred, as the exact date of Joan’s death is still unknown.<sup>57</sup> Despite documented references to the marriage between John of Brittany, Duke John IV and Mary of Waltham in 1361, it was short-lived, and there is a gap in the records of about ten years where there was no reference to a Duchess of Brittany.<sup>58</sup> The next memoranda in the Letters Patent pertain to Joan Holland, the second wife of John IV, Duke of Brittany. Interestingly, the wording of memoranda that pertain to Joan Holland, Duchess of Brittany, presumably sane, mirrors the phrasing of the grants for her late mother-in-law sojourn in England. “The king has granted the said three manors to his sister, the duchess of

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<sup>55</sup> Kenneth Alan Fowler, *The King’s Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 160; Tickhill Castle located on the Nottingham/Yorkshire West Riding Border also known as Tykhill or Tykhull.

<sup>56</sup> Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England, was the sole owner of Tickhill Castle from January 1, 1331 until her death in 1369, *CPR, 1330-1334*, 55; *CIPM*, xii: 416-17, no. 434.

<sup>57</sup> Joan is presumed to have died around 1374. According to the patent rolls, November 10-11, 1372 Godfrey Foljambe (Joan’s last recorded custodian) was given a Commission of Oyer and Terminer and November 24, 1373 he was noted as Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby. There was no further mention of Joan of Flanders as the Duchess of Brittany, nor association of Joan of Flanders with that title, after Tuesday, February 14, 1374, E 403/452, m. 12, See Chapter Six.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 17.

Brittany, in aid of her maintenance whilst staying in England.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the known record has to be mined with careful attention.

The November 1346 patent roll entry memorandum has remained the most illuminating about the mysterious circumstance of Joan of Flanders. The November 1346 entry from the *Calendar of Patent Roll of Edward III, 1345-1348* recorded:

Whereas the king by advice of his council lately ordained that the duchess of Brittany shall stay in the castle of Tykhull and, while she shall be there Thomas de Haukeston, constable of that castle, shall take order for the expenses of her and her household; in order for the security of the constable to fix the expenses at a certain sum, the king grants that he shall have allowance of 5 marks<sup>60</sup> for the expenses of her and her household for every week of their stay.<sup>61</sup>

Joan of Flanders arrived in England with her very young children, Joan and John, in the company of Edward III, early spring 1343. According to Adam Murimuth, she landed in Devonshire and stayed in Exeter throughout Lent.<sup>62</sup> There had been a lull in the fighting between the English and French claimants to Brittany and the Truce of Malestroit had forced a peace that was to last for about a year. John de Montfort, her husband and the English claimant, was still imprisoned in the Louvre in Paris, although his release was a condition of the truce. By the end of the year, Joan of Flanders had moved from London to Tickhill Castle

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<sup>59</sup> *CPR, 1381-1385*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> 1 mark= 2/3£, 5 marks or approximately 1822.45 GBP in 2014, an extraordinary sum per week.

<sup>61</sup> *CPR, 1345-1348*, 211; “King’s Remembrance: Accounts Various. ARMY, NAVY, AND ORDNANCE. Particulars of the account of Thomas de Haukeston, constable of Tickhill castle, of the maintenance of the duchess of Brittany and her household,” *Exchequer of Receipt: Issue Rolls and Registers* (The National Archives-Exchequer, Office of First and Tenth, and the Court of Augmentations, 25 January 1346-24 January 1350), *E 101/25/21*, accessed October 21, 2014, [http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?\\_p=1300&\\_q=%22duchess+of+brittany%22](http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_p=1300&_q=%22duchess+of+brittany%22)

<sup>62</sup> Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: University Press 2012), 135.

in York, and there she remained in the custody of William Frank and the successive Constables of Tickhill Castle.<sup>63</sup>

Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie has theorized that because Joan of Flanders was still living in the custody of the Constables of Tickhill Castle as of February 1374 and died sometime thereafter, she must have gone insane to have initially warranted the change in her administration.<sup>64</sup> He based his argument on a conflation of events surrounding *Letters Patent* and *Issue Roll* memoranda beginning in the years 1343- 1344 when Joan of Flanders was relocated to Tickhill Castle, and the Crown paid William Frank 40 livres for her maintenance and that of her household.<sup>65</sup> According to the *Calendar of Patent Roll of Edward III*, Joan was not yet under order, first stipulated in 1346; however, she was without her children who were royal wards. Joan of Flanders had a change in status from “friendship and fealty”<sup>66</sup> in April 1342 to veritable isolation one year later. La Borderie surmised that Joan had a

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<sup>63</sup> Constables of Tickhill Castle: Sir William Frank (1336-45/46), Thomas Haukeston (1346-55/56), Sir John Delves (1356-69/70) and Godfrey Foljambe (1370-73) were not constables of the castle, but administrators for Joan of Flanders and her household only. Isabel Delves, widow and executrix of the will of John Delves, briefly took over as custodian for Joan of Flanders and her household upon the death of her husband in 1369 until a new appointment of the Constable of Tickhill Castle in 1370. Isabel took the same amount in allowance as her husband 105*l* yearly or approximately 38,000 GBP in 2014, *CPR, 1367-1370*, 321.

<sup>64</sup> La Borderie, Louis Arthur Le Moyne de, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Rennes: J. Plihon & L. Herve, 1896.), vol.3, 488-91.

<sup>65</sup> The 1344 Patent Roll entry dated July 10, noted “a grant to William Frank, constable of Tykhill castle, of 5 marks a week for the expenses of the duchess of Brittany and her household, for such time as she shall stay in the castle,” *CPR, 1343-1345*, 331. Thomas Rymer’s *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae also* dated the Duchess of Brittany’s confinement to July 10, 1344 “The Order for the Duchess of Brittany to Stay in Tickhill Castle,” Know ye, that, Since we recently, on the advice of the Council of our ordained that our dear cousins the Duchess of Brittany, she should remain in our Tickhill Castle, and do ordain that our dear and faithful William Frank, Constable of the Castle, see to the expenses of the said duchess and her family, for the time that she is there. Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica interreges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes vel communitates ab ingressu Gulielmi I in Angliam, a. d. 1066 ad nostra usque tempora habita....* vol. 3, part 1. Eds. Robert Sanderson, John Caley, Frederic Holbrooke and Adam Clarke.

(London: Eyre & Strahan, 1825), 17.

<sup>66</sup> Alluding to the new relationship and renewed alliance between Brittany and England that Joan of Flanders, her children, and her Breton retinue encountered upon departure from France and arrival in England, *CPR, 1340-1343*, 454.

nervous breakdown or emotional collapse and Edward III placed her into guardianship for her own good.<sup>67</sup> In his *Histoire de Bretagne*, La Borderie states: “ ‘The very famous Lady! The very famous Duchess!’ Now is a poor woman incapable of action, personal desire, unable to settle the expenses of her house; which for the well-being and care of the Duchess required her custody and supervision under official order.”<sup>68</sup> The patent entry, albeit brief, was direct and straightforward; therefore, how had de La Borderie gleaned other information from this entry?

La Borderie seemingly based his supposition that Joan of Flanders went mad, upon her implied wardship in the November 19, 1346 patent roll entry, but his theory did not take into account the legal dynamics of feudal guardianship. At first blush, *Membrane* 11 denoted the award of Joan of Flanders’ person and the management of her affairs to the Constable of Tickhill Castle. The item stated that the Duchess of Brittany should stay in Tickhill Castle and the constables of the castles should take order for her expenses and household. However, under feudal law Joan of Flanders was no longer the primary tenement holder of Richmond.<sup>69</sup> Joan had no income; therefore, her stay in England had to be financed by someone else. The death of Duke Jean III, Joan of Flanders’ brother-in-law, vacated the Earldom of Richmond and it reverted to the Crown prior to hostilities in Brittany.<sup>70</sup> In fact

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<sup>67</sup> “après les terribles fatigues, les emotions accablantes, les mortelles angoisses du siege d’Hennebont; après les terreurs et les souffrances de cette affreuse tempête qui lors du passage en Angleterre l’avait ballottée...huit jours entre la vie et la mort, - s’etonner de la voir, battue, rompue, bouleversée par tant d’épreuves...Jeanne de Flandre était devenue folle!,” La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:488-91.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 489.

<sup>69</sup> CPR, 1345-1348, 211.

<sup>70</sup> John de Montfort had to vacate the Earldom of Richmond because of a conflict of interest as Count of Montfort-l’Amaury. During the War of Breton Succession, John could not be a tenant-in-chief to the King of England and a vassal of the King of France. Besides divided loyalties, if John had been captured by the French (which he was), the Philip VI, King of France, could claim rights to land in England. Despite hereditary rights as Duke of Brittany to the Honour of Richmond, John surrendered it to Edward III; Eugene Déprez, “Une lettre missive du prétendant Jean de Bretagne, Comte de Montfort,” *Annales de Bretagne*, xxxiv (1919): 61-62.

John of Gaunt, the very young son of Edward III, who had been created Earl of Richmond September 20, 1342, now held the rights (rents and relief) to Richmond County.<sup>71</sup> John of Gaunt, and by his minority his father, earned profits from the land through rental payments and taxes. Since Joan of Flanders had no land and no profits to manage, she was ineligible for prerogative wardship. The Constables of Tickhill Castle required additional income for their efforts of catering to Joan of Flanders and her entire household. As Joan of Flanders was the Duchess of Brittany, wife of a prominent foreign vassal and at the very least, a guest of the king, Edward was obliged to pay for her debts.

Furthermore, La Borderie failed to take into consideration that Joan of Flanders, even after being relocated to Tickhill Castle, was still being asked to account for her expenses thus indicating her cognitive ability. For the most part after 1344, the Crown lent Joan of Flanders' keepers money to pay her debts. Sir Thomas de Haukeston<sup>72</sup> and Sir Godfrey Foljambe<sup>73</sup> had military expense accounts<sup>74</sup> through the Exchequer for the sustenance of the Duchess of Brittany and William Frank and John Delves received remittances. However, Joan of Flanders as of January 20, 1344, three months after her confinement in Yorkshire, was still being asked to account personally for 100 shillings granted to her for her London Creditors.<sup>75</sup> Now, if she had been devoid of reason or unable to cogitate, estimate and calculate, the Crown would not have been pressing her to account for these funds. Those who were mentally incompetent were unable to think about the world critically, lacked insight, ability and had difficulty thinking; consequently, they would have been unable to perform

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<sup>71</sup> Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 821.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, E 101/25/21; E 101/26/21.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, E 101/31/3.

<sup>74</sup> Army Accounts, see Chapter Six.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, E 403/331 m. 25.



accounting or simple mathematical exercises.<sup>76</sup> The Crown certainly felt that Joan of Flanders was of sound mind and wanted to know what had happened to their money.

Joan of Flanders was in a precarious situation, as she was beholden to Edward III, because she was without her children who were feudal wards of the King of England. John de Montfort had escaped to England in 1345, following his release from the Louvre in 1343. On May 20, 1345 at Lambeth Palace before the Archbishop of Canterbury, John formally paid liege homage to Edward III as the King of France for Brittany.<sup>77</sup> He awarded custody of his children, Joan and John, as heirs to the Duchy of Brittany to his liege lord Edward III.<sup>78</sup> Joan of Flanders, if she had retained wardship of the body of her children, might have been entitled to some remuneration in their names, but without them she certainly was penniless. John de Montfort offered Edward the "keys to the kingdom" for Edward's support of his claim and the surety of military action in Brittany, including the use of the port of Brest. "After 1345 when Montfort had done homage to him and entrusted him with the guardianship of his heirs, the king [Edward III] assumed both the suzerainty and custody of the duchy," while Montfort returned to Brittany.<sup>79</sup> The children who had been installed in the royal apartments at the Tower of London, moved even closer to the royal orbit; while John de Montfort had abandoned his wife for a second time.

Until their majority, John de Montfort and Joan of Flanders' children were kept in the company and reared along with the other royal children. John and Joan grew up in the Tower of London amidst well-tended gardens; a menagerie that included leopards, lions and military

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<sup>76</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 85-86.

<sup>77</sup> Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 164.

<sup>78</sup> Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 821.

<sup>79</sup> Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 159; April 24, 1345 Rymer, *Foedera*, 3, pt.1, 37; Edward III's guardianship of the heirs of Britany first recorded November 15, 1345, Rymer, *Foedera*, 3: pt.1, 63.

arsenal, under the watchful eyes of Queen Philippa and William de Wakefield.<sup>80</sup> John de Montfort partially acknowledged his children's excellent care, in a missive to Edward III in which he thanked him for their nurture and sent greetings to their governess Jeanne.<sup>81</sup> Jeanne may not have been the name of the Infants of Brittany's maidservant, as the *Treasury Book of Receipt* for Queen Philippa's household recorded a payment to Perota de Britannie of 100 shillings for the children's necessities.<sup>82</sup> The missive itself was unusual for the fourteenth century, being more of a personal nature.<sup>83</sup> However, it was consistent with the highly sensitive nature of John de Montfort's return to France. As John de Montfort knew Edward III would protect his son, as Edward III had betrothed his daughter Mary, born in 1344, to young John. The marriage contract was probably made during their renewed alliance over Easter 1345, to cement the Anglo-Breton relationship. Whether out of affection or appearance Edward indulged young John and viewed him as central to plans for Brittany.<sup>84</sup> Edward, as guardian and protector of the Infants of Brittany, provided for their education and arranged marriages<sup>85</sup> commensurate with their station, while their mother remained in custody.

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<sup>80</sup> William de Wakefield (Keeper of the Exchange at the Tower of London in 1344) *CCR, 1346-49*, 98, 144, 273 581; Accommodations at the Tower of London, TNA, E 403/329, m. 32, 34; E 403/330, October 11, 1343; E 403/331, m.9, m.23 and m..24; Infants of Brittany dwelling in Queen Philippa's company, *CPR, 1345-1458*, 74.

<sup>81</sup> Déprez, "Une letter missive," 58; royal betrothal, Mary Anne Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), iv: 270-71. Alliance, Michael Prestwich, *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles*. (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 101.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, *Treasury of Receipt, Miscellaneous Book*, E 36/205, p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> G.N. Clark, ed. "Short Notices: Annales de Bretagne," *The English Historical Review* (London: Longman, Green, and CO, 1921), 36: 155; Missive dated Plymouth, June 24, 1345, SC 1/50/135.

<sup>84</sup> "Robes purpled with ermine were purchased for the 'infant of Bretagne,' in the year 1343." Green, *Lives of the Princesses*, 271.

<sup>85</sup> John IV, Duke of Brittany (1339-99) married (1) Mary of Waltham (1344-61), (2) Lady Joan Holland, half-sister of Richard II, (1350-84), and Jeanne of Navarre, second wife of Henry IV of England, (1370-1437). Jeanne of Brittany (1341-1402) was an heiress in her own right with land-grants of Crawhirst, Buleham, and Burghesse in the Rape of Hastings by Richard II in 1381, *CPR, 1381-1385*, 51. She married Ralph Basset, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Basset (1335-90) of Drayton.

Also, the language of Joan of Flanders' award to the Constable of Tickhill Castle denoted a command or order. The November 19, 1346 entry stated, "the king by advice of council lately ordained that the duchess of Brittany shall stay in the castle of Tykhull...and the constable of that castle shall take order of her and her household...."<sup>86</sup> The terms "order and ordained," implied a direct command or a degree of compulsion that was unusual in the language of guardianship. The memorandum dated September 26, 1351, was more blatant. Thomas de Haukeston received an allowance for such time as the duchess and her household stayed in his keeping at the king's expense or "until other order."<sup>87</sup> Recall Escheator John Rede's decision to entrust guardianship of Emma de Beston to her uncle. John Rede "advised Emma, her lands, and goods, be delivered during her infirmity into guardianship;" the language of his ruling did not imply duress or coercion.<sup>88</sup> The judicial process of guardianship prided itself in being fair and compassionate. Technically, the king could not compel under guardianship, as custody of the body was not the king's to give away. The guardian held a trusteeship to the land only, from which the guardian earned a stipend and paid the expenses of his ward.<sup>89</sup> Guardianship by mental defect differed from the wardship of minors, which had separate provisions and administration for the wardship of a juvenile's body and the wardship of a minor's estates. Joan of Flanders had neither her children nor access to the Honour of Richmond which were in Edward III's possession.

Even after Magna Carta, the king's orders had the same effect, strength, and virtue as if they had been passed and enacted by authority of Parliament. However, as compulsion was not an element of guardianship, the inclusion of the phrase "the king by advice of his council

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<sup>86</sup> *CPR, 1345-1348*, 211.

<sup>87</sup> *CPR, 1350-1354*, 177.

<sup>88</sup> Emma de Beston, *CIM*, iv: no. 227, 126.

<sup>89</sup> Bell, *Court of Wards*, 129.

lately ordained” in the 1346 entry suggested that Joan’s confinement was not the benevolent provision of someone chronically ill and may have had a degree of force.<sup>90</sup> Also, council may or may not have referred to the Privy Council or any administrative or political body. Rather council may just have implied the “common counsel” or advice that the king’s minsters or magnates offer.<sup>91</sup> None of the entries noted a particular “council” only the king’s remand of Joan and her household into residence in Tickhill Castle was abundantly clear.

After the death of John de Montfort in September 1345, a King’s Council was, in fact, held in London, at which the demoralized Anglo-Breton faction presumably discussed their way forward without their duke.<sup>92</sup> The Montfort heir to Brittany was only five, hardly a galvanizing figure for English support. At that time the Anglo-Breton supporters, including Edward III, decided to take no further action and devoted the autumn to hunting and relaxation.<sup>93</sup> Caution and calculation were “typical of Edward, a man who knew when he should take his chances and when he should not.”<sup>94</sup> It was likely that Joan’s “guardianship” was part of Edward’s “do no harm” strategy.

The choice of a constable as a guardian for a noble, foreign-born duchess was inappropriate and yet another red flag that Joan of Flanders’ guardianship was unorthodox. In royal prerogative wardship, the selection of a guardian or custodian was at the discretion of the king; however, there were guidelines for guardianship appointments. Besides the predictable qualifications of being of good character, fame and law-abiding, guardians needed to be sufficiently inherited and family members, unless they were otherwise

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<sup>90</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women*, 58-59.

<sup>91</sup> T. D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, 1201-1226. (London: Record Commission, 1835), 41.

<sup>92</sup> Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 189.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>94</sup> Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England: 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 315.

precluded from the grant.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, effort was made to leave the impaired in the care of trusted and notable relatives, lest the impaired be at “the mercy and power of a stranger.”<sup>96</sup> However, Joan of Flanders had no family, excluding her children, in England. Her children were minors and themselves wards of Edward III. As Joan had no dower from the Richmond lands, the most suitable guardian for her would have been another nobleman.

Preferably, Joan’s guardian would have been a person of similar station, if not higher, in the king’s favor, and with connections to her husband or interests in Brittany. “If there were no family members to whom such properties could be safely committed, the king might grant a wardship to a friend of the family of equal or higher status, so that, at least the property would be of little temptation to the guardian.”<sup>97</sup> Only in the cases where individuals were born mentally ill, with no friends or family at all, did the king grant wardship of the body and lands to a royal official as payment for services.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, if Joan of Flanders had been truly mentally ill, an aristocrat, such as Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, Lancaster and Leicester likely would have been her guardian and caretaker.

Henry of Grosmont was a captain and lieutenant in the Duchy of Brittany, under the command of Edward III, a friend and second cousin of the king. Henry of Grosmont had accompanied Edward III on his campaign in Brittany in October 1342<sup>99</sup> and was among the envoys representing Edward III’s interests in the Truce of Malestroit at the Priory of St. Mary Magdalen that ceased hostiles in Brittany in January 1343.<sup>100</sup> He had expansive military and

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<sup>95</sup> Bell, *Court of Wards*, 140.

<sup>96</sup> Richard Neugebauer, “Diagnosis, Guardianship, and Residential Care.” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 146, no. 12 (1989): 1582.

<sup>97</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 107.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, E 36/204, fols. 106r, 108v.

<sup>100</sup> Avesbury, *Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, 348.

administrative powers in Brittany including land-grants and the issuing pardons that traditionally were reserved for Breton lords. “His powers were thus similar in kind to those of the lieutenants in Brittany before him and those he had previously exercised in Aquitaine.”<sup>101</sup> Henry of Grosmont’s foreign appointments reflected his close relationship with Edward III, who was not only his cousin but had betrothed his son John of Gaunt to Lancaster’s younger daughter Blanche.<sup>102</sup> Only someone of his caliber, diplomatic experience, and wealth would have been an authorized guardian of a foreign-born duchess and future mother-in-law to the king’s daughter; not a castle constable.

Moreover, households, servants and attendants, did not enter into guardianship and yet that accommodation was another feature of Edward’s peculiar order for Joan’s custody. Thomas Haukeston was to “take order” of Joan and her household.<sup>103</sup> Noblewomen were accustomed to having cooks, ladies-in-waiting, groomsmen, chaplains, clerks, servants and other retainers. Joan of Flanders was no exception. As early as April 26, 1342, the ships of the Duchess of Brittany were off the coast provisioning and making ready to leave for England with “mariners of the king’s fealty and allegiance aboard ships with others of her service and carrying away goods, merchandise and other things converting these to her own use.”<sup>104</sup> No record exist of the Duchess of Brittany’s exact number of attendants (only payment for their expenses). Regardless no servant would have been permitted to accompany Joan of Flanders into guardianship as wards, if she had been one, went alone into custody.

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<sup>101</sup> Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 160.

<sup>102</sup> For genealogy, see Table 9, *Chapter Six*.

<sup>103</sup> *CPR, 1345-1348*, 211.

<sup>104</sup> *CPR, 1340-1343*, 454.

As in the case of Emma de Beston, wards only brought personal belongings of bedding and clothing with them into guardianship. Guardians took care of their charges' basic needs. Guardians appointed lunatic- keepers, in the event that wards were violently mentally ill, and needed twenty-four-hour attention. It was the responsibility of guardians to make sure the daily needs of the mentally incompetent were met commensurate with age and degree of impairment. In 1599 Jane Norris of Devon needed a maidservant, "more than before because she is more violent and unruly as she grows old."<sup>105</sup> A year later, her guardian had to employ two more keepers as Jane grew more distraught and needed upwards of two people to "attend her day and night."<sup>106</sup> Guardians had to keep ledgers and account for excessive expenditures, if their wards recovered.<sup>107</sup> Even after Joan of Flanders relocated to Tickhill Castle, she by name was being asked to account for her expenses and those of her household's in London, which certainly a mentally incompetent person would not have been able to do.<sup>108</sup> There was an allusion to a change in the number of attendants or household needs over the thirty years that Joan of Flanders resided in Tickhill Castle. There was an increase in the stipend for Joan's last two custodians, as she still had in her possession: vestments, jewels, saddles (harness) and other goods as late as 1370.<sup>109</sup> As Duchess of Brittany, Joan of Flanders' household would have numbered at least fifty, and a foreign entourage of that size, if not more, would not have been permitted to reside with her in perpetuity, if she were a mentally incompetent ward.

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<sup>105</sup> *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Series II, and other Inquisitions, for Cornwall and Devon: Henry VII to Charles I* Preserved in the Public Record Office. (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Society, 1906), 113; found in the Chancery Record C 142/222/4, 31 Elizabeth.

<sup>106</sup> *CIPM*, Series II, 113.

<sup>107</sup> Roffe and Roffe, "Madness and Care," 1708.

<sup>108</sup> TNA, E 403/331, m. 25.

<sup>109</sup> *CPR, 1370-1374*, 16; John Delves and Godfrey Foljambe had an allowance of 105*l* yearly considerably more than the initial 5 marks a week for William Frank and Thomas de Haukeston.

One must presume from the lack of corroborating evidence in either legal records or narrative sources that Joan of Flanders' guardianship was an unlawful action by a king seeking willfully to detain her. The Duchess of Brittany's conservatorship was an obfuscation of the judicial process. She appeared in no English court documents of any description, whatsoever; therefore, she had no legitimate determination of her mental state. It was the legal finding of incompetency that justified and authorized conservatorship, without which guardianship was null and void. Singularly, through the instrument of inquisition, the medical diagnosis of sanity was determined, in consultation with a local jury, royal officials, and other interested parties. The best interest of the impaired and their heirs was preeminent. The only safeguard was a fair and impartial judicial review. Officials had to assess whether individuals could rationally enter into legal agreements and would not foolishly squander away their estates. Heritable land was an heir's financial security and primary source of wealth. "For that reason the king provided the mentally impaired a guardian-or another person of capable mind-who could take responsibility for the land."<sup>110</sup> Emma de Beston's case illustrated the litigiousness and diligence of the inquisition process. Authorities took it seriously and documented everything. No such documents exist for Joan of Flanders; her guardianship was an anomaly, but not by accident.

Obviously Joan of Flanders' guardianship was part of a charade or pretense by Edward III to interminably detain the Duchess of Brittany. Joan and her children arrived in England in 1343 after pushing back the forces of Charles of Blois and maintaining the Montfortist hold on Brittany. Initially, Joan's stay in England amounted to "safe harbor" that was politically expedient for both Edward III and the duchess. Edward had safely sequestered

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<sup>110</sup> Turner, *Care and Custody*, 158.



Joan and her children in England in his protection, as he had committed to doing in 1342.<sup>111</sup> As a result, Edward had the heirs to Brittany in his charge and authority to act in their names, while their father was in captivity.<sup>112</sup> Following the death of John de Montfort, Edward III had to change course. The English claimant to Brittany was only 5 years old and Edward's strategy for French domination had to be reappraised. Consequently, Edward decided to do enough to maintain Brittany until John IV came of age and alternately he struck the French directly, at Caen and Crécy in 1346. On advice of his council, Edward decided to confine Joan of Flanders to Tickhill Castle for "safekeeping" to prevent her from intermeddling in his plans. Guardianship by mental defect was probably the easiest justification for her sequester, but it was not true, was not legal, nor does it seem to have been claimed. Joan of Flanders' guardianship appears to have been an assumption of Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie that historians have followed since the nineteenth century.

The legal system failed Joan of Flanders, as it did so many women in the Middle Ages. Joan of Flanders, Countess de Montfort, and Duchess of Brittany had: no inquest, no English property, an inappropriate guardian, a large household, and compulsory language in her custodial remission. One of those reasons was sufficient grounds to invalidate her guardianship. No documentation exists that Joan had either a formal or informal competency inquest. Thus Jeudwine stated: "There is not the very slightest evidence of any description that she was mad. It is wholly an assumption. The records offered show that Edward [and in

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<sup>111</sup> *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, iv: 1337-1347 (London: H.M.S.O., 1911-1962), 270; going forward referred to as *CFR*.

<sup>112</sup> Green. *Lives of the Princesses*, 271.

some cases her son] paid her debts.”<sup>113</sup> Debts that if Joan of Flanders had been insane, she would have been unable to accrue, yet she did at least for wine. Consequently, whatever custody arrangement Edward III orchestrated for her was not legal, as she was not statutorily found to be insane. Ultimately, Edward III needed her out of the way, and as he was king, no one challenged him. Her ambiguous status ironically has left her in a perpetual limbo, much like her precarious living situation. Like Emma de Beston, Joan of Flanders’ fate was not in her own hands. Regrettably, the lioness of Hennebont was a pawn in the king’s game. Now let us turn to the motivations and intent behind Edward III’s detention of Joan of Flanders.

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<sup>113</sup> John Wynne Jeudwine, *The Foundations of Society and the Land: A Review of the Social Systems of the Middle Ages in Britain, Their Growth and Their Decay*. (London: Williams & Norgate), 1918), 386; John IV, Duke of Brittany paying his mother’s debts, Jean, Duc of Bretagne, *Recueil des actes*, ed. Michael Jones (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1983) ii: no.594

## Chapter Six

### Confinement of Inconvenient Persons or the Justification for the “Putting Away” of the Duchess of Brittany and the Politics of Richmond

To the Duchess of Brittany in pence delivered to her as an advance in support of her expenses until the Lord otherwise shall decide concerning her status by order of the whole Council [*quousque dominus aliter de statu suo duxerit ordinand' per ordinat' totius Conc*] 20 pounds wherefore she shall account.<sup>1</sup>

Edward III of England had a “Joan of Flanders problem” and he knew it. He was well aware of the litigious nature of the House of Dampierre, Joan’s patrilineal ancestry as mentioned in Chapter Three. He knew the sensation and firestorm that it would create, if the public were made aware that the heroine of Hennebont was about to be imprisoned for the king’s greed. However, the wealth of Richmond and the riches of Brittany had been very tempting for him and as fate would have it the key to both, Joan, was finally on English soil. However, making such a high-profile noblewoman as Joan of Flanders “disappear” was not easy. With his “whole Council’s advice,” Edward III would have the political cover that he needed.

Forcible confinement was an implement of domination and control asserted by those in authority over those either out of favor or merely in the way. Regardless of station and gender sovereigns frequently imposed interminable detention as retribution against enemies and rivals. Edward III of England was no different and was not above using any and all tools at his disposal to get his way. Unfortunately for Joan of Flanders, she was the collateral damage to Edward III’s lust for power and wealth.

By the date of this memorandum, Tuesday, July 22, 1343, Joan of Flanders had been in

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, *Issue Rolls*, E 403/329, m. 28.

London for six months<sup>2</sup> in relative comfort and as a guest of the king.<sup>3</sup> Yet, she was no fool and knew and knew the king's propensity for chicanery. She had witnessed his avarice firsthand when Edward III had demanded the whole treasure of Brittany "to be lent" to him to do with as he pleased before lifting a finger to come to her aid.<sup>4</sup> Whatever Edward III's immediate intentions in Brittany (financial/campaign headquarters/empire) were or her husband's fate in France, for the moment, Joan of Flanders and her children were safe, and she could always sue to recover custody of Richmond.<sup>5</sup> She had reason to believe that her family was secure for the foreseeable future. However, she could not have predicted the cruel twist of fate that would lead her protector to become her captor by the end of the year. Although Joan of Flanders' was a serious matter that warranted the consensus of the King's whole council to resolve, her confinement was part of a devious plot engineered by Edward III with a two-fold objective, the deprivation of the Honour of Richmond from the Breton Ducal House and autonomous control of Brittany. In order to understand these relationships and the importance of Richmond, we must examine its history from its origins after the Norman Conquest.

For centuries, the Honour of Richmond had been a vital interest to the Kings of England because of its location and reserves; therefore, they had sought to forge the bonds between the Crown and landholder in a cooperative polity that preserved seigniorial authority. The Dukes of Brittany were hereditary tenants-in-chief to the English Crown and had held their feudal tenure or dependent ownership (privileges for service) through the Honour of

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<sup>2</sup> Arrived in England around February 27, 1343, Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 135 ; Kenneth Alan Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 259 n. 33.

<sup>3</sup> "Ad pacem domini regis," July 22 and Friday, August 8, 1343, TNA, *Issue Rolls*, E 403/329, m. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, iv: 1337-1347 (London: H.M.S.O., 1911-1962), 270

<sup>5</sup> Alienation by substitution

Richmond since 1069.<sup>6</sup> Tenants-in- chief held their lands directly from the king where the king acted in accordance with the feudal principle of reciprocity and promoted or protected his tenants and their families in return for relief.<sup>7</sup> Under royal lordship, the king and his tenants had rights and obligations to the other and this arrangement provided a framework of law, institutions, and norms under which families could pursue the acquisition and preservation of property.<sup>8</sup> King William I of England (1028-1087) granted the Honour of Richmond to his cousin Alan Rufus, “the Red” in 1069 for his bravery at the *Battle of Hastings* (1066) and his constant attendance upon the Conqueror during the *Siege at York* (1068) throughout the Norman Conquest of North East England.(1067-1080).<sup>9</sup> William I created Alan Rufus the Earl of Richmond for his military services and “rewarded Alan with the possessions of Eadwine [Edwin of Mercia], not only in Yorkshire, but all others that belonged to him and his father Ælfgar of Mercia,<sup>10</sup> in Norfolk, Suffolk, and other counties; all of which made his dominions so extensive, that sometimes he styled himself, Earl of East Angles.”<sup>11</sup> Yet, the endowment of Richmondshire, as the Honour came to be called, had its roots in Norman tradition.

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<sup>6</sup> William Farrer and Charles Travis Clay, eds. *Early Yorkshire Charters: Volume IV, Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 94; Christopher Clarkson, *The History of Richmond, in the County of York; Including a Description of the Castle, Friary, Easeby-Abbey, and Other Remains of Antiquity in the Neighbourhood*. Richmond [England]: (Richmond: Printed by and for T. Bowman at the Albion Press, 1814),29-33.

<sup>7</sup> Scott L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardships and Marriages in English Society and Politics, 1217-1327*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 268;

<sup>10</sup> Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans. *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 2: 139

<sup>11</sup> Clarkson, *The History*,33; Douglas, *William I*, 172; Farrer and Clay, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 94.

The bequest of an honour tenure was Norman in origin and administration. “The viscounts and barons of Normandy held *beneficia*,<sup>12</sup> *feoda*,<sup>13</sup> *honores* of the duke; in return they owed him military service, though the precise amount of service may not have been fixed.”<sup>14</sup> While Alan Rufus’ service to William the Conqueror was referred to as a constant for which he was granted more than four hundred manors in eleven shires, his successor to the Honour of Richmond his brother Alan Niger, “the black” had a less than illustrious military career.<sup>15</sup> The rights of Norman nobles were hereditary; however there was an element of precariousness in their tenure, that kings like Edward III exploited, which shaped ducal rights to relief and compromised their ability to prevent their lands from being given away to other family members.<sup>16</sup> Joan of Flanders’ husband’s tenancy of Richmond, as this chapter will show, suffered from this vagary of Norman lordship. Primarily, the rights of *honores* for Anglo-Norman nobles, which applied to the Dukes of Brittany’s English possessions, were determinative for the jurisdiction and authority within their demesne.

The Breton dukes had blood ties to the Anglo-Norman kings and had been invaluable in the settlement of England. In the Charter attributed to King William I regarding the grant of Richmondshire, the king refers to Alan Rufus as his nephew, *nepoti meo*, when in fact he was his cousin.<sup>17</sup> Alan Rufus, Count of Brittany was the nephew of Duke Alan III of Brittany and the second cousin of William the Conqueror, through his grandmother Hadvisa (Hawise), the

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<sup>12</sup> Agrarian estates held in return for rent or service

<sup>13</sup> Benefice of a vassal held on condition of military service

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* (New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange LTD, 2008), 1: 72.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas, *William I*, 268; George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain ...* (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 10::785. Katharine Keats-Rohan, “The Bretons and Normans of England 1066-1154.” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36, no.1 (1992), 48.

<sup>16</sup> Pollack and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, 1: 71.

<sup>17</sup> Farrer and Clay, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 94.

sister of Duke Richard II of Normandy.<sup>18</sup> The Charter further indicates that William I bestowed the land upon Alan Rufus and “his heirs forever, all the towns and lands that belonged to Earl Eadwine in Yorkshire, with knights, fees, churches and other privileges, and customs free and in an honourable manner, as the said Edwin had held them, given from the Siege before York.”<sup>19</sup> However, because Earl Eadwine was being held in honorable captivity at William I’s court at the time of the gift in 1068/69,<sup>20</sup> Alan Rufus’ grant was more liberal and princely in manner and constituted the noblest of tenures.<sup>21</sup> Ever the shrewd tactician, William I’s motivations in the creation of the Honour of Richmond were not solely out of gratitude, but rather the imperative to maintain a strong defense on the northern border of England fortified by fierce loyalists.

Richmondshire, and more specifically Richmond Castle, was first and foremost a device of war staffed by lieutenants of the king.<sup>22</sup> “It is clear that in creating the Honour as a necessary military buffer zone using the Tees as the border with a semi-independent northern Northumbria, William the Conqueror was taking both a major estate (that of Earl Edwin), together with its internal client relationships within the manors of Gilling and Catterick to weld it into a single feudal entity.”<sup>23</sup> Regardless, of the seigneurial rights of the Dukes of Brittany, the Kings of England took a keen interest in the affairs of Richmond for protection against invasion and the preservation of the royal patrimony. Because of the psycho-social aspect of feudal bonds, baronial lordship, which the lordship of Norman England was, protected itself by subinfeudation within the kin-group, i.e. the relatives of the Dukes of

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; Keats-Rohan, “The Bretons and Normans,” 41; See genealogical table, *Chapter 5*, Table 6.

<sup>19</sup> Clarkson, *The History*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Farrer and Clay, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 94.

<sup>21</sup> Clarkson, *The History*, 36.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas, *William I*, 216.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Butler, “The Origins of the Honour of Richmond and its Castles.” In *Anglo-Norman Castles*, ed. Robert Liddiard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 95.

Normandy, in which everyone played his or her part.<sup>24</sup> Land tenure within families enmeshed loyalty with tradition and fealty and assured the king of his own inheritance (landed wealth), because everyone had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Combine Richmond's feudal significance with the geo-political importance of the honour regarding its size and strategic position near the Scottish border and it made the shire a desirable prize to keep intact, even when passing through the female line.<sup>25</sup> This reality was evident to Edward III as the calamitous legacy of Duchess Constance of Brittany predicated his treatment of Joan of Flanders.

Dowers were often a source of contention and disputes over the expanse of royal prerogative and seignorial rights. By the fourteenth century, landholders relied entirely on the institutions of the law and royal courts to protect property arrangements thereby enshrining those arrangements in the legal tradition.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, dower or "widow's portion," like all demands on the estate, became part of English Common Law and rights worthy of protection. Dower, the one-third or one-half, depending on the tenurial arrangement in land or chattel due a widow upon the death of her husband was to provide for the children that did not inherit or to maintain the widow after the landholder's death.<sup>27</sup> Medieval legal opinion considered the right of dower a gift of the bridegroom made to his bride at the time of marriage "at the church door," where the bridegroom had the option of endowing his bride with specific lands (not exceeding one-third of his holdings) or money without a share of the

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<sup>24</sup> Keats-Rohan, "The Bretons and Normans," 44.

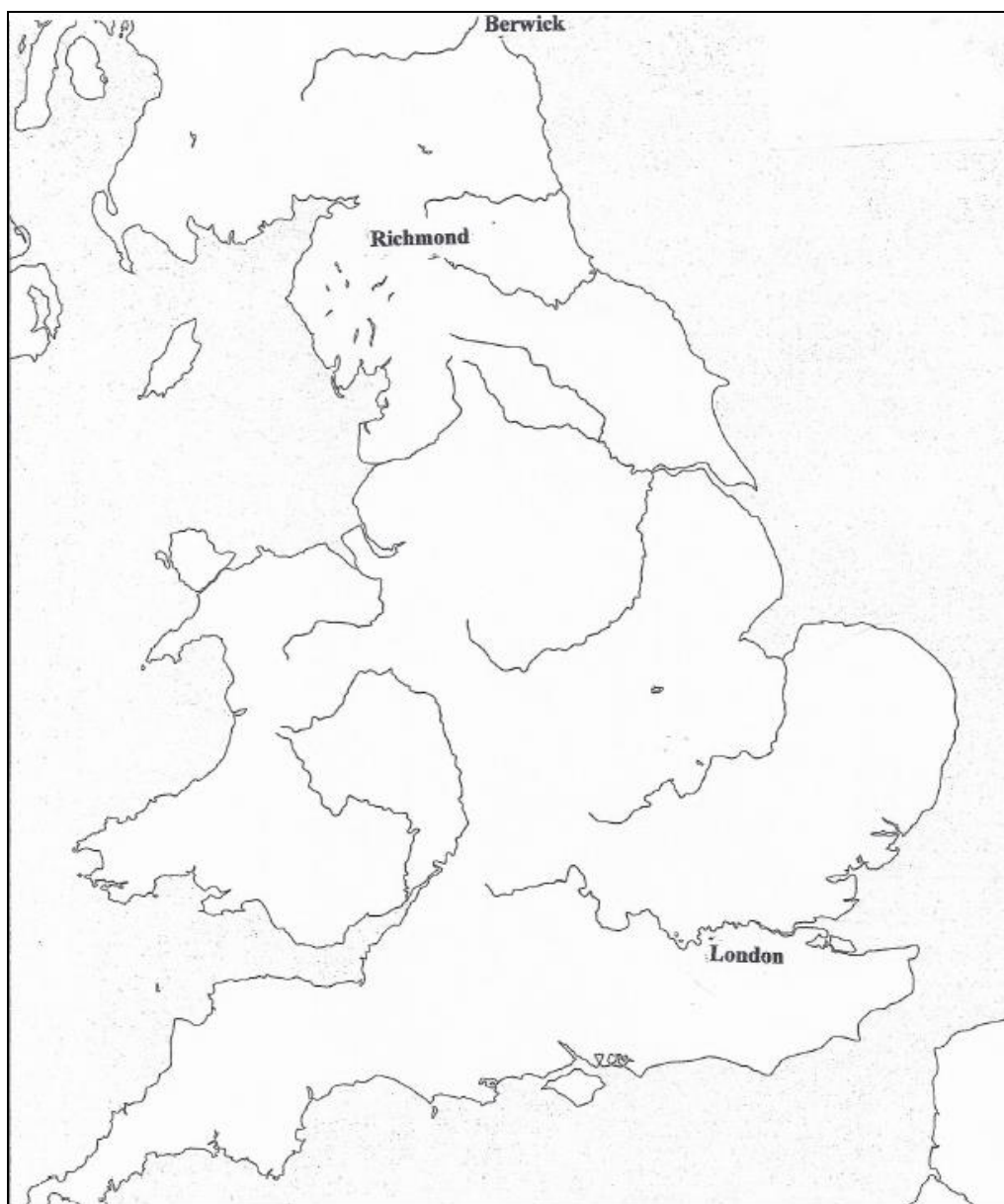
<sup>25</sup> Butler, "The Origins," 95.

<sup>26</sup> Waugh, *Lordship*, 130.

<sup>27</sup> Sue Sheridan Walker, "Litigation as Personal Quest: Suing for Dower in the Royal Courts, circa 1272-1350." In *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, ed Sue Sheridan Walker (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 81.



## Map of the Honour of Richmond<sup>28</sup>



*Map 4. A map of Richmondshire*

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<sup>28</sup> Map 4, The Honour of Richmond encompassed most of the land between the Tees and Ur Rivers in North West Yorkshire with the “Caput in North Riding.”

land.<sup>29</sup> As landholding was synonymous with wealth, few brides entering into marriage with great and middling holders of feudal, vassalage or socage<sup>30</sup> land accepted the latter. At the time of his death in 1345, John de Montfort, Joan of Flanders' husband, held the feudal tenure of Richmond *ut honore* of the Crown and he was a feudal landholder at the time of their marriage in 1329,<sup>31</sup> albeit not in England. However, as the tenure of Richmond was heritable, John de Montfort assumed all privileges, rights and responsibilities for it upon the death of his brother, the late Duke Jean III of Brittany, in 1341.<sup>32</sup>

Upon John de Montfort's death, Joan of Flanders, like most widows of her status, would have had to wait for her dower to be formerly assigned. Widows whose late husbands held any land of the king-in-chief received their dower or inheritance from the Crown by administrative assignment.<sup>33</sup> "To 'assign' a widow's dower was the duty of the [landholder's] heir or his guardian or the king: a duty to be performed within forty days after the husband's death."<sup>34</sup> Under Magna Carta by the end of the thirteenth century, a widow had to provide assurance and swear publically that she would not remarry without royal license.<sup>35</sup> This process occurred in conjunction with the tenant's heir being established by inquest (*inquisitio post mortem*) and paying homage or relief to the king, as the king was the *primer seisin* or primary landholder by his sovereignty.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the control of property demanded women to be familiar with land law, appurtenant rights and be prepared to make to their cases in court. Joan of Flanders could not have begun this process of suing for dower

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<sup>29</sup> Pollack and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, 2: 420-21.

<sup>30</sup> land for agricultural profits or money rent

<sup>31</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 821.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 820.

<sup>33</sup> Walker. "Litigation," 83.

<sup>34</sup> Pollack and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, 2: 422.

<sup>35</sup> Waugh, *Lordship*, 116.

<sup>36</sup> Pollack and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, 1:311

until after her husband's death, although at the time of her confinement in Tickhill Castle in October 1343,<sup>37</sup> John de Montfort was still alive under house arrest in France.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the complexities of a legal fight in the Court of Common Pleas in Westminster for the rights to the Honour of Richmond, where John de Montfort was Lord and Edward III's son John of Gaunt was Earl with a sympathetic plaintiff like Joan of Flanders, was not a contest that Edward III would have relished.

Although it was the Dukes of Brittany from the twelfth century onward, who had the legal title to Richmondshire, the actual enjoyment of the English possessions was frequently disturbed by political and other reasons, including disputed discussions and personal grievances.<sup>39</sup> It was Alan Rufus who, in his native Norman-French tongue, named the regions that had been known previously as the Gilling, Hang, and Hallikeld Hundreds,<sup>40</sup> Riche-mont for the bounty of the land and it was Bretons who became its first Lords, Counts and Earls shaping its political landscape as well.<sup>41</sup> When Eadwine of Mercia forfeited his lands in Yorkshire, he held them as an Earl in the Anglo-Saxon tradition;<sup>42</sup> however, William I created his tenancies in the Norman custom whereupon Alan Rufus de Penthievre, *comes Britanniae* (hereditary title of Count), became the first Lord of Richmond.<sup>43</sup> More importantly, the grant of Richmond made Alan Rufus the tenth wealthiest land landowner in England, a position he owed entirely to kinship.<sup>44</sup> As previously mentioned Alan Rufus and

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<sup>37</sup> TNA, *Issue Rolls*, E 403/331/6, October 22, 1343.

<sup>38</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 820.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Jones, "The House of Brittany and the Honour of Richmond in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Some New Charter Evidence," in *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte*, eds. K. Borchardt and E. Bünz (Stuttgart: 1998), 161.

<sup>40</sup> Butler, "Origins," 91.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 94; Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins Province and Empire, 1158-1203* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 12; Clarkson, *The History*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Noble vassalage of the royal line, Clarkson, *The History*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 780.

<sup>44</sup> Keats-Rohan, "The Bretons and Normans," 46.

William I of England were cousins as Alan was the grandson of Duke Geoffrey I of Brittany and Hadvisa of Normandy, William's great-aunt. Alan's father Eudo (Eudon), Duke Alan III of Brittany's younger brother, called of Penthievre<sup>45</sup> had many sons, legitimate and illegitimate, who fought alongside William I during the Norman Conquest including Richmond's successive heirs, Alan Niger and Stephen.<sup>46</sup> In 1098, it was Stephen who as the heir of his elder brother Geoffrey Boterel I succeeded to Penthievre, thus uniting their Breton and English possessions.<sup>47</sup>

Despite being fiercely loyal to the Anglo-Norman Kings, Duke Alan IV of Brittany had married Constance of Normandy, daughter of William the Conqueror.<sup>48</sup> Many cross-Channel Breton magnates were prone to internecine conflict. Most notably, the grandsons of Duke Alan III and Count Eudo challenged the grandsons of each other over ducal authority for most of the late eleventh century and into the twelfth. Those divisions between the House of Richmond-Penthievre and the ducal family only grew over the next century and laid the groundwork for the Breton Civil War 300 years later.

Eudo's descendants retained the Honour of Richmond until the mid- twelfth century when the tenancy came directly under the purview of the Breton Ducal House and the Angevin kings began to use the Honour as a bargaining chip in continental politics. In 1138, Stephen's son Count Alan le Noir, Earl of Richmond, married Duchess Bertha of Brittany,

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<sup>45</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10 783; Keats-Rohan, "The Bretons and Normans, 46.

<sup>46</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10:784; Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones. *The Bretons*, (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1991), 192.

<sup>47</sup> The House of Penthievre in 1098 held Penthievre, Tréguier, and Guingamp in Brittany, Farrer and Clay, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 85; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 786.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 780; Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 192.

## Genealogy of Brittany, Richmond and Penthievre: 1100-1250<sup>49</sup>

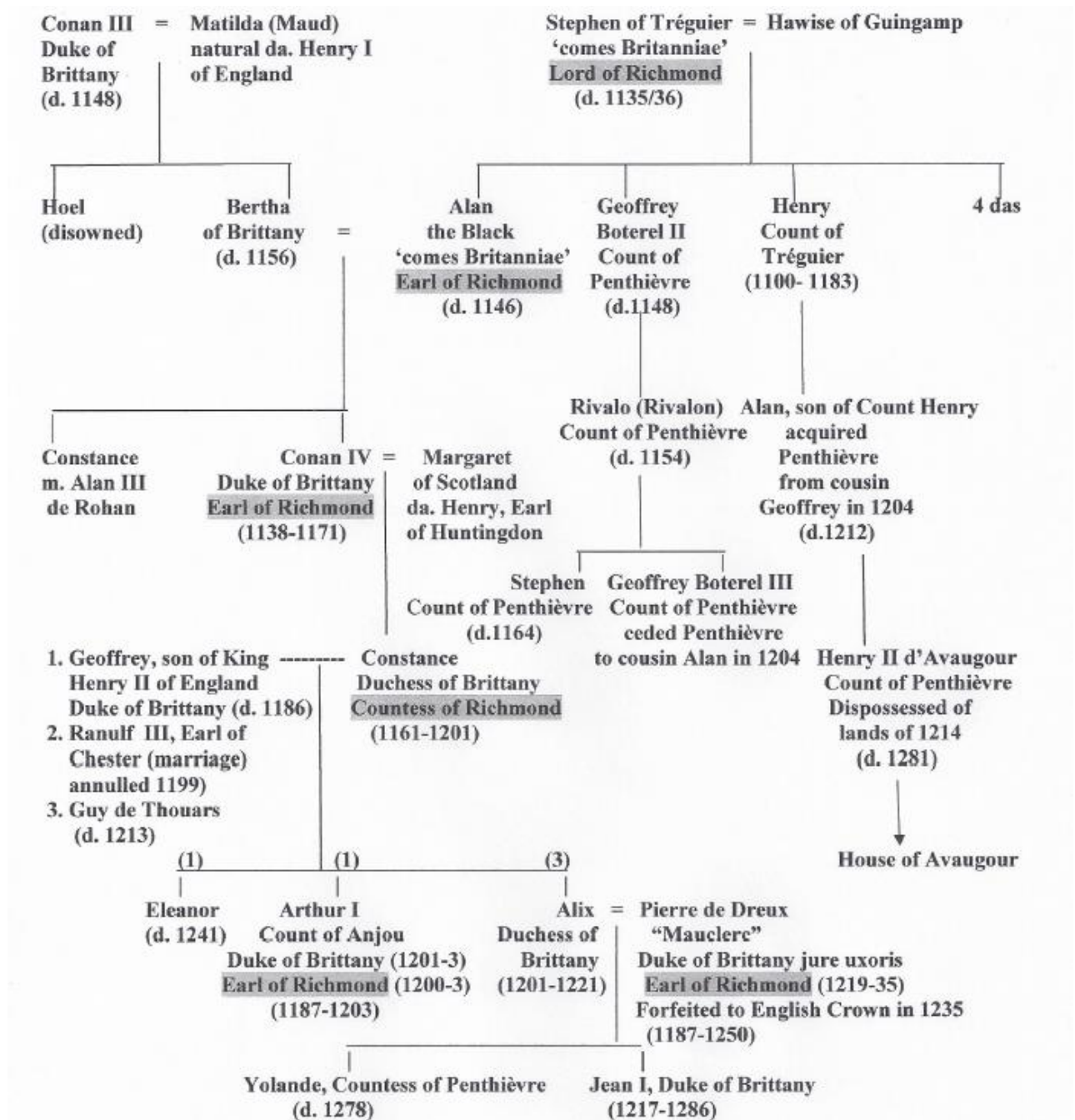


Table 7. Breton ducal house with the house of Penthievre and Richmond pre 1250

<sup>49</sup> Table 7, Genealogy of the Lords and Earls of Richmond, Dukes of Brittany and Counts of Penthievre, 1100-1250

after her father Duke Conan III disinherited his son and heir,<sup>50</sup> thus unifying the duchy with the birth and accession of Conan IV of Brittany, Bertha's and Alan's son. King Henry II of England confirmed his succession as Earl of Richmond in 1156.<sup>51</sup> Henry II's grant of Richmond to Conan IV henceforth involved the Kings of England in the issue of the Breton ducal succession. In 1160 Conan IV married Margaret of Huntington, sister of King Malcolm IV of Scotland, an alliance that may not have been brokered by Henry II but could not have occurred without Henry II's approval.<sup>52</sup> Just six years later in 1166, after a settlement of the duchy's affairs that involved Conan IV's abdication, Conan IV's only child Constance agreed to marry Henry II's son Geoffrey; thereby granting Henry II the regency of Brittany.<sup>53</sup> Conan IV retained the Honour of Richmond until his death in 1171; however, it was his daughter who would shape the nature of the relations between England and France for the next two hundred years.

Duchess Constance of Brittany, Countess of Richmond's twenty-year rule of the duchy left an impression and cast such a long shadow upon Anglo-French diplomacy that Edward III would have recalled its impact and sought to avoid its ramifications by his confinement of Joan of Flanders. By now Breton politics and by default the Honour of Richmond was entangled in Angevin high politics. Even when Henry II of England finally permitted Geoffrey and Constance to marry in 1181, ten years after the death of Conan IV, and assume the responsibility of Brittany, the king still kept a watchful eye on the affairs of the duchy

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<sup>50</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 790; Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins*, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Breton*, 194.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Léopold Delisle, ed. *Chronique de Robert de Torigni, abbé du Mont-Saint-Michel: suivie de divers opuscules historiques de cet auteur et de plusieurs religieux de la même abbaye: le tout publié d'après les manuscrits originaux* (Rouen: A. Le Brument, Libraire de la Société de l'histoire de Normandie, 1872), 1: 361; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 792; Farrer and Clay, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 92.

much to the disapproval of Duchess Constance.<sup>54</sup> In fact, when Geoffrey assumed the title of Duke, his father retained the Honour of Richmond, despite it being the ducal patrimony; thus treating it as Constance's *martiagium* or dowry.<sup>55</sup> Combine the consternation with Constance's selection of the name of Arthur for her heir, born after the death of Geoffrey in 1186,<sup>56</sup> her forced second marriage to Earl Ranulf of Chester that very same year by Henry II, and two year imprisonment in 1196 by Ranulf,<sup>57</sup> undeniably there was rift developing between Brittany and England. With the Honour of Richmond and her daughter Eleanor both in King Richard II of England's hands by 1189,<sup>58</sup> the severe Angevin rule and ill-feelings shared by Duchess Constance and her son Arthur drove them into the arms of Philip Augustus and opened up a new chapter for the duchy as direct French fief.<sup>59</sup>

The death of Duchess Constance in 1201 along with the murder of her son, Duke Arthur I of Brittany, by his Uncle King John of England in 1203 definitively altered the tenurial and political relationship between England and Brittany in ways not seen since the Norman Conquest that often pitted the interest of the Kings and the Earl-Dukes against the other.<sup>60</sup> "For political reasons, control of the Honour changed frequently. At times it was in royal hands; at times it was held by Constance; at times all or part of the Honour passed into the hands of one of Constance's three husbands Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl Ranulf of Chester, and Guy de Thouars, or of her son-in-law, Peter of Dreux (Pierre Mauclerc) who forfeited it

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<sup>54</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 195.

<sup>55</sup> Everard, *Bretons and the Angevins*, 128; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 794.

<sup>56</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 196.

<sup>57</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 794

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Hunter, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the First Year of the Reign of King Richard the First, A.D. 1189-1190* (London: Lyme & Spottiswoode, 1844), 100.

<sup>59</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 196.

<sup>60</sup> Jones, "The House of Brittany," 178.

in 1235 for his submission to the King of France.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, began the “carrot and stick” pattern of confiscation, restoration and confiscation regarding Richmond in which John de Montfort would find himself in 1341.

The exploitation of Richmond began in earnest a century earlier. In 1241, Henry III of England granted the Honour to a foreigner, his wife Queen Eleanor of Provence’s uncle, Peter of Savoy, who held it until his death in 1268. Thereafter, it passed back to Pierre Mauclerc’s descendants. Consequently, liege homage in return for the possession of the Honour became more arbitrary and capricious in the minds of the Kings of England, as the precedent had been set for the non-Breton ducal endowment of Richmond. Succession to the earldom was unclear, as tenure increasingly became contingent upon the political needs of the Plantagenets. “It was this fact which allowed Edward I to establish the second son of Duke Jean II of Brittany as Earl in 1306.”<sup>62</sup> However, the threat that Richmond and Brittany would henceforward descend in different branches of the same family was averted in 1334 on the death without heirs, of John de Bretagne; Jean III of Brittany, his nephew, was allowed to hold the earldom.”<sup>63</sup> John de Bretagne had been in service to the Kings of England and Edward I had created him Guardian of Scotland in 1305; consequently, it was not surprising for him to have been rewarded for his efforts with the Earldom.<sup>64</sup> However, Edward III granted Richmond to Duke Jean III of Brittany in 1334 following the death of his uncle, with

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<sup>61</sup> Hugh Thomas, "Subinfeudation and Alienation of Land, Economic Development, and the Wealth of Nobles on the Honor of Richmond, 1066 to c. 1300." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 26, no. 3 (1994), 399; Cokayne, *Complete Peerage* 10: 802.

<sup>62</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 815.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Jones, *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399: Relations with England and France During the Reign of Duke John IV* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1970), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 815.



## Genealogy of Brittany, Richmond and Penthievre: 1250-1400<sup>65</sup>

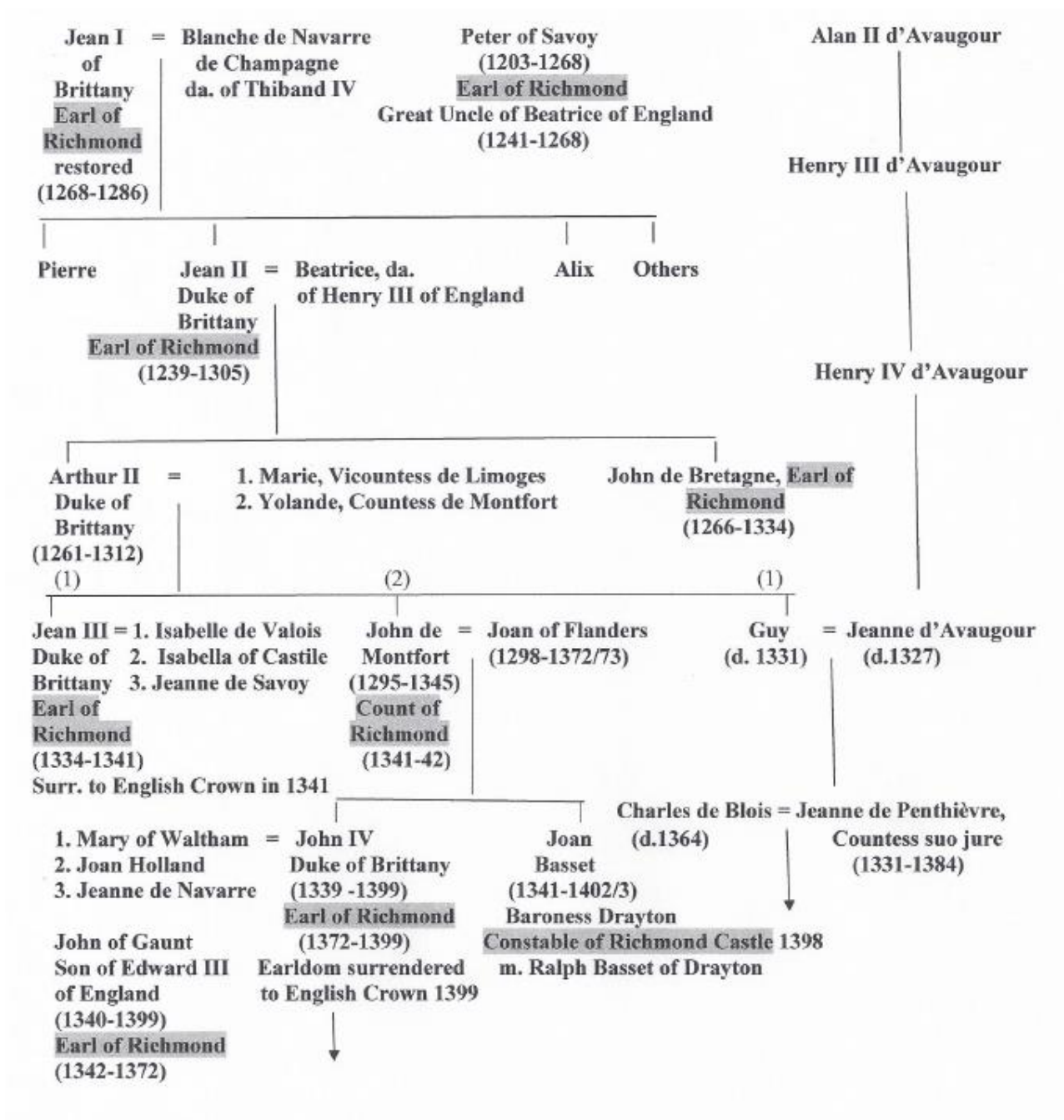


Table 8. The Breton ducal house with Penthievre and Richmond post 1250

<sup>65</sup> Table 8, Genealogy of the Lords and Earls of Richmond, Dukes of Brittany and Counts of Penthievre, 1250-1400

marks of signal favor<sup>66</sup> and privileges,<sup>67</sup> and allowed him to retain it despite having fought for King Philippe VI of France in the campaigns of 1339 and 1340.<sup>68</sup> Even before England's war with France, one can see that it was political motivations that predicated the English king's actions regarding Richmond; however, the Breton succession crisis made Edward III's machinations more overt.

Edward III's conditional grant of the Earldom of Richmond to John de Montfort in 1341 contributed to the confinement of his wife, Joan of Flanders, in 1343 by Edward III. Duke Jean III died on April 30, 1341 in Caen and by May 16 it certainly was known in England, because Edward III proclaimed the tenancy vacated, surrendered to the Crown, and appointed custodians to manage the lands.<sup>69</sup> Only six days later Edward III ordered, "by reason of the duke's death," the Honour of Richmond to be reserved for the maintenance of the king's children, specifically the household of John of Gaunt.<sup>70</sup> Incidentally, the succession crisis arose in Brittany and John de Montfort was well aware of the financial and legitimating importance of securing Richmond and having an alliance with England, as France was likely to support his rival's claim. Negotiations ensued throughout June and July of 1341<sup>71</sup> and an agreement was reached by late summer.

On September 24, 1341, Edward III granted John de Montfort the County of Richmond (lordship) to hold for those lands confiscated by Phillippe VI, with the castles, towns,

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<sup>66</sup> *CCR, 1339-1341*, 450.

<sup>67</sup> *CPR, 1340-43*, 73.

<sup>68</sup> La Patourel, *Feudal Empires*, 186.

<sup>69</sup> *CFR, 1337-47*, 225.

<sup>70</sup> *CFR, 1337-47*, 226; W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 131; Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England: 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 364.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, E 372/189 m.18; Jones, "Ancenis," 5: 7, n. 28; ; Eugene Déprez, "Une lettre missive du prétendant Jean de Bretagne, Comte de Montfort," *Annales de Bretagne*, xxxiv (1919), 59.

villages, fiefs and rents as the late duke, until his French possessions were returned.<sup>72</sup> Despite the semantics,<sup>73</sup> this was not an investiture of the Dignity of the Honour of Richmond, but rather a *quid pro quo* arrangement where John de Montfort got manpower to support his cause in Brittany and Edward III got remuneration from Brittany to support his war with France. Holding Richmond in abeyance for the return of Montfort-L'Amaury or French lands of equal value was a wash, although the language that John de Montfort was to hold Richmond as his late brother, who was fully invested, was provocative.<sup>74</sup> While the funding for English troops began almost immediately, English military assistance was delayed until the Spring of 1342 with Edward III not arriving until that Fall.<sup>75</sup> Despite these holdups and Montfort's capture, Edward III exacted more and more guarantees and assurances of friendship and fealty so that perhaps, cynically, he thought that he could avoid fully rendering the Earldom of Richmond to John de Montfort.<sup>76</sup>

Although John de Montfort's capture in November 1341 was the hiccup in Edward III's war strategy with France that forced the king to deal with Joan of Flanders, it did not derail his intentions regarding Richmond and desire to grant it to his son. It must be stated that John de Montfort was seemingly oblivious to Edward III's designs on Richmond. Yes, John de Montfort was preoccupied, under siege in Nantes by the Blois-French forces attempting to implement the *Arret de Conflans* and place Charles de Blois on the ducal throne,<sup>77</sup> but interestingly Montfort contemporaneously had appointed the same attorney as custodian of

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<sup>72</sup> "Comes Richemundiæ, eundem tenuit Comitatum," CPR, 1340-43, 291; Rymer, *Foedera*, 2.2, 112.

<sup>73</sup> CPR, 1340-43, 333

<sup>74</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 820.

<sup>75</sup> Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, ed. *Memoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742) 1:1424-5; E 36/204 fols. 72v, 73.

<sup>76</sup> Depuis, "Une lettre missive," 62; CPR, 1340-43, 380, 454; CFR, 1337-1347, 270.

<sup>77</sup> Émile Molinier, ed., *Chronique Normande du XIVe Siècle* in Internet Archive (Paris: Renouard, 1882, 51-53; Morice, *Preuves*, 1:1421-24; Michael Jones, "Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War of Succession in Brittany (1341)," in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003), 5: 7-8.

Richmond as his late brother.<sup>78</sup> Thus, it could be argued that John de Montfort was carrying on usual relations with England, while Edward III had another agenda. Edward III's decision to grant Richmond to John of Gaunt was a means of provisioning his son and securing his future. Despite their alliance, the king had no intent of fully investing Montfort with the earldom. While John de Montfort was still in prison and before departing for Brittany, Edward III created John of Gaunt the Earl of Richmond on September 20, 1342<sup>79</sup> and shortly thereafter named the king's wife Queen Philippa as guardian of the earl and the earldom.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the queen and by extension the king had sole control of the resources and revenues from the Honour of Richmond, while Montfort was still lord. Albeit the purpose of investing John of Gaunt with the Earldom of Richmond was to secure his son's domestic needs, as Edward III had and would do for his numerous other children throughout their lives, this act was inherently self-serving.<sup>81</sup>

Not only was the possession of Richmond lucrative and prestigious, it may have been a part of Edward III's broader foreign policy aims. Edward III was clearly in arrears regarding family expenditures in 1341; the issues of Richmond went a long way in covering the debts of his children's treasurer.<sup>82</sup> Staffing for positions in the households of Edward III's children were invaluable opportunities for diplomatic clientage in securing prominent posts for the relations of continental allies that were loyal to royal family.<sup>83</sup> More importantly, and this speaks to Edward III's character, was the fact that he was willing to undermine the alliance

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<sup>78</sup> *CPR*, 1338-40, 93; *CPR*, 1340-43, 333.

<sup>79</sup> Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, 10: 821.

<sup>80</sup> *CPR*, 1340-43, 569.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Frederick Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England, The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals* (Manchester: At the University Press, 1928), 5:282; Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 364.

<sup>82</sup> W. M. Ormrod, "The Royal Nursery: A Household for the Younger Children of Edward III," *The English Historical Review* 120, no. 486 (April 2005): 407.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 409, no. 60.

that he had made with John de Montfort and place his son upon the ducal throne by the rights of Richmond for personal dynastic aims. "Edward III continued his grandfather's practice of incorporating powerful baronies into the royal family and looked beyond the shores of England to employ his sons in great unions of states stretching across the British Isles and much of France."<sup>84</sup> The title Earl of Richmond had been associated with the rulers of Brittany and it was not farfetched to conceive a marriage between John of Gaunt and Marguerite de Bretagne, daughter of Charles de Blois and Jeanne de Penthièvre that would have assured a Plantagenet succession of Brittany.<sup>85</sup>

Edward III certainly did more than consider it twelve years later when he entered into formal negotiations with Charles de Blois. "An alliance that would have ended hostilities in Brittany between the pro-French and pro-English factions with the marriage of Margaret of Winsor to Charles de Blois' heir to the disadvantage to John of Brittany. Ultimately, Edward III decided against the accord."<sup>86</sup> It is also worth noting that John de Montfort was to hold Richmond until he recovered his French possession. He never did and it was his son, in the Treaty of Brétigny, who recovered Montfort- L'Amaury and relinquished his claim to Richmond in 1361.<sup>87</sup> Edward III certainly had ulterior motives and his dispensation and revocation of Richmond was to his benefit.

The administrative rationale behind Edward III's creation of John of Gaunt as the Earl of Richmond was that John de Montfort was not qualified to hold the tenancy. Edward III granted the earldom to his son, a year after it reverted to the Crown, by patent; creating him

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<sup>84</sup> W. M. Ormrod, "Edward III and his Family," *The Journal of British Studies* 26, no. 4 (1987): 400.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 400; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 254.

<sup>86</sup> F. Bock, "Some New Documents Illustrating the Early years of the Hundred Years War (1353-1356)," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* xv, (1931): 84-91

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 16/17; *CCR 1360-64*, 225.

earl and cementing his investiture with the Dignity by girding with the Sword which was clearly distinct from a grant of the territorial property of the Earldom of Richmond.<sup>88</sup> By royal birth, John of Gaunt possessed the sufficient capacity, *sufficiencia facultatis*, for Edward III to grant the Name, Dignity and Holdings of the earldom to John of Gaunt and his heirs. It stood in contrast to John de Montfort who did not have that status, nor was he designated “*Nomine Comitis*,” as previous Dukes of Brittany had been.<sup>89</sup> It was a distinction without a difference for John de Montfort to hold the grant of the territorial Honour rather than the full endowment he desperately needed the alliance with England and certainly considered himself to be earl. However, for Edward III he was insuring the Crown against Richmond again becoming anything but a royal barony, at the expense of fealty and friendship.

So what does the politics of Richmond have to do with Edward III’s captivity of Joan of Flanders’? When King Philippe VI of France finally paroled John de Montfort from the Tower of the Louvre on September 1, 1343, Joan of Flanders was moved to Tickhill Castle about a month later in October.<sup>90</sup> Her liberty had become a liability for Edward III’s interests at home and abroad.<sup>91</sup> Edward III could ill afford to have Joan of Flanders reunited with her husband, for their reunification was an existential threat to Edward III’s agenda. They could have mounted a challenge to the substitution of John de Montfort as heir to Richmond. John de Montfort had the grounds to contest the king's alienation of the hereditary Honour of

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<sup>88</sup> “et cum deceat et honori tanti nominis correspondeat sufficiencia facultatis,” Great Britain, Parliament, House of Lords, *Reports from the Lords Committees Touching the Dignity of a Peer of the Realm, &C. &C. With Appendixes*. London: House of Lords, 2: 109.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>90</sup> Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 16.

<sup>91</sup> Jean du Tillet, “Recueil des Guerres et Traictez d’Entre les Roys de France et d’Angleterre,” In *Recueil des Roys de France, leurs Couronne et Maison: Ensemble, le rang des grands de France*, (Paris: Chez Pierre Mettayer, 1618), 225; Jules Viard, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, (Paris: Societe de l’histoire de France, 1939), 9: 243.

Richmond, as the purpose of conditional grants was to protect heritable lands from coming under the auspices of non-direct family members, if they did not establish families of their own.<sup>92</sup> According to the Statutes of King Edward the Third in 1326, the king could not seize or confiscate alienated, even if alienated by the Crown, if those lands were held *ut de honore*.<sup>93</sup> Despite having the grounds for a case, it is unclear whether John de Montfort, if he had returned to England in 1343, would have made an issue of Richmond at that moment.

More pressing for John de Montfort and Joan of Flanders was their sovereignty over Brittany. If they along with their children had returned to Brittany, they would have uncovered Edward III's hostile takeover of the duchy. For all intent and purposes, Edward III had assumed control of Brittany, since his arrival the year before. Under the agreements with Joan of Flanders, Edward III had the right to collect ducal revenues and garrison towns, ports, and castles as needed; but with the duchess now out of the way, he was operating with impunity.<sup>94</sup> He set up courts and appointed officials, and seized possessions from those who refused allegiance.<sup>95</sup> Most onerous, "to make their foothold in Brittany as self-financing as possible, the English developed a system of 'ransom districts,' systematically exacting forced payment in money and kind from the unfortunate Breton populace in the areas they controlled. This practice dampened enthusiasm for the Montfortists and would have encountered Joan's opposition."<sup>96</sup> As Brittany was vital to Edward III's grand strategy and he needed to prolong the civil war to deplete French resources, even the skilled tactician

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<sup>92</sup> Waugh, *Lordship*, 62.

<sup>93</sup> Luders, Alexander, Thomas E. Tomlins, John Raithby et al., *Statutes of the Realm 1101-1713*, (London: Records Commission), 1810, 1: 256.

<sup>94</sup> Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 139.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 28.

Edward III always knew when to adjust to changing political landscapes.<sup>97</sup> Back in Brittany with their children, John de Montfort and Joan of Flanders would have renegotiated the terms of their previous agreements those more favorable for the duchy, as they would have had more leverage over Edward III.

Neither of those scenarios occurred, Joan of Flanders' captivity was inevitably ordained by her husband's release. Edward III knew that Montfort's freedom from the Louvre was imminent. In January 1343, England and France had reached an agreement at Malestroit that ceased hostilities and a key provision was the parole of John de Montfort. However, by that summer Montfort had yet to be freed. The French were stalling, attempting to exact more concessions; while, Edward III was emphasizing the likelihood of a return to war and called Parliaments in 1343 and 1344 for the express purposes of discussing the state truce and other proposals.<sup>98</sup> As of July 22, 1343, Joan of Flanders was residing in London, but her status was subject to review by the Council. As of Friday, August 8, 1343, she was still residing in London under the King's Peace.<sup>99</sup> However, the determination of Joan of Flanders' captivity had to have been made within the following eight days; for by Saturday, August 16, 1343 Joan of Flanders' children were no longer in her care but residing in the Tower of London in William de Wakefield's charge.<sup>100</sup> John de Montfort was released from prison on September 1, but under house arrest in France and ordered never to return to Brittany.<sup>101</sup> The following month, Joan of Flanders was ferreted away to Yorkshire in the custody of William Frank.

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<sup>97</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:421.

<sup>98</sup> Parliament, House of Lords, *Reports from Lords Committee*, 4: 546-51; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 255.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, E 403/329, m. 32.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, E 403/329, m. 34.

<sup>101</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3:442, n.5, 493; Émile Molinier, ed *Chronique Normande du XIVe Siècle*. (Paris: Renouard, 1882), 61.



Undoubtedly, Joan of Flanders' confinement was designed and executed to coincide with her husband's parole. There is no other explanation for it.

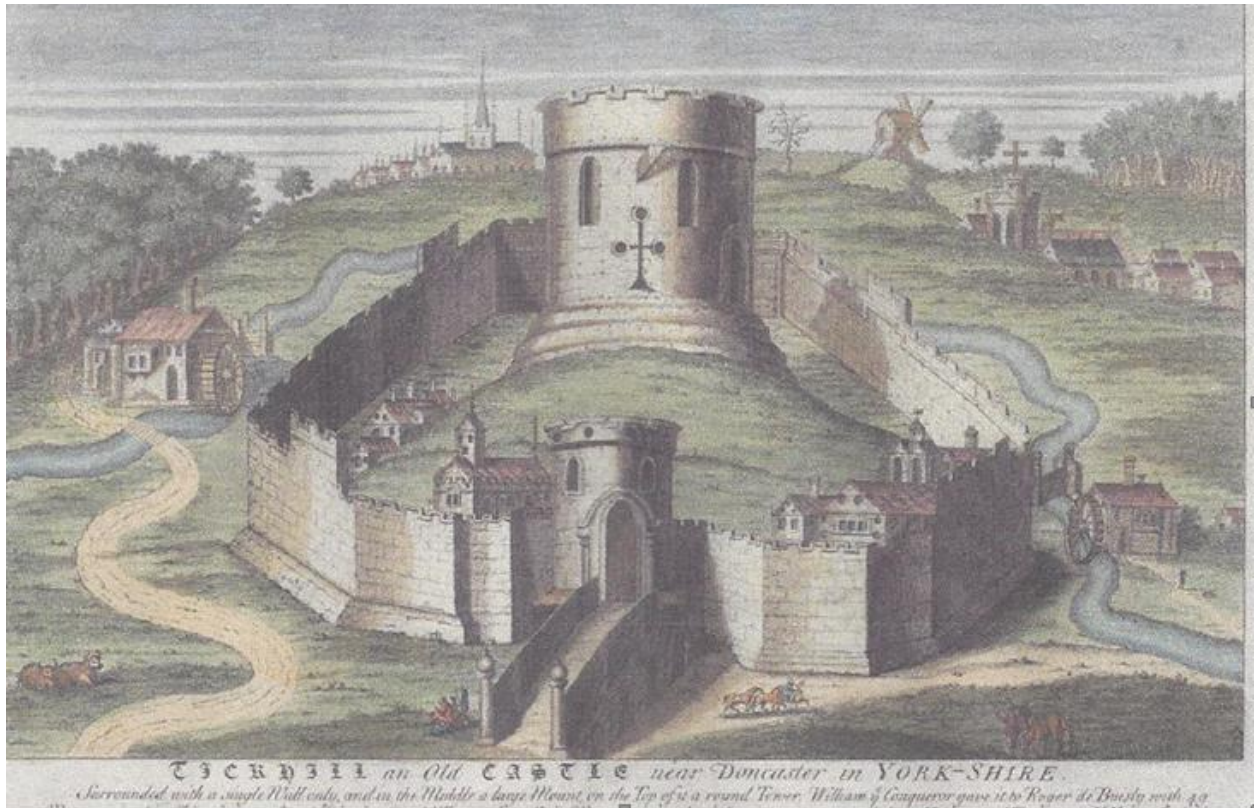
Joan of Flanders was locked away in the north of England far from her husband, children and the conflict; however, Edward III could not have foreseen his plans working so well. Inexplicably, John de Montfort made no attempt to rescue his wife after his parole and in fact he made no attempt to escape France for a year and a half. It was unexpected. It was as if he had resigned himself to his predicament and that of his family. This illustrates the brilliance of Edward III's scheme and that Joan of Flanders' husband did not see a remedy to their present situation or a way forward for Brittany without Edward's help. The conditions of Montfort's parole had been scrupulously observed, and King Edward was in a position to make sure as envoys were still negotiating the terms of the truce.<sup>102</sup> The dispirited Montfortist forces felt abandoned by their duke and duchess and had to rely on England, which was Edward III's intention. It was for that reason that when John de Montfort finally escaped in March 23, 1345, he fled to England to perform homage to Edward III as King of France.<sup>103</sup> With the lives of his family in Edward III's hands, capitulating to the King of England offered his best hope of recovering them, his country and eventually Richmond. John de Montfort left England to resume the fight for Brittany against France. After John de Montfort's untimely death, shortly after his return to Brittany, he was no longer an impediment to Edward III's interests. However, Joan of Flanders remained a hindrance for Edward III because her talents and skills made her a formidable opponent.

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<sup>102</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 432; Karsten Plöger, *England and the Avignon Popes: The Practice of Diplomacy in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Legenda, 2005), 33-34.

<sup>103</sup> Murimuth, *Continuo Chronicon*, 243; Henri Moranville, ed. and trans., *Chronographia Regum Francorum*. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1891) 2: 208, n.1.

## Old Tickhill Castle<sup>104</sup>



*Figure 2. Map of Tickhill Castle in Yorkshire*

After John de Montfort's demise, Edward III still faced the inevitability of dower challenges from Joan of Flanders and the likelihood that she, like Duchess Constance a century earlier, would not be a willing partner but rather a worthy adversary. The example of Constance will illustrate Joan's position. It was no secret that Constance of Brittany had had a tense relationship with Henry II of England and there seems to have been no love lost between Constance and her Angevin relatives.<sup>105</sup> Throughout her ten-year marriage to the

<sup>104</sup> Figure 2, George Vertue, *Tickhill an Old Castle near Doncaster in Yorkshire*, 1739, Courtesy of the British Museum Collection, *Tickhill an Old Castle near Doncaster in Yorkshire*, London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1739); colored etching, Courtesy of Government Art Collection, Department of Culture Media & Sport, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.gac.culture.gov.uk/work.aspx?obj=23861>

<sup>105</sup> Galliou and Jones, *The Bretons*, 196;

Anglo-Norman noble Earl Ranulf of Chester, she stayed in Brittany while he preferred to live in England and Normandy and the duchy followed her lead after the death of Henry II.<sup>106</sup> Although King Richard I had held the custody of Constance's daughter Eleanor of Brittany since 1189,<sup>107</sup> he needed more than this if he were to reassert the traditional Norman hegemony over the Bretons: he needed custody of Arthur, the heir.<sup>108</sup> When Richard I tried to take possession of nine-year-old Arthur, it was Duchess Constance who ended up kidnapped by her husband and carried away, as soon as she set foot on Norman soil.<sup>109</sup>

Alarmed and holding Richard I responsible for her imprisonment, Constance through her Breton advisors, who had Arthur in their charge, appealed to King Phillip Augustus of France for help, and threw off all allegiance to the Duke of Normandy, and attacked Richard's lands.<sup>110</sup> As had been the case under Richard I and John in 1196, for Edward III Brittany in enemy hands, i.e. under French control, posed a serious threat to English political and economic interests. Joan of Flanders was in a similar predicament as Duchess Constance and in her capacity as regent for her son in Brittany after her confinement and her husband's imprisonment and death she would have had to reconsider the merits of the Plantagenet alliance.

Not only was the regency of Joan of Flanders a potential threat, but her remarriage to a French noble would have signaled an abandonment of the Breton allegiance and shifted the balance of power in foreign affairs. Again, the example of the Duchess Constance would

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<sup>106</sup> John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 298.

<sup>107</sup> Joseph Hunter, ed. *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the First Year of the Reign of Richard I, 1189-90* (London: Eyre & Spottewoode, 1844), 197.

<sup>108</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, 298.

<sup>109</sup> Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. William Stubbs (London: Longman, 1871), 4: 7.

<sup>110</sup> Richard I of England was also Duke of Normandy, *Ibid.*, 7.

have highlighted this potential risk to Edward, if the past was prologue, for Edward III. The death of Richard I on April 6, 1189, marked a turning point in Anglo-Breton relations. The accession of John as King of England had polarized the Breton nobles and complicated the status of Arthur and Eleanor of Brittany, as the heirs of John's late older brother to England and Brittany.<sup>111</sup> With an ascendant Capetian state under King Philippe Augustus, there was a viable alternative for whom Duchess Constance could rely for support and advice including marriage suitors.

While Constance's third marriage to Guy de Thouars, brother of the Vicomte de Thouars, months after John came to the throne, may not have been an overt act of rebellion against years of Angevin authority, it certainly was a rejection of the English primacy and further complicated matters. The Counts of Thouars, whose fief bordered Brittany and Poitou, were bound in feudal service to the House of Poitou, and this sudden alliance gave new anxiety to the Angevins, since it pointed to an understanding between Philip Augustus in connivance with the Bretons.<sup>112</sup> As King John found this disturbing, so would have Edward III in the potential remarriage of Joan of Flanders. That premise made Joan of Flanders' release and return to Brittany a risky bet for him.

Furthermore, Edward III still needed a compliant Brittany, both as a client-state and revenue stream, as part of his war effort in France. After 1345, Edward III was the guardian of the ducal heir and governed the duchy as a suzerain. He needed to maintain a strong military foothold there sufficient to give confidence and security to the supporters of John of Montfort who recognized him as King of France and Suzerain of Brittany to encourage their

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<sup>111</sup> James C. Holt, "King John and Arthur of Brittany." *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 44 (2000): 86-87.

<sup>112</sup> Amy R. Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

loyalty and to win new adherents by grants of castles, lands and revenues seized from those who refused their allegiance.<sup>113</sup> As control of Brittany was part of his larger campaign to restore militarily England's position and prestige on the continent, not only did Edward III take over all operations, he manipulated the succession crisis to maintain his war against the Valois.<sup>114</sup>

A hostile Brittany with Joan of Flanders as regent would have been a humiliating, public rejection of Edward III. Remember in England, after John de Montfort's death, she still could have mounted a dower challenge in the Court of Common pleas for Richmond. It is unclear how successful it would have been. However, claiming that a tenant *ut honore* had been wrongfully alienated by the Crown in open court, although a gamble, would have brought attention to Joan of Flanders' plight. "Widows of great, middling, and small holders of feudal and socage land often had recourse to the courts when refused part or all of their dower or shortchanged in the apportionment of the property."<sup>115</sup> Any opposition by Joan of Flanders through resistance to his military strategy, remarriage, or a court case would have been an embarrassment and rebuke to Edward III. It also would have alarmed his other magnates and lords, who might have thought that Edward would treat them and their heirs similarly. With his real motivations of prolonging the English presence, rather than settling the succession, a regency by this woman who so tenaciously upheld her husband's cause was a gamble.<sup>116</sup> Edward III, like previous Kings of England, did not make foolish bets and with so much for him to lose, Edward III felt the circumstances necessitated Joan of Flanders' lifetime incarceration.

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<sup>113</sup> Fowler, *King's Lieutenant*, 38-39.

<sup>114</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 253.

<sup>115</sup> Walker, "Litigation," 83.

<sup>116</sup> Henneman, *Olivier*, 28.

Political imprisonment had long been a way for rulers to dispose of inconvenient women, where often the sentence was linked to the degree of meddling or perceived threat. “Conflict in the realm between the king and subjects (or those claimed to be subjects) might be the context for the confinement of women, and particularly noblewomen.”<sup>117</sup> In the Middle Ages, imprisonment was a covert way of neutralizing a dangerous person without the formality of passing a sentence or having a trial, although the semblance of a trial was generally granted to men accused of treason until the attainder process was regularized in the mid-fifteenth century, guilt was generally presumed.<sup>118</sup> Despite the fact that nobles, more than other social orders, accused of treason were likely to have a “trial by their peers,” when those proceedings occurred they often took place in different formats.<sup>119</sup> Imprisonment was simply less complicated for female political prisoners than men. The example of Edward I's treatment of women allied to Robert the Bruce illustrates these tactics.

Edward I had dealt with the female relatives of the rebellious Robert Bruce with the judgments passed upon each perceived complicity in Bruce's rebellion. In 1306, Edward I was in a quandary when it came to determining the fate of Elizabeth Bruce, Robert's wife and the Countess of Carrick. She was the daughter of the loyal Earl of Ulster, had openly criticized her husband's rebellion, and yet had given him support.<sup>120</sup> As in the case of Joan of Flanders, once Elizabeth Bruce's status had been determined, the arrangements for her custody proceeded swiftly and before she reached England she was sent to the royal manor at

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<sup>117</sup> Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, C.1170-1509* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 27.

<sup>118</sup> John. G. Bellamy, *The law of treason in England in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7, 123

<sup>119</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 27.

<sup>120</sup> Marquis of Bute, ‘Notice of a MS of the Later Part of the Fourteenth Century Entitled *Passio Scotorum Perjuratorum*,’ in *Proceeding of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, new series, ((Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland ), 7: 172-73.

Burstwick in Holderness to be lodged there in comfort.<sup>121</sup> However, there was no mistaking the fact that Elizabeth Bruce was imprisoned, because like Joan of Flanders she was carefully watched by male keepers chosen for their loyalty to King Edward I and the length of her confinement was left deliberately vague.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, as with Joan of Flanders and Edward III's intervention in the Breton Civil War, Elizabeth Bruce's confinement was necessarily protracted because of Edward I's success, or lack thereof, in the Scottish Wars of Independence.

Like Joan of Flanders, the perceived political threat posed by Eleanor of Brittany, daughter of Duchess Constance, to Kings Richard I, John and Henry III required her lifetime incarceration. Women like Eleanor of Brittany, styled Countess of Richmond,<sup>123</sup> were imprisoned, despite no clear suggestion of their involvement against the King of England, if they were associated by birth or marriage to those considered traitors, rebels or were political liabilities in themselves.<sup>124</sup> Having been a ward of Henry II of England since the age of two,<sup>125</sup> Eleanor of Brittany was in the protective custody of the English kings most of her life. For by 1203 being the sister of Arthur of Brittany, whom King John considered a rebel, made her by association a threat to John's kingship and warranted her imprisonment. After Arthur's murder at the command of King John in 1203, he could not as easily dispose of her, because it would have been too suspicious. As medieval historian James C. Holt argued, "the

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<sup>121</sup> Sir Frances Palgrave, ed. *Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland and the Transactions between the Crowns of Scotland and England 21 Henry III—35 Edward I* (London: Records Commission, 1837), 1: 357-58.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Alison Weir, *Britain's Royal Families: The Complete Genealogy* (London: Bodley Head, 1989), 63.

<sup>124</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 33.

<sup>125</sup> Weir, *Complete Genealogy*, 63; William Stubbs, ed., *Gesta Regis Henrici = The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169-1192* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), 1: 353.

ambience was not right for secrecy.”<sup>126</sup> She was remanded into custody over the ensuing years with the scant hope that she would be freed; for no Angevin would release her not only because of her superior claim to the English throne but also because of the fact that she was a potential cause of rebellion and a diplomatic bargaining chip. “John and then Henry III kept custody of Eleanor for the rest of her life, neutralizing the technical dynastic threat that she posed to them, since, on Arthur’s death Eleanor had the potential claim to Brittany, Richmond, England and other lands in the ‘Angevin Empire.’”<sup>127</sup> With her total years in captivity rivaling those of Joan of Flanders and her possible death due to starvation,<sup>128</sup> Eleanor of Brittany was the quintessential political pawn.

Aristocratic protection, residing in the King’s peace, was disregarded when the accused party was a threat or had something of interest to the Crown and Elizabeth de Burgh, née Clare, like Joan of Flanders, had an inheritance. In 1326, Elizabeth de Burgh, 11<sup>th</sup> Lady of Clare and co-heiress of Gilbert de Clare, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Gloucester and 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Hertford, wrote a formal protestation of her confinement by Edward II of England.<sup>129</sup> Elizabeth, along with her sisters, were the heirs to their childless, late brother’s estate, who at the time of his death in 1314 was probably the largest landowner in England apart from the king.<sup>130</sup> In 1322, Elizabeth claimed to have been forcibly taken from her residence at Usk Castle and confined to Barking Abbey, where her lands were confiscated by the king’s hand to benefit Hugh Despenser the Younger.<sup>131</sup> Summoned to appear before Edward II at York, she alleged, “The king kept (retained) me like I was in custody (*come en garde*), imprisoned apart from her

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<sup>126</sup> Holt, “King John,” 92.

<sup>127</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 34.

<sup>128</sup> Weir, *Complete Genealogy*, 63.

<sup>129</sup> George Holmes, “A protest against the Despensers, 1326.” *Speculum* 30, no. 02 (1955): 207-212.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> CCR, 1318-1323, 428; Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 13.



council, and ordered to quitclaim all her Welsh lands to the Duke (referring to Hugh Despenser, the younger 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Despenser, a favorite Edward II).<sup>132</sup> When Elizabeth, an heiress in her own right, complained of being pressured by Edward II to forfeit the Clare lands in South Wales to the younger Despenser, she was captured at Usk, before her husband's death in March 1322 and taken to the Abbey of Barking where she was kept throughout the summer.<sup>133</sup> “While she was at Barking all her lands, which were, of course, her own property and not that of her rebel husband, were taken into the king's hands and letters were sent by the king to persuade her to give Usk to Despenser in exchange for the lordship of Gower, to the west of Glamorgan.”<sup>134</sup> She insisted throughout the entire process that she was under duress to capitulate to Edward II.

As with Joan of Flanders, Elizabeth de Burgh was taken prisoner before her husband's death and held for an extended period of time at the command of the king. Elizabeth de Burgh's case stands out because her vehement protest, while Edward II was still king, was recorded; therefore, posterity has an opportunity to examine an incidence of abuse of power by the king through an unlawful imprisonment of a woman for extortion. “The statement has an unusual interest in being a full statement by one of the aggrieved parties in one of the most important of the Despensers' aggressions, made when the oppressors [Edward II and Despensers] were still in power and revealing in their control of the royal machinery of

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<sup>132</sup> “Le Roi me retient come en garde houstant mon conseil et ma mesnee de moi tantque ieusse enseallez une quiteclamance encountre mon gree de la terre Duke et de tout mon heritage en Gales et outre ceo moi comanda densealler vne autre escritpar le quele iestoie et vncore sui oblige de mon corps et de mes terres encontre ley de la terre,” Liber Niger de Wigmore, The Cartulary of the Mortimer Estates, British Museum, Harleian MS. 1240, ff. 86 v.-87.

<sup>133</sup> Holmes, “A protest,” 208.

<sup>134</sup> Great Britain, *Calendar of Charter Rolls, Edward I-Edward II, A.D. 1300-1326*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1908) 3: 449; Holmes, “A protest,” 208.

government for the purpose of expanding their own estates.”<sup>135</sup> That statement could equally have applied to Joan of Flanders’ political imprisonment through the machinations of Edward III only twenty years later.

Direct evidence of Joan of Flanders’ political imprisonment lies in the very nature of the accounts of her wardens, the Constables of Tickhill Castle. Most of Joan of Flanders’ keepers were the Constables of Tickhill Castle and their primary responsibility was the maintenance of their high-value detainee, more specifically the feeding, guarding and raiment of the Duchess of Brittany and her household.<sup>136</sup> Besides the unusual fact that Joan of Flanders and her entire retinue entered into “guardianship,” the Exchequer paid her custodians out of the accounts meant for prisoners of war. The Exchequer accounts payable for Joan of Flanders’ custodians, classified as military accounts and designated in the fourteenth-century by the *Exchequer King’s Remembrancer*, consisted of accounts for military expenditures: including the cost of provisioning and munitions, wages for men-at-arms, and victualing ships and mariners.<sup>137</sup> In regards to Joan of Flanders, these accounts were for, “the constables of military fortresses for the maintenance of garrisons and prisoners of war at the Tower of London, Winsor and castles elsewhere.”<sup>138</sup> Specifically, the Accounts for Thomas de Haukeston, from January 25, 1346-January 24, 1357<sup>139</sup> and Godfrey Foljambe from January 25, 1370-January 24, 1374<sup>140</sup> were Exchequer accounts for the wages and expenses related to war or prisoners. The fact that Edward III’s used his King’s

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<sup>135</sup> Holmes, “A protest,” 207.

<sup>136</sup> TNA, E 403/387, m. 19; *CPR, 1367-70*, 27.

<sup>137</sup> S.R. Scargill-Bird, ed., *A Guide to the Various Classes of Documents preserved in the Public Record Office*, (London: HMS Stationery Office, 1908), 97.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Particulars of Accounts for Thomas de Haukeston, January 25, 1346-January 24, 1350, E 101/25/23 and January 25, 1351-January 24, 1357 E 101/26/21

<sup>140</sup> Particulars of Account of Godfrey Foljambe January 25, 1370-January 24, 1374, E 101/31/3.

Remembrancer, who had the responsibility of reminding barons of business pending,<sup>141</sup> for Joan of Flanders' custodian payments highlights how well entrenched her incarceration was in the machinery of government. By 1346, Joan of Flanders' imprisonment was routine and ordinary and essentially being managed by civil servants until the date of her death.

Administratively, Joan of Flanders was considered to be in custody (*sub custodia*) under the king's order or at the King's command.<sup>142</sup> While residing in England at the King's peace for most of 1343, by October 1343, Joan of Flanders was confined at the direction of Edward III. Initial Exchequer registers for Joan of Flanders stated that she was "staying in England in the peace of the Lord the King;"<sup>143</sup> however, after she was moved to Tickhill and placed under the heavy supervision, those same records indicate that she was "staying in the same Castle by order of the Lord the King by Privy Seal Writ among the orders of this Term."<sup>144</sup> From late 1343 onward, the administrative documents began to use similar verbiage regarding Joan of Flanders' confinement and by 1350 all treasury records were on the same page, containing virtually identical language for her captivity. The *Pipe Roll 30 Edward III* (1357) claimed, "the Duchess is to be considered to be at the cost of the King in the keeping (*custodia*) of the said Thomas until the King shall cause otherwise therein to be commanded by which the King shall order."<sup>145</sup> In the *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1350-1354*, it said, "the duchess shall stay in his keeping at the King's charges or until other order."<sup>146</sup> Lastly, the *King's Remembrancer*, January 25 1351-January 24, 1357, stated that the accounts were for the expenses of the "Duchess and her household staying in the said Castle in the custody of

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<sup>141</sup> "Remembrancer," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified 2016, accessed September 26, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/remembrancer>

<sup>142</sup> TNA, E 101/26/21

<sup>143</sup> TNA, E 403/329, m. 32.

<sup>144</sup> TNA, E 403/331, m. 17.

<sup>145</sup> Account of Thomas de Haukeston, TNA, E 372/201/36.

<sup>146</sup> *CPR, 1350-1354*, 177.

the aforesaid Thomas.”<sup>147</sup> As Joan of Flanders’ management required a modicum of bureaucratic oversight, her forced custodianship, at least by the late 1350s, was little more than an open secret.

As with the use of the phrase *come en garde* in the case of Elizabeth de Burgh and *sub custodia* with Joan of Flanders, the abstruseness of those phrases for imprisonment was intentional. Politically, the employment of those terms in official documents was deliberate on the part of the Crown. Each woman’s confinements underscored the issue of ambiguity, practically and legally, regarding the imprisonment of women at the command of the king.<sup>148</sup> “Both *come* and *en garde* convey this ambiguity, *come* in straightforward linguistic terms, denoting an approximate comparison and *garde* in its multiple interpretations. *Garde* (and its Latin near-equivalent, *custodia*) are used in connection with wardship and with other, more hostile forms of confinement.”<sup>149</sup> Consequently, this nuance allowed for enough latitude where incarceration could mimic protection in certain circumstances in the medieval period; thus, the onus is on scholars to not take situations at face value and gather corroborating evidence to support their thesis for one or the other. The circumstances of Joan of Flanders’ confinement were murky enough that Edward III could couch his imprisonment of her from the Bretons and Montfort supporters, under the guise of protective custody or wardship, especially after the death of her husband. Only her most ardent supporters would have been in a position to question Edward III in his capacity as Breton suzerain. However, the phrase *sub custodia* is linguistically plain in meaning “being under custody” and Edward III repeatedly reiterated that he issued the directive for her detention.

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<sup>147</sup> Particulars of Account of Thomas de Haukeston, TNA, E 101/26/21.

<sup>148</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 13.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

By the time of the investment of John of Gaunt as Earl of Richmond on September 20, 1342, Edward III had likely decided that he was going to confine Joan of Flanders. Her husband John de Montfort was in prison in France. Edward III knew that if he were successful in his campaign that fall in Brittany that he would take over the governing of the duchy and obligingly take Joan and her children back to England with him for safe keeping. It was a mere formality to get his council to agree. Joan of Flanders was in no position to argue in 1343: she had no money, as Richmond, for all intent and purposes, was now in the hands of the Crown, and Edward III had separated her from her children. She did not even have access to the reliefs of lands of Montfort-L'Amaury which were in Valois hands. Once John de Montfort was finally released, their reunification threatened Edward III's actions in Brittany and it went nowhere. In other words, Joan of Flanders was far too dangerous to return to Brittany. She was a woman who could command an army of men loyal to her and had her own mind about the way Brittany should be ruled. Like Duchess Constance a century before, she was a loose cannon who could have played the French against the English for her interests. Too much was at stake for Edward III, with Brittany the key to maintaining his war against the French, Joan of Flanders at liberty with her resourcefulness and talents was too risky. So he put her away, like his predecessors, to make sure that she was comfortable and the news of her imprisonment did not get out. Now, we turn to the lengths that Edward III went to assure that Joan of Flanders was honorably confined.

## Chapter Seven

### Bread, Baths and Bridles: The Fate of Joan of Flanders and her Honorable Captivity

Whereas Warmer de Giston, and his yeoman and men and servants, entered by force the king's castle of Tikhull and took the duchess of Brittany from that castle, in which she was by the king's order, and brought her within the honour of Henry, earl of Lancaster, of Pontefract, where they are now arrested by some of the king's faithful subjects, he had appointed John Bourdon, king's serjeant at arms, to enter the honour and take the same duchess, Warmer, his yeoman, and his men and servants, there or anywhere else, with their horses and goods, and bring them before him and the council.<sup>1</sup>

Thus did Patent Roll Membrane *16d* from 1347 the twentieth year of the reign of Edward III of England describe a moment in the saga that was Joan of Flanders' captivity—a failed escape attempt. By the date of this incident, Joan of Flanders and her household had been in captivity for five years in Tickhill Castle, Yorkshire: Not a long time in terms of medieval imprisonment, but long enough for some in the Montfortist camp and long enough for her.

Honorable captivity dictated that a modicum of decency be afforded a noble prisoner that universally was recognizable and acceptable. Captivity that was comfortable for the captive reflected well on the captor. Honorable captivity was not uncommon in the Middle Ages. From Eleanor of Aquitaine to Eleanor of Brittany and Elizabeth de Clare to Elizabeth Bruce, noblewomen and men had the hazard of captivity for the displeasure of the king by their or their families' preserved grievance. There was nothing unusual about Joan of Flanders' imprisonment, save for its extravagance and secrecy. This belies the underlying lack of merit and wrongfulness of it.

Duchess Joan firmly can be placed in England from 1343 until her death after 1374 in English administrative and legal documents, i.e. roll series and *Foedera*. The *Issue Rolls for*

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<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, in Medievalist Resources online (London: H.M.S.O., 1891-1901), 1345-1348, 468. Hereafter referred to as *CPR*.

17 *Edward III* membrane 31 dated August 8, 1343 states, “To the Duchess of Brittany, staying in England in the peace of the Lord the King, delivered to the same in pence by authority of an order about her expenses by his Privy Seal Writ among the orders of this term. She must account for it £80.”<sup>2</sup> This is the first formally recorded entry of the presence of Joan of Flanders in England.<sup>3</sup> As the administrative records indicate, the duchess and her household remained permanently in England, in comfort with varying degrees of freedom, but always under the watchful eye of a king’s man. As with other high-profile captives, Joan of Flanders frequently changed custodians so as not to form close attachment.

Undoubtedly, Edward III was conscientious about the Duchess of Brittany’s oversight, although, Edward III permitted Thomas de Haukeston to continue as Joan of Flanders’ overseer until 1357.<sup>4</sup> Richard Charles, yeoman to Queen Philippa, replaced Thomas de Haukeston as Constable of Tickhill Castle in 1358, because Haukeston had died sometime around November 1356/7.<sup>5</sup> Edward III quickly put this incident behind him and did not make more of it or draw undue attention to it, by abruptly replacing Thomas de Haukeston.

The Montfortist faction sentiment during the mid-1340s was despondent. Despite the initial success, the civil war was dragging on seemingly without end. Moreover, the years without Joan of Flanders’ leadership on the ground would have been difficult for the Montfortist forces in their battle for control of Brittany against Charles de Blois. There had been setbacks, notably the death of John de Montfort. Without a Breton standard bearer the

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<sup>2</sup> £80 = 61, 070 GBP in 2014; *Issue Rolls and Receipts, 17 Edward III*, Easter, m. 32, E 403/329, m.32.

<sup>3</sup> According to Adam Murimuth, Joan of Flanders and her children arrived in England off the coast of Devon early in 1343, Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: University Press 2012), 135. See *Chapter Two*.

<sup>4</sup> A *King’s Rembrancer* gives the last date of Thomas de Haukeston’s administration of the Duchess of Brittany as between January 25, 1351-January 24, 1357, E 101/26/21. Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie gives the last recorded date of administration as October 13, 1355, La Borderie, Louis Arthur Le Moyne de, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Rennes: J. Plihon & L. Herve, 1896.), vol. 3, 489, note. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Charles’ constablership of Tickhill Castle, Rickard, *The Castle Community*, 501.

English faction was demoralized, despite the so-called truce.<sup>6</sup> Edward III of England had placed men in Brittany called captains, such as: Henry Grosmont (Duke of Lancaster), William Bohun (Earl of Northampton), Sir Walter Manny, and Sir Thomas Dagworth; all of whom were his relatives. As for the Breton captains, Geoffrey de Malestroit and Amaury de Clisson, they had been long-time advisors to John de Montfort and Joan and now, in their absence, supported Edward III largely out of fear.<sup>7</sup> Amaury de Clisson had been the acting guardian of John de Montfort's son, an appointment that continued until Joan of Flanders and her children departed Brittany for England in 1343.<sup>8</sup> With the Duchess of Brittany inexplicably in England and the heirs "too young for use as symbols, even with more effective leadership it would have been difficult to maintain the loyalty and morale of the Montfortists."<sup>9</sup> Battered and beleaguered, one loyal subject arose to reclaim his imprisoned duchess and march toward victory. Where the English Montfortist faction would not, the Breton Warmer de Giston set out to right an injustice and in effect complicated Joan of Flanders' situation.

Despite the circumstances of Joan of Flanders' attempted escape, she appears to have been well-kept and treated in a similar fashion as other high-born political captives throughout the Middle Ages. There is no existing evidence to the contrary. In fact, the existent record only reinforces the gentility of her confinement. Nonetheless, she was in exile in England, never to return to her precious Brittany. That fact was cause enough for consternation within certain quarters. The escape attempt deserves examination, because if it

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<sup>6</sup> Truce of Malestroit (1343-45/46), negotiated peace between France and England, See Chapter Three.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle, Volume I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 432.

<sup>8</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227-1485*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1911-1962), iv: 270. Hereafter, referred to a *CFR*.

<sup>9</sup> Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 432.



had been successful it could have been a hegemonic game changer not only in the *Breton Civil War*, but in the *Hundred Years' War*. It had the potential for a consequential diplomatic realignment that had not been seen in Brittany since 1199, when Duchess Constance of Brittany abandoned King John of England.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, this incident provides insight into Joan of Flanders' protection, because if her confinement had been above board there would have been no incident. Therefore to establish the nature of Joan of Flanders' captivity it is necessary to construct its dynamics, parameters, and regimen of her detention in comparison to contemporary long-term aristocratic political captives.

Flight from custody was not uncommon and whether successful or not, such incidents were well-documented. There is an explicit account of Joan of Flanders' escape found in the *Chancery and Judicature: Patent Rolls*. It is as much confounding as it is illuminating. While the facts are the same, as in the *Calendar*, two phrases provide more context. First, Warner de Giston is said to have "seditiously taken the Duchess of Brittany" and secondly, John Bourdon was ordered to enter the Honour of Pontefract and "to seize [her] the Duchess."<sup>11</sup> Thus, according to Edward III, the manner in which Warner de Giston took Joan of Flanders was rebellious. Understandably, as she was being held by the order of the king; therefore, her abduction would have been an act of rebellion. More curious, was that Serjeant Bourdon was ordered to seize the Duchess of Brittany. The language used implies more intent on the Joan of Flanders' part and possibly resistance to being returned. There is just enough ambiguity for one to wonder whether Warner de Giston took the Duchess from Tickhill Castle against

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<sup>10</sup> "In Le Mans, Arthur of Brittany and his mother took a meeting with the King of France in which they pledged their loyalty to him under oath." Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti,' in *Œuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton, historiens de Philippe-Auguste*, in Internet Archive, ed. H.F. Delaborde (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1882), i: 145.

<sup>11</sup> The National Archives, (United Kingdom), C 66/222 m16d, trans. Peter Foden, hereafter TNA.

her will or with her collusion. Considering Joan of Flanders' vigorous nature, it would not have been out of the realm of possibility for her to arrange being taken.

The recorded date of Joan of Flanders' escape is November 28, 1347, four months after the Montfortist forces captured Charles de Blois at the *Battle of La Roche-Derrien*.<sup>12</sup> This is significant because the battle took place in Brittany on June 20, 1347, after a lengthy siege. The timing is off, as the incident with Joan of Flanders occurred *after* the skirmish; unless, the purpose of her fleeing was not to have her present to rally the troops, but to broker the peace and rule in her son's name. Either scenario would have required prior knowledge on Joan's part, if not full collusion in the plot.

Whether it was a kidnapping or escape it is unclear, as the details to this today are very murky; however, I argue that Joan of Flanders was not abducted and attempted to escape. She would have no cause to remain in Yorkshire with Charles de Blois in English custody. He was no longer a threat to her son and she needed to get back to establish her regency. Moreover, her father had done the same thing in 1312. Louis of Nevers had used a ruse to escape from the custody of Philippe IV of France; therefore, she would have known how to do it successfully.<sup>13</sup> Regardless, the one thing that was for certain is that any suspicion of her mistreatment would have been an invitation for hostilities against Edward III. In comparison, the captivity of Robert Curthose in 1106 for almost thirty years at the hands of his brother Henry I of England did not lead to unrest. In Duke Robert's case neither he, nor

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<sup>12</sup> Battle of La Roche-Derrien, Robert of Avesbury gives the date as June 20, 1347; With forces one-fourth the size of those of Charles de Blois, Thomas Dagworth's superior archers and men-at-arms managed to defeat the French and take Charles prisoner. A seminal moment in the Breton Civil War, it foreshadowed the ultimate defeat of the Blois faction by Duke John IV. Robert of Avesbury, *Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 388-90.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Two, for Louis of Nevers escape from French custody at Montlhery in January 1312.

William Clito his son, nor his supporters ever engineered any escape attempt.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, Joan of Flanders' absence was so noticeable that it could no longer be dismissed.

The facts surrounding Warmer de Giston,<sup>15</sup> the person, are as elusive as the incident itself. Nothing more is known about him other than his name, which likely was an alias to disguise his true identity. Excluding the *Calendar of Patent Roll* that refers to him as Warmer de Giston, the *Judicature Patent Roll* calls him Wariner de Giston,<sup>16</sup> there is no record of this man. In either membrane, there is not a significant difference in the first name and the last name is the same. Regardless of that fact, he was someone who was in a position to know of Joan's predicament and to do something about it.

It is speculation that de Giston was of Breton descent. Duchess Joan brought with her a large household and had emissaries working on her behalf on either side of the Channel, particularly the powerful de Clisson family. Amaury de Clisson was Joan of Flanders' liaison to Edward III and responsible for coordinating the relief efforts to Hennebont.<sup>17</sup> Also, the late Lord Olivier de Clisson's heir was among those playmates who arrived in England with Duchess Joan and her children. In *The Castle Community, The Personnel of English and Welsh Castles: 1272 – 1422*, John Rickard notes, "The Duchess of Brittany was kidnapped from here [Tickhill Castle] by Warmer de Giston and her men and taken to the honour of

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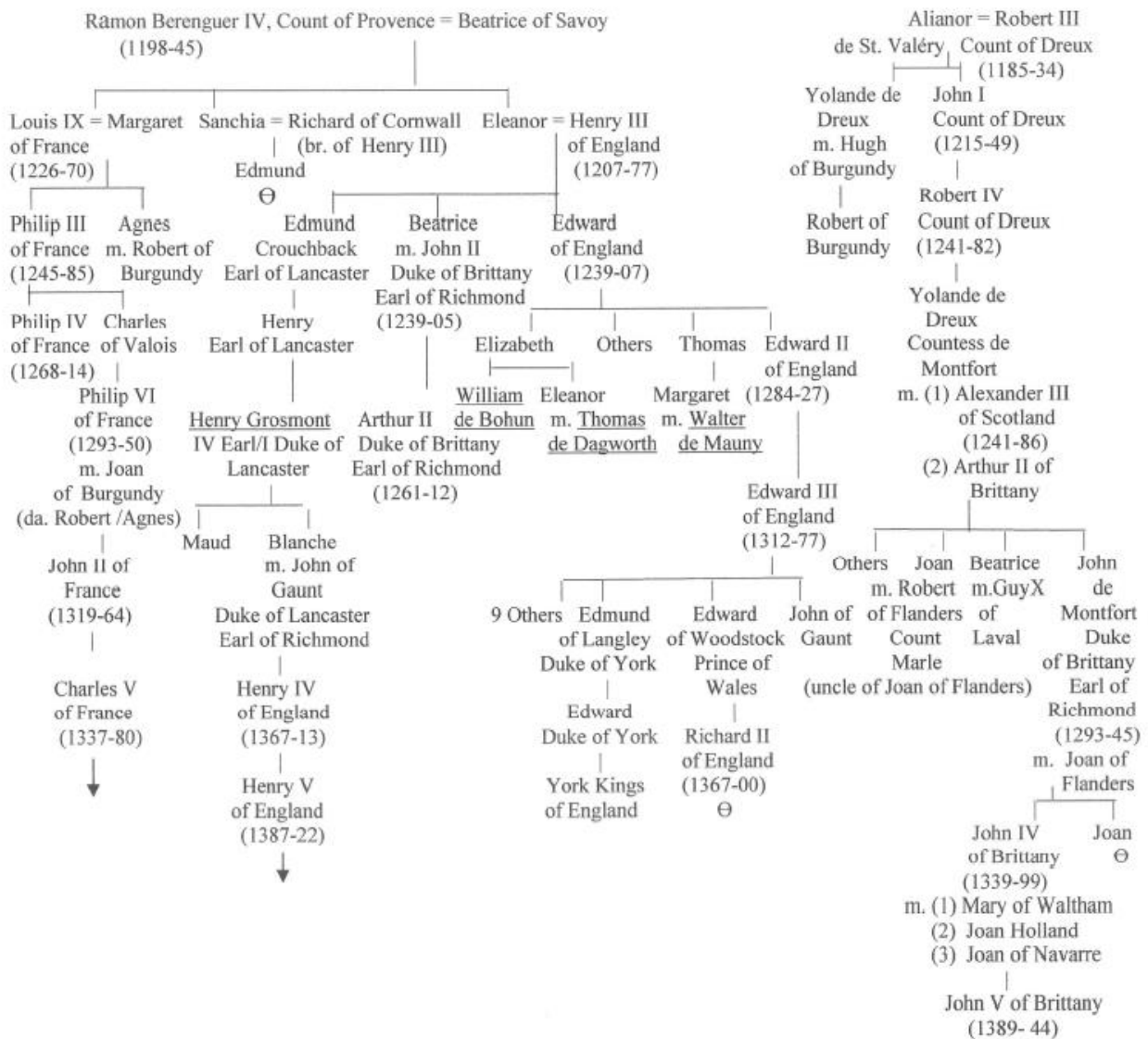
<sup>14</sup> Jean Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 115.

<sup>15</sup> There are only two references to Warmer de Giston in the public records. There is no record of persons by that name listed in the pay rolls, muster rolls or household accounts. While there are Gistons living in Essex in the seventeenth century, there is no nexus to this Warmer de Giston. A Garnier de Clisson was Captain of Brest Castle for John de Montfort, but he died in its siege in 1342.

<sup>16</sup> TNA, C 66/222 m16d

<sup>17</sup> *CPR, 1340-43*, 380.

## Edward III's Captains of Brittany<sup>18</sup>



*Table 9. Captains of Brittany with the Houses of Montfort, Capet and Plantagenet*

<sup>18</sup> Table 9, Most of Edward III Captains of Brittany (underlined) were Englishmen and relatives through descent of Edward I: William de Bohun, Thomas de Dagworth, Walter de Mauny, and Henry Grosmont. Thomas de Dagworth was governor/commander of Brittany in charge of the keeping of the seals and managing affairs for John of Brittany, Joan of Flanders's son, *CFR*, 1347-1356, 93; Henry Grosmont was Edward III's Breton lieutenant and liaison to Brittany, among his other responsibilities.

Pontefract.”<sup>19</sup> So this de Giston could have been her man or a well-connected sympathizer to her cause. He could have had some military training and possibly acquired status through service in the Breton Civil War. According to fourteenth-century Breton custom, “when one had been counted twice at the musters, then one is henceforward reputed noble.”<sup>20</sup> There are no other clues as to his identity in the memoranda and the servant referenced in the rolls may have been one of the duchess’ men.

The events that occurred at Tickhill Castle regarding the spiriting away of Joan of Flanders are unclear; however, the actions must have taken some considerable forethought. The roll memoranda indicate that the Duchess of Brittany had servants, horses, and goods with her. However as a duchess aside from wardrobe and culinary staff, she would have brought with her a diplomatic corps and knights for her protection.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of whether Joan of Flanders’ escape was an inside job, the disappearance of such a high profile person would have required the complicity of some ducal personnel. Unless it was an open secret, how could this mysterious Warmer de Giston know of the Duchess of Brittany’s whereabouts? It is uncertain whether any of Joan of Flanders’ attendants left with their mistress for Pontefract Castle within the Honour (Palatinate) of the Duke of Lancaster.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> John Rickard, *The Castle Community: The Personnel of English and Welsh Castles: 1272 – 1422* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 502.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Meyer, *La Noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe Siècle*, (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966), i:107-9.

<sup>21</sup> Sir Guillaume (William) de Cadoudal, Captain of Hennebont Castle, and Sir Garnier de Cadoudal were knights in the service of Joan of Flanders during and following the Siege of Hennebont. Garnier de Cadoudal was at the Battle of La Roche-Derrien and the Battle of Tallebourg in 1351. Jehan Le Bel, *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2011), 197.

<sup>22</sup> The Honour of Lancaster was so large that it had privileged status as a quasi-autonomous county in England. Henry Grosmont claimed the rights to and styled himself as: *Duke of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, Lincoln and Leicester, Steward of England, Lord of Brigerl and Beaufort*. George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*. (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910-1959), 5:6-7.

Perhaps Warmer de Giston brought Joan there for sanctuary at Pontefract Priory<sup>23</sup> located on its grounds. Alternatively, de Giston may have attempted to make contact directly with Henry Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster and aide to Brittany.

Henry Grosmont was a natural ally to the Montfortist cause and a future in-law to Edward III through the marriage of John of Gaunt to Grosmont's daughter Blanche. John of Gaunt, who now had the Earldom of Richmond although only seven, could have been himself at Pontefract as he spent time as child in the Lancastrian household.<sup>24</sup> As Kenneth Fowler states, "Lancaster's successive commissions as captain and lieutenant in the duchy [Brittany] (14 September 1355, 8 August 1356 and 1357) gave him full military authority, with powers to lead an army and garrison the country, and over-riding administrative authority with powers to dismiss and appoint local officials at his discretion."<sup>25</sup> As for the nature of the relationship between King Edward and Lancaster, the Duke was one of Edward III's closest friends and well-known to the king's children.<sup>26</sup> Certainly, de Giston thought that Henry Grosmont would have been receptive to Joan's case. However, de Giston misjudged the situation. Henry Grosmont appears to have willfully surrendered or at the very least denied refuge to Joan of Flanders.

The memorandum alludes to the "king's faithful subjects" making the arrest of Joan of Flanders, Warmer de Giston, and company and turning them over to Edward III's sergeant-

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<sup>23</sup> While Joan of Flanders would have expected to receive sanctuary within Pontefract's Abbey, the castle green had been a site of executions, including the Uncle of Henry Grosmont, Thomas Earl of Leicester and Lancaster in 1322. Pontefract Castle itself was one of the two strongest military fortifications in Plantagenet England, Rickard, *The Castle Community*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> John de Montfort had surrendered the Earldom of Richmond to the English Crown prior to his capture at Nantes in November 1341 and subsequent imprisonment at the Louvre in 1342. Edward III created his son John of Gaunt, Earl of Richmond in 1342. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 10: 820-21.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Alan Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 160.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 33. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 160.

at-arms John Bourdon.<sup>27</sup> As a trusted sergeant-at-arms, Edward III would have been confident in John Bourdon's discretion and expertise in prisoner retrieval.<sup>28</sup> Sergeants-at-arms by the reign of Edward III had ever increasing power: including the policing functions of arresting suspects and escaped prisoners were preeminent.<sup>29</sup> Thus, John Bourdon was wholly capable of his charge and he brought Joan of Flanders, the conspirators, servants, and their belongings before Edward III and his council, as demanded.

The failure of this escape plot must have been disheartening for Joan of Flanders' supporters. Warmer de Giston was never heard from again, and it is doubtful whether Edward III permitted the duchess' staff to remain with her. For certain, the Duchess of Brittany returned to Tickhill Castle and back to her routine under Constable Thomas de Haukeston.<sup>30</sup> The Crown renewed his contract for her management with an increase in compensation in 1351. The King increased his stipend from 5 marks per week for the expenses of the Duchess of Brittany and her household to a portion of the rents from the

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<sup>27</sup> CPR, 1345-1348, 468; TNA, *Chancery and Supreme Court of Judicature: Patent Rolls*, C 66/222 m.16d.

<sup>28</sup> If it is the same John Bourdon who Edward I appointed Sheriff of Berwick in 1300, Edward III would have trusted his abilities in local law enforcement, E 39/100/137. As Chamberlain of Berwick during 1330's John Bourdon reported to Edward III and frequently gave accounts to him directly. Christopher E. Blunt, "The Mint of Berwick-on-Tweed under Edward I, II, and III." *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* (1931): 42.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Partington, "Edward III's Enforcers: the King's Sergeants-at-Arms in the Localities," in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. James Bothwell (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 97.

<sup>30</sup> CPR, 1350-1354, 177; TNA, King's Rembrancer E 101/26/21.

priorities of Blith, Holy Trinity, and Alverton Mauleverer as the king commanded.<sup>31</sup> As for her supervision, Edward III must have decided that it was adequate for the time being.

John Delves, Joan of Flanders' next keeper, was not a Constable of Tickhill Castle but rather a sergeant-at-arms of Edward III. John Delves seems to have taken over the keeping of the Duchess of Brittany sometime in late 1357. According to the *Pipe Rolls*, John Delves assumed the administration of the Duchess of Brittany on November 20, 1356/7,<sup>32</sup> while the *Issue Rolls* date his administration as of December 4, 1357.<sup>33</sup> The *Patent Rolls* first reference him in 1363.<sup>34</sup> The *Issue Roll* membrane 24 begins with similar wording as those entries previously noted in Chapter Four, a payment to John Delves for the expenses of the Duchess of Brittany. However, that is where the similarities end. The memo differs from the others, because it was a remittance to John Delves for the expenses of the Duchess of Brittany "residing in his company" (*in comitiva sua*) rather than at Tickhill Castle by writ of Privy Seal.<sup>35</sup> The regime of John Delves marked a dramatic change in the fashion, if not the manner, of the supervision of Joan of Flanders.

First and foremost, John Delves was an interesting choice as custodian for the Duchess of Brittany. He was an unconventional choice as sergeant-at-arms to Edward III, a rising

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<sup>31</sup> Grant to Thomas de Haukeston, in lieu of the 5 marks (1 mark= 2/3£, 5 marks or approximately 1822.45 GBP in 2014) a week for the expenses of the duchess of Brittany and her household granted to him by letters patent, dated 19 November, in the twentieth year, surrendered, that he shall have of the farm of the priory of Blith 28l. 6s. 8d. (approximately 13,500 GBP in 2014) of the farm of the priory of the Holy Trinity, York, 100 marks (approximately 37,600 GBP in 2014) and of the farm of the priory of Alverton Mauleverer 15l. (approximately 8561 GBP) yearly, for such time as the duchess shall stay in his keeping at the king's charges or until other order; This an abbreviated version. A more detailed account exists, TNA, E 372/201 Pipe Roll 30 Edward III m. 36

<sup>32</sup> Ibid; Issue and Pipe Rolls conflict on the dates of Thomas de Haukeston's death, either November 1356 or November 1357, E 403 387/19.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, *Exchequer of Receipt: Issue Rolls and Registers, Issue Rolls, 31 Edward III*, Michaelmas, m. 24, E 403/382. Referred to going forward as the *Issue Rolls*

<sup>34</sup> *CPR, 1361-1364*, 313.

<sup>35</sup> Grant to John Delves for the expenses of the Duchess of Brittany residing in his company (*in comitiva sua*), by writ of Privy Seal December 4, 1357.



lawyer, and yet he was already of personal importance to Edward III in his capacity to provide the Crown with local control.<sup>36</sup> He had been a Lieutenant of the Justices of North Wales and Cheshire, as well as in service to Edward, the Black Prince in Gascony in 1355.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Edward III saw John Delves as a loyal and trusted servant, perhaps even more than previous castle constables. After the foiled escape, Edward III likely thought that Joan of Flanders required a change in security. That would not have been uncommon, as in the case of Eleanor of Brittany after the failed coup to topple John of England by her brother Arthur, King John kept her in close custody with her custodians frequently changing.<sup>38</sup> Acting cautiously, Edward III took the necessary steps to prevent another plot from ensuing, especially, since there were rumors surfacing that Joan of Flanders was in France again.

Regarding the rumors of Joan of Flanders returning to France, one has to address the discrepancy in the residence of Joan of Flanders between Jean Froissart and the English legal records. For example, Jean Froissart in volume two of his *Chronicles* places Joan of Flanders in France in May of 1357, at the Siege of Rennes. "About the middle of May in the year 1357 the Duke of Lancaster raised a large body of men at arms, of English and Bretons, for the assistance of the Countess of Montfort and her young son who at that time bore arms and was a party in their excursions."<sup>39</sup> Also, historian Mary Alice Everett Green indicates that John of Brittany accompanied his mother and Henry Grosmont to Brittany in 1357 and laid siege

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<sup>36</sup> Partington, "Edward III's Enforcers," 104.

<sup>37</sup> David Green, "Politics and Service with Edward III the Black Prince," in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. James Bothwell (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 54; *CPR, 1354-1358*, 331.

<sup>38</sup> Gwen Seabourne, "Eleanor of Brittany and her Treatment by King John and Henry III," *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 51, no. 1 (2007), 95; Henry Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici*, (London: Longman, 1864-69), iv, 51, Hereafter *AM*.

<sup>39</sup> Jean Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries: From the Latter Part of the Reign of Edward II. to the Coronation of Henry IV.* ed. Thomas Johnes (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), ii: 373-74.

to the town of Rennes.<sup>40</sup> However, medieval chronicler Robert of Avesbury's excerpt of the Duke of Lancaster's journal references John of Montfort, the younger, and himself being at Rennes, but not his mother.<sup>41</sup> This is not the only inconsistency as to the whereabouts of Joan of Flanders after 1342. Froissart claims that Joan of Flanders was at the Battle of La Roche-Derrien in 1347,<sup>42</sup> while Everett Green states that the Duchess of Brittany periodically traveled across the English Channel as the situation warranted.<sup>43</sup> Since the fourteenth century, popular lore has concurred with Froissart and Mary Anne Everett Green that Joan of Flanders periodically traveled back and forth between 1342-1357. One of the most fabulous tales comes from twentieth-century Scottish historian Lewis Spence who placed Joan of Flanders in France at the Battle of La Roche-Derrien, single-handedly capturing Charles de Blois.<sup>44</sup> Given the Duchess of Brittany's previous level of commitment, it would be hard to fathom her being absent from the fight. However, there is no verifiable evidence that Joan of Flanders ever returned to France.

Returning to John Delves, he was the Deputy Justice of Chester and had served with the Black Prince, among his other responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> His tenure as Joan's custodian coincided with her movement from Tickhill Castle to Chester Castle (residence of the Black Prince) in

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<sup>40</sup> Mary Anne Everett Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England From the Norman Conquest* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), 3: 281.

<sup>41</sup> Robert of Avesbury, *Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, in *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. Edward Maude Thomson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 462. A lengthy account in Thomas Rymer's *Foedera* references Henry Grosmont and John, Duke of Brittany, but does not mention Joan of Flanders. Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica interreges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes vel communitates ab ingressu Gulielmi I in Angliam, a. d. 1066 ad nostra usque tempora habita....* Eds. Robert Sanderson, John Caley, Frederic Holbrooke and Adam Clarke. (London: Eyre & Strahan, 1825), 3, part 1: 335-36.

<sup>42</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, ii: 212.

<sup>43</sup> In 1347, Everett Green, *Lives of the Princesses*, 3: 274-75.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis Spence, *Legends and Romances of Brittany*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1917), 29.

<sup>45</sup> Herbert James Hewitt, *Cheshire Under the Three Edwards*, (Chester: Cheshire Community Council, 1967), 105.

Cheshire and subsequently to High Peak Castle in Derbyshire. Joan of Flanders was residing in the company, not necessarily at Tickhill, of John Delves after 1357.<sup>46</sup> John Delves had a commission as Keeper of the Manor of Walton on Trent in Derbyshire beginning in 1363<sup>47</sup> and was the licensed owner of Doddington Castle in Cheshire in 1364.<sup>48</sup> John Delves' primary assignments were the sustenance of the Duchess of Brittany, the food and raiment of her household, and management of Walton on Trent; therefore, it was highly likely that the Duchess of Brittany was present with him at Walton on Trent.<sup>49</sup> After John Delves died in 1369/70, his wife Isabel took the same assignment for the provision of the Duchess of Brittany at Walton.<sup>50</sup> Albeit brief, Isabel Delves' administration of Joan of Flanders was in the same fashion as her husband with careful attention against despoliation.

As a guest of the Prince of Wales, Joan of Flanders' stay at Chester Castle coincided with the peace after the Treaty of Brétigny between England and France and his marriage to Joan of Kent. As previously stated security frequently changed for political captives, unlike the mental incompetent whose guardianships remained consistent.<sup>51</sup> Kings John and Henry III moved Eleanor of Brittany from Corfe,<sup>52</sup> to Bristol, to Gloucester,<sup>53</sup> and to Marlborough Castle. In Eleanor's situation, it is unclear whether John or Henry III relocated her for additional comfort or more stringent confinement.<sup>54</sup> As Gwen Seabourne states of Eleanor of

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<sup>46</sup> December 4, 1357, Award to John Delves for the expenses Duchess of Brittany residing in his company, "*in comitiva sua existentis*," Michaelmas, m. 24, E 403/382; £55 = 41,990 GBP in 2014.

<sup>47</sup> *CPR, 1361-1364*, 313

<sup>48</sup> Rickard, *The Castle Community*, 137.

<sup>49</sup> *CPR, 1361-1364*, 313; *CPR, 1367-1370*, 27.

<sup>50</sup> *CPR, 1367-1370*, 305.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter Five

<sup>52</sup> *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office*, 1108-1272, (Edinburgh: H. M. General House, 1881), i, no. 569, Referred to henceforward as CDS.

<sup>53</sup> *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1237-1242*, Printed Under the Superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1902), iv: 57.

<sup>54</sup> Christopher Woolgar, *Household Accounts from Medieval England, part 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 126.

Brittany, “numerous interventions in, and alterations of; her security arrangements are recorded and her keepers were royally appointed, kept under scrutiny...and in Bristol. Eleanor clearly did not have freedom of movement even within the castle.”<sup>55</sup> Joan of Flanders’ sojourn in Cheshire with the Black Prince, Earl of Chester as he was also styled,<sup>56</sup> could have been for a celebration of the peace and festivities<sup>57</sup> or because John Delves had reason to be in Chester. In fact, Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie says John Delves chauffeured the duchess and her suite wherever he went.<sup>58</sup> The *Issue Rolls* are unclear as to the explanation for her stay there; however while there, she had an opportunity to reconnect with her son.

The *Issue Roll* entry dated July 16, 1360 indicates that John, Duke of Brittany went to visit his mother who was at Chester Castle.<sup>59</sup> John of Brittany, who had been in the household of Queen Philippa and the company of the Duke of Lancaster, finally in 1360 (first recorded instance) saw his mother in seventeen years. There must have been something else occurring at Chester Castle in 1360 or another important reason for their meeting. It was not his marriage to Princess Mary which took place the following summer at Woodstock Place in

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<sup>55</sup> Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, C.1170-1509*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 67; Seabourne, *Eleanor of Brittany*, 96; Woolgar, *Household Accounts*, 129, 134, 138, 144; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, ed. Thomas Duffus Hardy (London: Printed by G. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1833), ii: 199.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Plantagenet, Prince of Wales, styled as “of Woodstock,” Earl of Chester and Duke of Cornwall, Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 2: 227

<sup>57</sup> The Treaty of Brétigny ended hostilities between England and France in the Edwardian phase of the Hundred Years’ War was signed on May 8 1360, to England’s benefit, see *Chapter One*. The Black Prince married Joan of Kent in October 1361 in Palace of Westminster, although there may have been a secret marriage a year earlier in 1360., Karl P. Wentersdorf, “The Clandestine Marriages of the Fair Maid of Kent,” *Journal of Medieval History* 5, no. 3 (1979), 225.

<sup>58</sup> La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, iii: 490.

<sup>59</sup> “To John Duke of Brittany by the hands of Hugh Swynnerton in part payment, £20 which the Lord the King ordered to be delivered to him as his gift in support of his expenses going with his mother to Cheshire and making pilgrimage to Walsingham by Writ of Privy Seal among the orders of this term.” *Issue Rolls, 34 Edward III*, Easter, m.19; E 403/401, m.19.

Oxon.<sup>60</sup> According to the *Issue Roll* memo, John of Brittany and his mother were to pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham located in Norfolk. This distance from the shrine to the castle is about 194 miles (roughly from Liverpool to Norfolk). That would have taken a week on horseback, not to mention if they were walking or taking into account Joan of Flanders' age at 62. They could have visited the shrine, but it would have been nearly impossible if the Duchess of Brittany were debilitated. If Joan of Flanders had been so incapacitated, it would have been doubtful that she would have ever left her primary residence for fear of her unpredictable behavior or outside observance. She obviously had some stamina and control of faculties but was still under the order of Edward III to remain in England. Surprisingly, at this point there was no longer a fear of her escape. Perhaps the visit between Joan of Flanders and her son was on account of his poor health, as he had been unable to participate in the Reims campaign of 1359-60 due to illness.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, his accompaniment of his mother on pilgrimage was in gratitude for his recovery. By 1360, John of Brittany owed as much, if not more, allegiance to Edward III as his mother, and it would have been doubtful that their encounter would have been for nefarious reasons.

After John Delves' death Joan of Flanders may have never returned to Tickhill Castle. Isabel Delves became her intermediate custodian and Sir Godfrey Foljambe followed Isabel. As John's widow, Isabel Delves' administration of the Duchess of Brittany was for less than a year. However, her maintenance of Joan of Flanders was the same. Isabel Delves was to keep the Duchess of Brittany and "take for the expenses of the duchess and her family as much and in the same places as the said John took."<sup>62</sup> Mary Anne Everett Green indicates

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<sup>60</sup> Alison Weir, *Britain's Royal Families*, (London: Bodley Head, 1989), 115.

<sup>61</sup> TNA, E 101/393/11, fol.63r

<sup>62</sup> *CPR, 1367-1370*, 305.

that the payments to the custodians for Joan of Flanders were to cover the cost of her entertainment at the king's expense.<sup>63</sup> By 1370, almost thirty years would have been a long time to entertain and expensive to sustain a barrage of guests, but it was not a long time to manage a prisoner. As the entry specifically references places, it was likely that Isabel shuttled Joan of Flanders between the manor at Walton-on-Trent, Doddington in Cheshire, and Tickhill Castle. Isabel had the same order as her husband and the same stipend;<sup>64</sup> therefore, there was no reason to deviate from the same routine as her husband. Isabel's term as Joan of Flanders' keeper was brief, as Godfrey Foljambe took her place in the Fall of 1370.

Sir Godfrey Foljambe's commission as Joan of Flanders' custodian likely was yet another patronage play for years of service to the Crown, as Sir Godfrey was Seneschal and Steward of John of Gaunt.<sup>65</sup> Sir Godfrey's assignment to Joan of Flanders' detail was not the only reward he was to receive, as he became the Constable of High Peak Castle in 1371.<sup>66</sup> The *Patent Roll* entry dated November 12, 1370 indicates that Godfrey Foljambe took the same stipend as John and Isabel Delves for the sustenance of the Duchess of Brittany "in his company" out of the revenues from High Peak Castle in Derbyshire.<sup>67</sup> The routine for the Duchess of Brittany and her household would have paralleled that of Sir Godfrey, as they were dwelling in his company.

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<sup>63</sup> Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England*, 3: 276.

<sup>64</sup> "Isabel has now made a petition to him [Edward III] to satisfy her of 105l yearly which John took for such expenses...." CPR, 1367-1370, 321; 105l = 47,540.00 in 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Stephen Glover and Thomas Noble. *The History and Gazetteer of the County of Derby: Drawn Up from Actual Observation, and from the Best Authorities: Containing a Variety of Geological, Mineralogical, Commercial and Statistical Information*. V.2, (Derby: H. Mozley, 1833), 360; *Memorials of Old Derbyshire*, (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1907), 103.

<sup>66</sup> CFR, 1369-1377, 139.

<sup>67</sup> CPR, 1370-1374, 16; E 101/31/3

Another important element of Joan of Flanders' confinement was her wardrobe: the aforementioned bridles, raiment, and other possessions that a duchess would be expected to have, regardless of immuration. There is some slight indication of the size of the Duchess of Brittany's wardrobe. At the time of Godfrey Foljambe's commission to Joan of Flanders, he was to make sure that Isabel Delves returned all of the duchess' servants, jewels, clothes, goods, furniture, and harnesses when she surrendered Joan of Flanders to him.<sup>68</sup> This was quite a large traveling suite, one that befitted royalty on progress rather than someone purported to be mentally ill in her seventies. Moreover, its extravagance denotes generous and benevolent treatment, as accorded most noble political captives. As mentioned in Chapter Four, it would have been most unusual for a mentally impaired person to have saddles, as the afflicted person probably would not have been riding on a frequent basis.

Captors often provided those in honorable captivity luxuries such as saddles, depending on the level of trust. King John ordered "a fancy saddle and bridle" for Eleanor of Brittany and permitted her to ride under careful supervision.<sup>69</sup> As in the case of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II was generous in her confinement providing her maids, clerks, and grooms, but like Edward III he was mindful of outlays and expenditures.<sup>70</sup> In both cases, horseback riding not only correlated with the elevated status of the captive; aristocrats necessarily would have needed horses. Moreover, it symbolizes the liberal nature of their captivity; the horse equates to freedom. Joan of Flanders' provisioning was not extraordinary for someone of her station in castle confinement.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid; Rymer, *Foedera*, iii, part 2, 174.

<sup>69</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 67; Woolgar, *Household Accounts*, 129, 134, 138; *RLC*, ii: 144 and 150.

<sup>70</sup> *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Years of the Reign of King Henry II*, eds. The Pipe Roll Society, (London: Wyman & Sons, 1896), *Pipe Rolls 33 Henry II*, 39; *Pipe Rolls 34 Henry II*, 143.

Indefinite confinement was more honorable, because it afforded an opportunity for the requisitioning of staff and attendants to care for the detainee and consequently a large *familia*.. Therefore, attendants, fine furnishings, sumptuous food, and clothes were essential. The provisioning of Joan of Flanders seems to have been more than adequate. She departed Brittany heavily laden with possessions and quickly added to those once in England. In 1342, she and her children “boarded ships with goods and merchandise [belonged] of value and all other particulars” for England.<sup>71</sup> After her arrival in London in the summer of 1343, the Crown designated £95 for the hands of divers (various) creditors of the City of London for divers things bought from them for the use of the Duchess for the expenses of her household.<sup>72</sup>

At the time of her departure October 3, 1343 to Tickhill Castle in Yorkshire, the Crown provided her first administrator William Frank a guaranteed 5 marks a week for the expenses of the Duchess and of her household for the duration of her confinement.<sup>73</sup> Subsequent to their arrival, on October 22 the Treasurer and Chamberlain issued William Frank another £12 for costs of the Duchess.<sup>74</sup> On December 1, the Treasurer issued yet another £40 to Frank “for the charges of the Duchess staying in the castle as is contained there,”<sup>75</sup> and 100 shillings for the procurement of a carriage for certain chests and other things of the same Duchess carried from London.<sup>76</sup> Given that the average cost for transport for perishables was about a penny a mile, the 177 mile transport from London to Yorkshire would have been a

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<sup>71</sup> *CPR, 1340-1343*, 454.

<sup>72</sup> *Issue Rolls, 17 Edward III*, Michaelmas, m. 13, E 403/331, m.13.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, E 372/203, October 3, 1343, Account of William Fraunk (Frank) for keeping the Duchess of Brittany

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; TNA, E 403/331/6, Wednesday October 22, 1343.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, E 372/203, October 3, 1343, Account of William Fraunk

<sup>76</sup> £5 = 4338 GBP in 2014; *Ibid*, Michaelmas, m. 17.



most luxurious ride for the duchess' wardrobe.<sup>77</sup> During William Frank's three tenure as Joan of Flanders' keeper, there were numerous payments above his assured 5 marks per week for the expenses of her and her household. By the time Thomas de Haukeston became Constable of Tickhill Castle and took over her custody on November 18, 1346, for the 162 weeks of William Frank's term he had received at a rate of 66s 8d per week, a total of £557 2s 5d.<sup>78</sup> The Crown, ever gracious, allowed William Frank to keep an over payment of £15 6s, but he was deceased and the Exchequer would have had to recover the sum from his heirs.<sup>79</sup>

Noble captives, whether male or female, had privileges. There were some curious features to the castle confinement of Charles de Blois. Interestingly, Edward III permitted Charles de Blois during his imprisonment in the Tower of London following his capture in 1347 at the Battle of La Roche-Derrien to take horse exercise throughout London at his leisure. However, Froissart says that he was not allowed to stay out overnight, except in the presence of the royal family.<sup>80</sup> Naturally, one would find it hard to fathom that after six years of war, Edward III would have been so permissive with the leader of the opposing claim to Brittany. However, Froissart attributes Edward III's generosity to the intercession of Queen Philippa, who was Charles de Blois' first cousin.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, it was unlikely that he was not without some surveillance, as Edward III would have been interested in knowing whether Charles de Blois had any contacts or supporters in England.

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<sup>77</sup> "Cost of a carriage varied with the nature of the article carried...on average a little more than a penny a mile for the fourteenth-century." Francis Pierrepont Barnard, *Companion to English History (Middle Ages)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 302.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, E 372/203, October 3, 1343, Account of William Fraunk; Approximately 410,933.49 GBP in 2014 for the three years..

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Froissart, *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, ii: 234.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.; See *Figure 1, Introduction* for genealogy

The entire matter of Charles de Blois' confinement was quite odd, as it seems that he was allowed a "conditional release" to travel back to France, visit his wife, and recover his own ransom in 1351.<sup>82</sup> When negotiations fell through with the King of France for the payoff, Edward III rescinded Charles de Blois' bail and he returned to the Tower.<sup>83</sup> He remained in captivity for another five years. In a curious twist of fate, the King of France would find himself trading places with Charles de Blois in the Tower of London in 1356 after the king's capture at the Battle of Poitiers. Like Charles de Blois, Edward III permitted King Jean II of France to return to France and raise his ransom in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Brétigny.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, negotiations fell through and Jean II returned to England, dying in captivity in 1364.

Ironically, Joan of Flanders second half of her life resembled much of the political intrigue as the first, not on the front lines of battle but as an unwitting pawn in high politics. Joan of Flanders lived an even more sequestered life after 1371. If she had any political flourishes after her arrival in England, they were certainly over by the latter half of the fourteenth century. In a letter to Charles V King of France dated September 8, 1372, Duke John IV of Brittany requests that his mother and sister be guaranteed promotions and honors

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<sup>82</sup> TNA, E 301/1607, September 11, 1351; Jeanne de Penthièvre visited her husband in Fall 1351 while paroled in Calais, albeit under strict supervision; Rymer, *Foedera*, iii, pt. 1, 230.

<sup>83</sup> Jean (John) II of France agreed to pay the ransom as part of the marriage arrangements between Charles de Blois' daughter and John's son, the Duke of Anjou. Reportedly the ransom was equivalent to the amount of money needed to finance a small campaign. Jean II was unable to make the first payment and Edward III's agents took Charles de Blois back into custody. In 1356, Charles de Blois managed finally to pay his ransom and was released with his sons Guy and Jean (John) to remain in England as hostages, E 30/74; Rymer, *Foedera*, 3, pt. 1:230; Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Fire, Volume II*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 91-92.

<sup>84</sup> Edward III afforded Jean II's all luxuries and comforts of home including: "...horses, dogs, and falcons, a chess set, an organ, a harp, a clock, a fawn colored-palfrey, venison and whale meat from Bruges, elaborate wardrobe for his son Philip and for his favorite jester...an astrologer, and a 'king of minstrels' with an orchestra." Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*, (New York: Knopf, 1978), 168-69; TNA, E 101/27/38; Permission to return to France, TNA, E 30/89, August 9, 1356; Safe conduct to Dover, TNA, E 101/29/8.

as the duke had done for Jeanne de Penthièvre.<sup>85</sup> Jeanne de Penthièvre had surrendered to John of Brittany and signed the first Treaty of Guérande recognizing him as duke in 1365.<sup>86</sup> The matters of the Breton Succession and inheritance had been well settled by 1372; however fighting between England and France had resumed in June of 1372 at the Battle of La Rochelle.<sup>87</sup> Strategically, John IV wanted to signal to Charles V that he was going to uphold the conditions of the treaty and protect Jeanne de Penthièvre's interests in Brittany, i.e. no need for him to invade Brittany. Conversely, John IV wanted Charles V to respect all Montfort interests.

Despite being the King of England's pawn in his war with France, Joan of Flanders was a political captive enjoying plush quarters, like so many others. Rank and money could not necessarily prevent one's capture in the Middle Ages, but they had everything to do with a person's respectable treatment, as in the case of Joan of Flanders, was no exception. "Honorable captivity," as it was called, was a condition of confinement that was befitting of one's station or status and was comfortable for the prisoner, and as such reflected well on the captor. As Edward III had in the case of Duchess of Brittany, centuries earlier Henry I of England treated his brother Robert Curthose, whom he imprisoned for twenty-eight years, "not as an enemy captive but as a noble pilgrim."<sup>88</sup> Of those who eventually capitulated to the Conqueror in 1066 and returned to Normandy with William I of England, after crossing the Channel:

King William took with him into honorable captivity Archbishop Stigand, Edgar Ætheling, a cousin of King Edward, and three leading earls Edwin, Morcar,

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<sup>85</sup> Jean, Duc of Bretagne, *Recueil des Actes de Jean IV, Duc de Bretagne*, ed. Michael Jones (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1983), i: no.203.

<sup>86</sup> The first Treaty of Guérande signed Jeanne de Penthièvre and John of Brittany April 12, 1365 gave him and his heir's male ducal rights and Jeanne de Penthièvre the right to her familial lands and estates and the use of the title Duchess of Brittany until her death. For *Breton Civil War* See Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>87</sup> For *Hundred Years' War* See Chapter Three.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Howlett, ed., *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, (London: Longman, 1889), iv: 85-6.

and Waltheof Æthelnoth 'governor' of Canterbury, and other men of high rank and handsome person. By this friendly stratagem he ensured that they would cause no disturbances during his absence, and that the people in general, deprived of their leaders, would be powerless to rebel.<sup>89</sup>

Edward I provided comparable levels of sustenance to the Countess of Carrick, as his grandson would to the Duchess of Brittany, fifty years later. Upon the capture of the Countess of Carrick Elizabeth Bruce, wife of the rebellious Robert the Bruce in 1306, Edward I permitted allowances for attendants, thirty quarters of wheat and malt by the king's purveyor, and lodging at the royal manor at Burstwick in Holderness "in comfort."<sup>90</sup> Honorable Captivity was a state of confinement that was more than hospitable; it was gracious, by the standards of the day. Joan of Flanders' comfortable maintenance and sustenance matched this pattern of "honorable captivity."

Higher social class precluded a level of respect in captivity down to the minutest details. Dishonorable captivity was not only synonymous with physical mistreatment, as in the case of Empress Matilda's chaining of King Stephen in 1141, but it was a social harm that could disrupt the king's peace. Particularly in the imprisonment of noblewomen, their captors were usually portrayed as either conspicuous in their chivalric behavior or condemned for wickedness.<sup>91</sup> Orderic Vitalis castigates Robert of Bellême for one of his faults being that he dishonored his highly-born wife [Agnes of Ponthieu] and even kept her imprisoned in Bellême Castle.<sup>92</sup> By the twelfth century, honor became one of the hallmarks

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<sup>89</sup> Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Ordericus Vitalis*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 2.4:196-7.

<sup>90</sup> *CCR, 1307-13*, 284, 511; *CDS, 1272-1307*, 2: no. 1963; iii, no. 299. Cynthia Neville, "Widows of war: Edward I and the Women of Scotland during the War of Independence." in *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, ed. Sue Sheridan Walker. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 123.

<sup>91</sup> Annette Parks, "Living Pledges: A Study of Hostageship in the High Middle Ages, 1050-1300." (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2000), 200.

<sup>92</sup> Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, *OV*, 4.8:301.

of chivalric culture and part of a code of conduct of behavior in the treatment of women and men. Captors were responsible for prisoners in their custody and could earn the disapproval of their peers if their charges fell into harm's way. Not to say that persons adhered to a code of chivalry solely for the benefit of their reputation. Honor extended to one's family and relatives profited from a good name.<sup>93</sup>

That being said, this does not mean that those in confinement did not feel contempt about their state. Elizabeth Bruce, imprisoned for eight years, raised numerous objections to her detention to Edward I. The *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland* indicates:

“[she] complains that though the K. [King Edward I] had commanded his bailiffs of Holderness to see herself and attendants honourably sustained, yet they neither furnish attire for her person or head, nor a bed, nor furniture of her chamber, saving only a robe of three 'garnementz' yearly, and for her servants one robe each for everything. Prays the K. to order amendment of her condition, and that her servants be paid for their labour, that she be not neglected; or that she may have a yearly sum allowed by the K. for her sustenance.”<sup>94</sup>

To the prisoner, dishonorable and honorable captivity was a distinction without a difference, for it was the action itself that was problematic. The Black Book of Wigmore (*Liber Niger de Wigmore*) recalls Elizabeth de Burgh's (née de Clare) vehement protestations of her coercive confinement at Barking Abbey in 1322 by Edward II. “The king kept (retained) me like I was in custody (*garde*), imprisoned apart from council and ordered to quitclaim all Welsh lands to the Duke [referring to Hugh Despenser, the younger Lord Despenser, a

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<sup>93</sup> “Honor was a major preoccupation of the lord, who was responsible for maintaining order at home and protecting the glorious family name.” Philippe Ariès, and Georges Duby. *A History of Private Life*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 82.

<sup>94</sup> CDS, 1272-1307, 2: no. 1963.

Favorite of Edward II].”<sup>95</sup> Edward II’s tactics were clearly extortive; nevertheless, they were effective and Elizabeth de Burgh surrendered her lands shortly after her confinement in June 1322, presumably out of fear of retribution.<sup>96</sup>

Honorable Captivity had a higher threshold; beyond whether a person was adequately fed and clothed but whether the captivity was justifiable. As Jean Dunbabin states, “public outcry was easily engineered against the captivity of the great.”<sup>97</sup> Among free and noble alike, it was considered unseemly for hands better suited for adornment to be bound with chains.<sup>98</sup> Honorable captivity dictated that a modicum of decency be afforded a noble prisoner that universally was recognizable and acceptable. There is no evidence that Joan of Flanders’ needs were unmet or that she was in want for food or earthly possessions. It was unusual for well-born female political prisoners to be mistreated and if it happened, there were extenuating circumstances.

Loneliness and alienation from family were feelings that political captives had to confront. Joan of Flanders spent years without her children and played no significant part in their rearing or marriage arrangements. As royal wards, Edward III secured the marriage for both John of Brittany first to his daughter Mary of Waltham and after her death to Lady Joan Holland, daughter of the Princess of Wales by her first husband, and Joan of Brittany to Ralph Basset, Lord Drayton.<sup>99</sup> Not that Joan of Flanders would necessarily have had much

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<sup>95</sup> The French is even more emphatic “le Roi me retient come en garde houstant mon conseil et ma mesnee de moi tantque ieusse enseallez une quiteclamance encountre mon gree de la terre Duke et de tout mon heritage en Gales et outre ceo moi comanda densealler vne autre escrit par le quele iestoie et vncore sui oblige de mon corps et de mes terres encontre ley de la terre” *Liber Niger de Wigmore, the cartulary of the Mortimer Estates*, British Museum, Harleian MS. 1240, ff. 86 v.-87.

<sup>96</sup> G. A. Holmes "A Protest Against the Despensers, 1326." *Speculum* 30, no. 2 (1955): 207-212.

<sup>97</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity*, 29.

<sup>98</sup> Pauline Stafford, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press), 165-67.

<sup>99</sup> Bassets of Drayton, Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 2:4.

influence over these matters, if she had not been in confinement. At this point, Edward III had his clutches in the duchy, as well as the young duke.<sup>100</sup> However Joan of Flanders missed her opportunity to voice her opinion and make decisions on matters of Brittany, as given her history she certainly would have done. She missed opportunities to press her family's cause and had to rely on others.

Compounding the discomforts of confinement, the imprisonment of women reflected their precarious state in medieval society. The machinations of patriarchal power structures allowed for the subordination and control of women in most activities of daily living. The same society that proclaimed women weak and dangerous to men, deemed them entitled to special protections and condemned acts of violence towards them.<sup>101</sup> The same society that devalued these women outside of captivity immediately recognized their inherent value in captivity, for the damage to familiar honor in the event that one's female relatives were abused was immense. As historian Yvonne Friedman states, "misconduct in captivity 'clouded issues of legitimacy on which claims of property depended.' Not only was the woman herself tainted, but also her family's honor and the honor of the family that had held

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<sup>100</sup> According to Dom Pierre Morice, Duke John IV pledged his undying support for to Edward III and willingness to defer to him in all matters great and small. "bearing ever in mind the great good honour and love long shown him by the English king, in nourishing his person and sustaining his wars in Brittany, and giving him in matrimony his late dearest companion the late Lady Mary [composed after her death 1361/62 ] his daughter, I feel bound to do all in return that is agreeable to the king, and therefore, of my own pure will, without coercion, grants and promises-touching the holy evangelists with his right hand in confirmation, -that at no future time will take in marriage, matrimony, or espousals, any dame, damsel, or other woman in the world, without the express will and accord of his said lord and father; not will give any pledge to any king, prince, duke, baron, or other person whatsoever, touching his marriage, without license, on pain of being reputed false, disloyal, and wicked, convicted of breach of faith, and incurring such reproach, blame, and ill fame as any must be liable to in such a case." Pierre Morice, *Memoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne, tirés des archives de cette province, de celles de France & d'Angleterre, des recueils de plusieurs sçavans antiquaires, & mis en ordre* (Paris: C. Osmont, 1742), 1552.

<sup>101</sup> Parks, "Living Pledges," 270; R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 90.

her captive.”<sup>102</sup> Noble or not, medieval society esteemed a woman’s virtue at the same time it encouraged their deference.

Although during Joan of Flanders’ captivity, there was little worry of indiscretion, as she was past childbearing age in 1347, scandal could have disadvantaged her children. Any hint of impropriety or dishonor towards the Duchess of Brittany could have undermined Edward III’s campaigns in Crécy and Poitiers (causing dissension in the ranks), and thus inadvertently disadvantaged John of Brittany’s efforts to reclaim Brittany. John of Brittany’s fate was inexorably linked to Edward III’s fortune in his war with France, at least during John’s minority.<sup>103</sup> The fact that Edward III considered allying with Blois-Penthievre faction, not once but twice in the 1350s to the detriment of John of Brittany highlighted the precariousness of the situation. Social norms and cultural mores shaped the perception of captivity as honorable.

Consequently, honorable captivity reflected medieval belief systems, influenced by religious cosmology and interpretations of biblical texts. Universally, it was considered better to endure the strains of confinement than to perish. Convention dictated the placement of captives in castles or religious houses. Long-term confinement, such as the detentions of Eleanor of Aquitaine (16 years), Robert Curthose (28 years), Joan of Flanders (29 years), and Eleanor of Brittany (39 years), were considered honorable and just. Reflecting the attitudes of the day, Orderic Vitalis extolls, rather than admonishes, William the Conqueror for his imprisonment of his brother Bishop Odo of Bayeux. Because, “harmful ambition should always be checked and it is never right to spare one man against the public interest through

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<sup>102</sup> Yvonne Friedman, *Encounter between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002.), 162-84.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapters Two and Three for further discussion of the negotiations between Edward III and Charles de Blois that would have ended hostilities in Brittany. F. Bock, “Some New Documents Illustrating the Early years of the Hundred Years War (1353-1356),” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* xv, (1931): 84-91.



any partiality.... [furthermore] the divine law of Moses commands, earthly rulers to restrain evil doers that they cannot injure the innocent.”<sup>104</sup>

Medieval rulers occasionally pushed the limits of the conditions of captivity that were socially acceptable. King William Rufus put Robert of Mowbray “in chains forever” after an argument.<sup>105</sup> Fulk le Rechin, Count of Anjou, imprisoned his brother Geoffrey Martel for thirty years until his death. Prior to the Norman Conquest, William Duke of Normandy imprisoned Guy of Ponthieu for two years after his capture at the Battle of Mortemer.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, King John confined his ex-wife Isabel of Gloucester, who like Eleanor of Brittany had previously been a royal ward, for years after their annulment until he was paid a dowry for privileges of her remarriage.<sup>107</sup> The records are replete with examples of captivity for extensive periods of time. Consequently, indefinite confinement without ransom must have been considered meritorious because it did not take the life of the culprit and was a deterrent to others against such offensive behavior.

Joan of Flanders’ detention at Tickhill was not an anomaly. As previously noted, Eleanor of Brittany was confined at Corfe, Bristol, Gloucester, and Marlborough Castles. Although the records are less conclusive on the imprisonment of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the

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<sup>104</sup> Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV 4.7:40-44, 96.

<sup>105</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1: 565; Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV 4.8:282

<sup>106</sup> Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV 4.7: 86-87.

<sup>107</sup> T.D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, 1201-1226. (London: Record Commission, 1835), 77, 108, 141; AM 3:45; Wilfred Warren, *King John*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 39, 66, 202. See *Chapter Five* for further discussion of Isabelle of Gloucester’s wardship.

manner of her detention likely was castle confinement.<sup>108</sup> Whether a person endured castle confinement or imprisonment in an abbey was at the discretion of captor; however, castles afforded opportunities for more amenities and comfort, and in turn were more honorable. Castles were strongholds and defensive fortifications that demonstrated the power and magnitude of the lord. For the most part they were secure and prisoners depending on the security risk, frequently remained in large castles as the situation warranted. Imprisonment in the Middle Ages was not solely an instrument of oppression, but a means of retribution or vengeance; consequently there were circumstances where individuals were lawfully or otherwise chained or confined in their own residences, castles or cottages.<sup>109</sup>

While the Angevin kings Henry II, Richard I, King John and Henry III preferred to use castle confinement, early Plantagenets favored religious houses. As previously mentioned Edward II detained Elizabeth de Burgh in Barking Abbey in 1322. After the Conquest of Wales, Edward I imprisoned Gwenllian, daughter of the last native Prince of Wales, and her cousins in English convents throughout Lincolnshire and made them take the veil.<sup>110</sup> Edward I confined Gwenllian to Sempringham Abbey from infancy, (“in hir credille ging tille Ingland scho cam”) until her death in 1337.<sup>111</sup> Religious houses had certain advantages for the detention of females. Convents were less hostile than jails or dungeons, fairly secure, and

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<sup>108</sup> Eleanor of Aquitaine had some liberty in her confinement. In 1184 after her daughter the Duchess of Saxony's arrival in England, she “suffered to go to Winchester” to attend to her following the birth of a child. W. Stubbs, ed., *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi*, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867) i: 303, 313, 333, 334,337; Ralph Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of France, Queen of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 231-255.

<sup>109</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity*, 62-63; Gwen Seabourne attributes the use of castles in the detention of women to the “profound ambiguity of the women's situation in non-judicial *garde*,” because although castles like Corfe, Bristol, Gloucester, and Marlborough were secure they were also places where kings stayed. Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 69.

<sup>110</sup> R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 361-62.

<sup>111</sup> Confinement in convent, *CPR, 1281-1292*, 321-22; bought to England as an infant, Thomas Hearne, *he Works of Thomas Hearne, M.A.*(Containing the Second Volume of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle), (London: Printed for S. Bagster, 1810),iv: 243.

religious vows could inhibit marriages and childbearing by inconvenient women.<sup>112</sup> There is no evidence of Joan of Flanders ever being imprisoned in an abbey or a convent. The practice peaked in the early fourteenth century and began to wane along with castle confinement giving way to jails and prisons in the fifteenth century.

Joan of Flanders' subsequent keepers, Thomas de Haukeston and Godfrey Foljambe, had personal accounts through the Exchequer, now classified with the Army, Navy, and Ordinance Accounts, for the maintenance of the Duchess of Brittany and her household.<sup>113</sup> Her household would have consisted of numerous attendants for various things such as wardrobe, cookery, stewardship, and entertainment. So extensive was her *familia* that between the years 1352-1357, her expenses totaled £539 13s 3d, including £173 6s 8d for one year.<sup>114</sup> Her son John of Brittany as Duke, as late as 1386 (well after her death), was paying off some of his mother's debts to the merchants of Gascony, likely for wine.<sup>115</sup> Outside the patent memo requesting the return of harnesses, jewelry and furnishings from Isabel Delves to Godfrey Foljambe, no English household inventory exists for Joan of Flanders. However, she would have had to been appropriately attired to reside with the Black Prince in 1360 and for travel between Tickhill Castle, High Peak Castle, Doddington Castle, and Walton-on-Trent Manor on a frequent basis. From the provisioning of noblewomen in custody, one can extrapolate as to the endless possibilities for comfortable confinement.

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<sup>112</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 63.

<sup>113</sup> TNA, *King's Remembrancers*: TNA, E 101/25/21 and TNA, E 101/26/21 The accounts of Thomas de Haukeston 1346-1357; TNA, E 101/31/3 The account of Godfrey Foljambe 1370-1374. Further discussion of the specifics of the Accounts, Army, Navy and Ordinance, see *Chapter Six*

<sup>114</sup> Approximately 386,200 GBP in 2014 for the five years cumulative, *Pipe Rolls 30 Edward III*, m.36 E 372/201; Approximately 132,300 GBP for the one year, E 101/25/21

<sup>115</sup> The fact that it fell to Joan of Flanders' son to pay this debt rather than Edward III or Richard II underscored the political nature of all matters relating to Gascony. The heart of matter was control of Aquitaine. See Chapter Two; Jean, Duc of Bretagne, *Recueil des actes*, ii: no.594.

For some aristocrats, the conditions of captivity were comparable to home. In 1246 Henry III of England mandated the Abbess of Godstow receive Isabella de Braose, widow of Dafydd ap Llywelyn, and her house with as much comfort as possible.<sup>116</sup> In 1213, King John commanded the Mayor of Winchester to provide Isabella and Margaret, the daughters of William I of Scotland, with robes, hoods, and other and other necessary clothes at the cost of the Exchequer.<sup>117</sup> As for Eleanor of Brittany in 1213, she received: “robes of dark green, tunics, supertunics, with capes of cambric furred with miniver, and 23 ells of good linen cloth, one cap of good dark brown furred with miniver, and a hood for rainy weather for her use, and also for the use of her three maids, robes of bright green, tunics and supertunics, and cloaks with capes of miniver and rabbit skin, and furred with lambskin.”<sup>118</sup> Surely trying to overcompensate for less than ethical reasons for their captivity, King John also granted Isabella and Margaret of Scotland, who at this time were at Corfe with Eleanor of Brittany, and their maids new summer shoes.<sup>119</sup> It was at this time that King John provided Eleanor of Brittany with a “saddle of gilded reins,” paid for by the Crown.<sup>120</sup>

Not just clothing and attendants, but the food of those in honorable captivity was quite good and provided for the essentials for an aristocratic diet. While at Bristol Castle in 1225, Eleanor of Brittany had gifts of game, fruit, wine, beef, and pigs.<sup>121</sup> The *Account Rolls* for Bristol in 1225 indicate that she had two baths, bedding, fuel and lighting, ale porters, plates, kitchen utensils, jugs, spices, oats for carthorses, towels, wax, axes, and expenses for sick

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<sup>116</sup> *CCR, 1242-1247*, 415.

<sup>117</sup> *CDS, 1108-1272*, 1: no. 581.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 580-81.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 581.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Woolgar, *Household Accounts*, 126-50.

## Household of Duchess and Infants of Brittany<sup>122</sup>

Dates	Roll Series	Keepers
8/16/1343-4/1346	Issue Rolls= E403/328, Aug, 16,1346; E 403/329 m. 32, m. 34 Oct 1343; E 403/330, Nov 7, 1343; E 403/331/9; E 403/331/23, E 403/331/24, Dec 1343	William de Wakefield, Keeper of the King's Exchanges in Tower of London, for the expenses of the household of the children of the Duke of Brittany
10/3/1343- 11/18/1346	Issue Rolls (Pells) = E 403/331/6, October 22, 1343 Issue Rolls: E 403/331 m. 17 Pipe Rolls: E 372/203 Foedera: Volume 3, pt.1, 17 <i>CPR, 1343-1345</i> , 331	William Frank (Fraunk), Constable of Tickhill Castle, for the expenses of the household of the Duchess of Brittany
4/1346-1350's	<i>CPR, 1345-1348</i> , 74	Queen Philippa, for the sustenance of the Infants of Brittany dwelling in her company
11/19/1346-1357	Issue Rolls: E 403/387 m. 19 King's Rembrancer: E 101/25/21, E 101/26/21 <i>CPR, 1345-1348</i> , 211; <i>1350-1354</i> , 177	Thomas de Haukeston, Constable of Tickhill Castle, for the expenses of the household of the Duchess of Brittany
12/4/1357-1370	Issue Rolls: E 403/382 <i>CPR, 1361-1364</i> , 313; <i>1367-1370</i> , 27	John Delves, Knight, for the expenses of the household of the Duchess of Brittany
1370	<i>CPR, 1367-1367</i> , 305, 321	Isabel, late wife of John Delves, for the same
11/12/1370-1372/74	Foedera: Volume 3, pt. 2, 902 King's Rembrancer: E 101/31/3 <i>CPR, 1370-1374</i> , 16	Godfrey Foljambe, Knight, for the same

*Figure 3. Crown expenditures by date, roll series and custodian for Joan of Flanders*

<sup>122</sup> Figure 3, A schedule of the Keepers of the Duchess of Brittany and her children after her confinement in England in December, 1343 until her death c. 1372/73.

employees, cheeses, and almonds.<sup>123</sup> Eleanor of Brittany also had medical assistance and money for almsgiving.<sup>124</sup> However, Mary de Monthermer, Countess of Fife only was granted 40 shillings a week and one summer and winter robes while in English custody from 1336 to 1345 for her husband's rebellion.<sup>125</sup>

Gwen Seabourne suggests that deprivation is not an indication of dishonor or lack of respect, nor is indulgence a sign of favor. "The gifts of John and Henry to Eleanor should not be read as products of simple kindness: sociology and modern human rights studies suggest other motivation for unpredictable largesse."<sup>126</sup> She goes on to say and this is relevant to Joan of Flanders, "such a high-ranking noblewoman would have been disappointed by her lack of landed provision, since she was kept from virtually all of the Richmond lands which were traditionally granted to the dukes of Brittany."<sup>127</sup> Living a hundred years after Eleanor of Brittany, Joan of Flanders would have been well aware of the similarities to her situation.

Long years of confinement cost dearly in terms of political promotion and advancement at home.<sup>128</sup> There is no way of knowing whether the occasional visitation with her adult children affected ducal polity; as she had missed out on formative years. Moreover, the heirs of Brittany, as well as their mother, were so dependent on Edward III for their fates. Eleanor of Aquitaine's captivity deprived her attending the burial of Young King Henry in 1193 in

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<sup>123</sup> Seabourne, *Eleanor of Brittany*, 98.

<sup>124</sup> *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1916), 1226-1240, 253. Going forward referred to as *CLS*.

<sup>125</sup> *CDS, 1307-1357*, 3: nos. 1312, 1333, 1360; *CPR, 1338-1340*, 480. Douglas Richardson, and Kimball G. Everingham, *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*. (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co, 2005), 471.

<sup>126</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 70.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity*, 115-16.

Rouen, and there were always ramifications of long-term detention.<sup>129</sup> Confinement cut men off from careers and women off from marriage and reproduction; which for all the problems that those events caused women were part of the normal life cycle.<sup>130</sup> However, there are no universals and imprisonment affects everyone differently. Despite the deprivation from family, Robert Curthose seemingly adapted well to his confinement and engaged in the public square.

Apart from Joan of Flanders' captivity, the imprisonment of Robert Curthose was considered quite courteous. Henry I of England had his elder brother Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, held in indefinite detention after the duke's defeat and capture at the Battle of Tinchebray in 1106. Henry I considered Duke Robert to be a dynastic threat to his security as King of England. Robert Curthose had repeatedly challenged Henry's right to rule and instigated rebellion among the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. Tinchebray was Duke Robert's last throw with Fortune and King Henry captured him.<sup>131</sup> As William Aird states, "he [Robert Curthose] recognized the hopelessness of continuing the struggle, although concern for the well-belling of his young son, William, may have made the duke apprehensive. Robert had fought to keep his duchy, but it was unlikely that he could withstand a determined campaign by his brother backed by the financial resources of the kingdom of England."<sup>132</sup> By this point, Robert Curthose obviously was resigned to his fate and possibly relieved.

As a result, Henry I kept his brother in comfort and even afforded him indulgences that befit his noble station, as the eldest son of the Conqueror and a duke in his own right.

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<sup>129</sup> Douglas David Roy Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 72.

<sup>130</sup> Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 79.

<sup>131</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), i:706

<sup>132</sup> William Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy: C. 1050-1134* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 245.

William of Malmesbury says, “he was kept in open confinement until the day of his death, having to thank his brother’s praiseworthy sense of duty that he had nothing worse to suffer than solitude, if solitude it can be called when he was enjoying the continual attention of guards, and plenty of amusement and good eating.”<sup>133</sup> Orderic Vitalis says that out of fear of protests, “Henry sent him [his brother] to England and kept him for twenty-seven years in prison, providing him liberally with every comfort.”<sup>134</sup> However as with other political prisoners, Robert Curthose was shuffled from castle to castle, being held first as Wareham<sup>135</sup> and later at Devizes by Bishop Robert of Salisbury.<sup>136</sup> Robert Curthose’s courteous treatment was to Henry I’s advantage. Besides placating the Norman nobles who might have mounted a rescue attempt for Robert Curthose, he had promised not to escape. Duke Robert’s oath may have been worthy of repayment with kindness.<sup>137</sup> William Aird says that Henry kept his brother under supervision to legitimize his governance of Normandy. “The king [Henry] was, in effect, ruling on behalf of his brother and with his brother’s legitimacy.”<sup>138</sup> Perhaps, it was a confluence of all of the above; regardless, Robert Curthose like Joan of Flanders was confined honorably.

Robert Curthose’s relatively “free custody” *libera custodia* for offenses against the Crown, stands at odds to Joan of Flanders’ detention for no discernable criminality. Irrespective of the motivations for each person’s captivity, the conditions of confinement were so similar that it gives credence to the political overtones of Joan of Flanders detention. Castle confinement aside, Robert Curthose may have been in the company of Bishop Robert

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<sup>133</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, i:707.

<sup>134</sup> Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV, 6.11: 98-99.

<sup>135</sup> Luard, *AM*, ii: 42.

<sup>136</sup> William of Malmesbury, *GR*, i:736-39; Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV, 6.11:98.

<sup>137</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity*, 113.

<sup>138</sup> Aird, *Robert Curthose*, 248.



of Salisbury as Joan of Flanders was in the company of her keepers with some freedom of movement. The record is unclear as to whether Robert Curthose traveled with the bishop while he fulfilled his ecclesiastical obligations, but Geoffrey of Vigewis insinuates that Duke Robert did.<sup>139</sup>

Regardless of whether Robert Curthose was able to venture out into the localities, he was still confined and had his contacts restricted and correspondence monitored. According to Orderic Vitalis, Henry I told Pope Calixtus II at Gisors on November 23, 1119, “I have not kept my brother in fetters like a captured enemy, but have placed him as a noble pilgrim, worn out with many hardships, in royal castle, and have kept him well supplied with abundance of food and other comforts and furnishings of all kinds.”<sup>140</sup> As in the case of Joan of Flanders, there is no household account for Robert Curthose. Only one *Pipe Roll* memorandum from Henry I records a sum of £23 10 shillings paid out for clothes, *in pannis*, and £12 in furnishings or *estructura*.<sup>141</sup> A far cry from the sums granted for the Duchess of Brittany and her household. Nevertheless, Robert Curthose was well-treated; however, the deprivation of liberty does not seem to be considered a mistreatment in the Middle Ages.

From the existing records, it appears that Joan of Flanders until her last days was well-treated. There was no recorded incident of abuse or indignity apart from her exile. Perhaps this is because overt violent acts while in custody such as mutilation and physical restraints were increasingly taboo by the fourteenth-century. Or as in the case of Joan of Flanders, such maltreatment never occurred. There is no further mention of her in the patent rolls after

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<sup>139</sup> Geoffrey of Vigewis ‘Chronica’ in Martin Bouquet and Léopold Delisle. *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, eds. Martin Bouquet and Léopold Delisle (Paris: Gregg Press, 1840), xii: 432.

<sup>140</sup> Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History*, OV, 6.12:286-87.

<sup>141</sup> “Et civibus Lincoln’ in soltis. lxj. l. et.xvij. d. pro pannis ad opus Regis per breve regis. Et Roberto Cours. .xxj l et .xv. s. pro pannis ad opus Regis per breve regis” The *Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirty-First Year of the Reign of King Henry the Second: A.D. 1184-1185* (London: St. Catherine Press, 1913), 80; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, 251-52.

1370. Her last custodian Godfrey Foljambe held his account with the Exchequer for her and her household's sustenance at least until 1374 when they were still in his counties.<sup>142</sup>

However, he had another position as a Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby beginning in November 1373 until his death three years later.<sup>143</sup> This does not mean that Joan of Flanders could not have traveled around with Godfrey Foljambe on his circuit as a justice. She and her household were in his company as he tended to his duties at various residences, Walton-on-Trent and High Peak both in Derbyshire and not in Yorkshire at Tickhill Castle.<sup>144</sup> Yet, it would have been difficult to imagine that her large *familia* would have followed him to the county seats or towns where he presided.

Residing in "comparative tranquility," Joan of Flanders enjoyed her last days in a state of confinement customary to long-term political captives of her time. Her experience followed a pattern typical of political detainees: moving from one location to another, from one fortress to another, having limited communication, being afforded certain conveniences, and closely guarded even past child-bearing age. Being neither tried nor convicted of a crime, Charles de Blois, Eleanor of Brittany, Robert Curthose, and Joan of Flanders were permitted a modicum of freedom, sumptuous food, and extravagant clothing. They had attendants and servants and were kept in castles, as befit their rank. While some imprisoned nobles in rebellion were treated harshly, most were treated with courtesy even if their detentions were lengthy.

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<sup>142</sup> TNA, *Pipe Rolls* E 101/31/3, *Issue Rolls* E403/452, m. 12.

<sup>143</sup> *CPR, 1370-1374*, 364.

<sup>144</sup> *CPR, 1370-1374*, 16.

Joan of Flanders' did not return to Brittany to live out her days in Vannes,<sup>145</sup> as some have suggested. Until her death, she abided in England in the shadows, while her children were revered in the Plantagenet court. As we have seen from her bread, bath, and bridles or the sustenance and caretaking of the Duchess of Brittany and her household that her maintenance and provisioning were indicative of a well-born, political captive. Even so her confinement must have been stifling, for someone so redoubtable. However, she was not entirely powerless: she on occasion saw her children and her son became Duke of Brittany in her lifetime. Her legacy extended past her confinement, of which I turn to now.

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<sup>145</sup> Everett Green. *Lives of the Princesses of England*, 3:290.

## Chapter Eight

### The Redoubtable Duchess Joan: A Warrior and Her Hero-Worship

As to the question of Joan's detention in England as a mad woman from 1343, raised by M. de la Borderie (*Hist. de Bretagne*, vol. iii p.488), there is not the *very slightest evidence of any description* that she was mad. It is wholly an assumption. The records offered show that Edward paid her debts in London in 1343.... Later, the records would appear to prove that the Duchesse de Bretagne was residing in Tickhill Castle. Edward was guardian of John IV, and he had no need to consult Joan of Montfort or consider her in any way...[Furthermore] when John de Montfort died in 1345, Edward was freed from the necessity of consulting in the interests of Brittany, and he waged war for the advantage of England. She may very likely made herself dangerous to Edward's plan of Brittany as a vassal state and most probably Edward confined her in Tickhill to prevent her interference with his plans. Women who would not play the game according to the gambling rules of those days had to be put out of the way.<sup>1</sup>

This is a short rebuttal of sorts to Arthur Le Moyne de la Borderie's theory of Joan of Flanders' confinement due to madness by early twentieth-century barrister and social historian John Wynne Jeudwine. Our legal analysis of the facts and administrative records shows that, the preponderance of evidence supports the premise that Edward III's imprisonment of Joan of Flanders from 1343 until her death around 1374 was for his own political purposes, not for her protection. The fact that Jeudwine felt the need to comment in his 1918 monograph *The Foundations of Society and the Land* highlights the fact that Joan of Flanders' story is compelling. Consequently her exploits have become part of legend and lore woven into the historical landscape.

The myth and mystique of Joan of Flanders endures in song and the written word. She has captured the hearts of men throughout the centuries. Her story of courage and fighting for family is compelling and strikes a chord of familiarity. Joan of Flanders was not true to type

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<sup>1</sup> John Wynne Jeudwine, *The Foundations of Society and the Land: A Review of the Social Systems of the Middle Ages in Britain, Their Growth and Their Decay*. (London: Williams & Norgate), 1918), 386

and unlike most depictions of weak-willed women in the Middle Ages, t she as virago stood in an elite class, head and shoulders above the rest.

Despite the obscure nature of Joan of Flanders' captivity, the siege of Hennebont has become mythologized and commemorated in song and verse. For example, recall the words that twentieth-century historian Pierce Butler wrote of the siege: "Hennebon is one of those romantic episodes of history learned or absorbed almost unconsciously in childhood, which lingers as a precious memory in the hearts of all."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to say that in Joan of Flanders' actions you see, "No Eleanor of Guienne, masquerading in tinsel armor as the head of a troop of stage amazons, but a gallant lady charging her foes sword in hand. One cannot read her story without enthusiasm."<sup>3</sup> Eighteenth-century Scottish historian David Hume called Joan of Flanders the most extraordinary woman of her age who so moved and inspired inhabitants that they vowed to live and die with her in defending the rights of her family.<sup>4</sup> It is as if this event has taken on a life of its own beyond its proximate scope and significance. The symbolic power of sieges and battles depends on the ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones along with new and unforeseeable connections.<sup>5</sup> Thus Hennebont is something more than a siege in the Breton Civil War but rather a singular personal and aspirational moment that stirs emotions and arouses passions in audiences more than 600 years after the fact.

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<sup>2</sup> Pierce Butler, *Women of Mediaeval France* (Philadelphia: Rittenhouse Press, 1908), 294.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 302-3.

<sup>4</sup> David Hume, *The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688 in Eight Volumes*: (London: T. Cadell in the Strand, 1791), 2:417-8.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Nora, "General Introduction Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kriztman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 12.; Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25.

How is this done? It is done through literature, which has the capacity to enchant perennially and mythologize through sacrifice, prophecy, the sacred or universally significant, particularly when it comes to war, i.e. Hennebont.<sup>6</sup> While chivalric epics and romances have captivated the popular imagination since the thirteenth century, popular ballads have had a similar effect for almost as long. Ballads, which essentially are narrative poems set to song or music that rely upon simple language, rhyme, and repetition for communication of information, were created by minstrels, and became readily to be accepted by the people and became a vital means of disseminating news.<sup>7</sup> Particularly, during the years of territorial fighting in the Middle Ages, ballads appear describing first-hand descriptions of sieges, battles, victories and defeats.<sup>8</sup> Thus, consider the ballad entitled *Jean o' The Flame*, first written down in the nineteenth century that recounts the story of Hennebont.<sup>9</sup> Although it is unclear as to the date or origins of the ballad, its author Théodore Hersart La Villemarqué recalled it being recounted to him in the traditional romantic style, word of mouth intoned to a strummed accompaniment, the musical recitation of a wandering blind beggar.<sup>10</sup> As the battle storyline is typically truncated to highlight the more descriptive details, it is important to take a look at *Jean o' The Flame*'s interpretation of the siege of Hennebont for its historical treatment.

Like other warrior motif ballads, *Jean o' The Flame* records the routing of the Blois-French faction during the siege of Hennebont, an epic battle that offers the hero an

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<sup>6</sup> Kirschenbaum, *Legacy*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Glenda Simpson and Mason Barry, "The Sixteenth-Century Spanish Romance: A Survey of the Spanish Ballad as Found in the Music of the Vihuelistas." *Early Music* 5, no. 1 (1977), 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Théodore Hersart La Villemarqué, "Jean o' the Flame," in *Ballads and Songs of Brittany*, eds. and trans. Tom Taylor, and Laura Wilson (Barker) Taylor (London: Macmillan and Co, 1865), 135.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*; Simpson and Barry, "The Sixteenth-Century," 51.

opportunity for glory and honor. To provide context and draw the audience into the story, in the foreword Villemarqué draws a comparison for modern audiences, unfamiliar with Joan of Flanders' story, whom he describes as the gallant wife of Jean de Montfort, to Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa who also presented herself, with her infant son in her arms before the assembled barons, knights, and men-at-arms.<sup>11</sup> Villemarqué seemingly is as interested as a medieval minstrel in his audience having a vested interest in the plot. In taking a look at three major stanzas of the ballad for what the poet hopes his listeners glean, the key points are: Joan was defender of family's right to rule, she put fear into the hearts of the French, and she decimated the French troops- the siege of Hennebont in a nutshell. Folk ballads personalize the narrative and expressly convey the motivations for events.<sup>12</sup>

As our Duchess rode Henbont streets about,  
Oh leal and loud bells rang out;  
On her milk-white palfrey, bright o' blee,  
Holding her babe upon her knee  
Nowhere she turned her bridle-rein,  
But the Henbont folk shouted amain:  
"God have mother and babe in grace,  
And bring the Gaul to desperate case."

There was many a Gaul that sat for drunk  
With heavy head on the board y-sunk  
When through the tents an alarum past  
The fire! the fire! To rescue fast!  
"The fire! the fire!" Fly one! fly all  
'Tis Jean o' the Flame, from Henbont Wall!"

Jean o' the Flame, I will go bound,  
Is the wightest woman that e'er trod ground.  
Was never a corner, far or near,  
Of the Gaulish camp but the fire was there.  
And the wind it broadened, the wind it blew.

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<sup>11</sup> Villemarqué, *Ballads*, 135.

<sup>12</sup> Wolfgang G. Muller, "The Battle of Agincourt in carol and ballad," *Fifteenth Century Studies* 8 (1983): 168.

Till it lit the black night through and through.  
Where tents had been stood ash-heaps grey,  
And roasted therein the Gauls they lay.  
Burnt to ashes were thousands three.  
Only a hundred 'scaped scot free!<sup>13</sup>

The ballad concentrates on the details of Hennebont, but only so much as that the siege can fascinate or captivate the audience's imagination simplistically. As is characteristic of the folk ballad genre, *Jean o' the Flame* is short and concentrates on a few scenes with sharp transitions, often omitting relevant facts.<sup>14</sup> While it is important to tell the events of the day and relay the news, the narrator needs to enthrall his audience on an elementary level, i.e. Gauls bad and Jean good. The ballad sharply delineates between both sides and the story becomes a battle between might versus right or good versus bad. For example, "The Duchess had ridden so blithely by/ When from the Gauls there came a cry:/ "When Doe and Fawn alive we hold/ To bind them we've brought a chain of gold.,"<sup>15</sup> in these lines the complexity of the Breton Civil War is condensed or compressed and becomes digestible for mass consumption. Joan of Flanders is forced to take up arms against the menacing French to defend herself and Brittany. In historical ballads, the emphasis on personal grievance is accentuated that allows for rivalries to be extrapolated by the audience and antagonisms individualized.<sup>16</sup> At the height of popularity during the border wars in the High Middle Ages, ballads began to wane in their fashionability as an art form with the decline in border warfare. The wandering minstrel no longer carried his versions of ballads from village to village.<sup>17</sup> However, even after medieval border conflicts, these historical ballads are still

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<sup>13</sup> Villemarqué, "Jean O' the Flame," 134-37.

<sup>14</sup> Muller, "The Battle," 168

<sup>15</sup> Villemarqué, "Jean o' the Flame," 135.

<sup>16</sup> Muller, "The Battle," 168.

<sup>17</sup> Simpson and Barry, "The Sixteenth-Century," 52.



meaningful because the tensions and angsts in the audience are still there. Thus, Hennebont is ubiquitous.

However, without the indomitable spirit of Joan of Flanders, there would have been no siege story to tell. Joan of Flanders stands out as the virago, idealized, female warrior archetype. While finding women at war in any capacity throughout recorded history requires a specialized approach, as women typically did not fit into conventional combat roles, the virago seemingly has been an enduring stereotype.<sup>18</sup> As previously noted, viragos were women who heroically performed traditionally male activities without censure, but with praise. Women who acted with “male boldness” and daring, and yet never undermined or challenged the social order or gender norms.<sup>19</sup> Like Joan of Flanders, the most visible medieval viragos were female heads of state and by virtue of that position they were commanders-in-chief with the imprimatur, or least the authority, to head their armies.<sup>20</sup> Not uncharacteristically, these warrior women were indicative of an Anglo-Norman brood of noblewomen throughout the Middle Ages, who committed their organizational skills to military projects and frequently became directly involved in military encounters, particularly in the siege of castles.<sup>21</sup> Acting as agents of their husbands or heirs, they defended castles and like Joan of Flanders raised armies and took aggressive military action. Twelfth-century, Byzantine chronicler, Niketas Choniates, recalled mounted women bearing ‘lances and

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<sup>18</sup> Linda Grant DePauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Jean A. Truax, “Anglo-Norman Women at War: Valiant Soldiers, Prudent Strategists or Charismatic Leaders?”, in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, eds. Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 114.

weapons' and dressed in 'masculine garb...more mannish than the Amazons' on the Second Crusade.<sup>22</sup>

In the same way, Muslim chroniclers described Frankish women who supposedly dressed up and rode into battle at the siege of Acre "as brave men though they were but tender women," and who were subsequently "not recognized as women until they had been stripped of their arms."<sup>23</sup> One Muslim account recalls a Frankish noblewoman who allegedly fought at Acre alongside 500 of her own knights.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, women noted as being on the First Crusade (1096-1099) were recorded as being present at the *Battle of Dorylaeum* (July 1, 1097), and also at the sieges of Antioch (1097-1098) and Jerusalem in 1099.<sup>25</sup>

Not only during the Crusades but throughout the Middle Ages marriage afforded noblewomen, like Joan of Flanders, power and influence through legitimate and important military roles in defending their husbands' property."<sup>26</sup> The most rudimentary form of leadership occurred when women held a position of military command: ordering the movement of troops, making strategic decisions, and having ultimate responsibility for the outcome of the battle or siege in which they may have been involved.<sup>27</sup> These were often temporary positions, assumed in their husband's absence, during times of crisis, and vacated once their husbands returned. Out of necessity, these noblewomen had to defend their lands

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<sup>22</sup> Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit, MI.: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 35.

<sup>23</sup> Francesco Gabrieli, ed and trans, "Imād al-Dīn," in *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, selected and trans. from the Arabic sources (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1969), 207; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York, NY.: Routledge, 2000), 348-49.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades I: The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 185, 234, 284-85

<sup>26</sup> James Michael Illston, 'An Entirely Masculine Activity'? Women and War in the High and Late Middle Ages Reconsidered. (MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2009), 50; Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1997), 89.

<sup>27</sup> Illston, 172.

and thus had to fulfill military functions. Some women had great freedom to influence military affairs and a select few were even able to conduct military campaigns or assaults on their own initiative, although few actually fought the enemy on the battlefield in hand-to-hand combat.<sup>28</sup> Joan of Flanders stands out for military prowess in that she was deftly able to subdue the forces of Charles de Blois and hold Hennebont, while town after town had fallen to him, thus preserving Montfortist Brittany. Although not physically engaging in combat, she had the essence of a warrior: astride her horse, leading the charge, and galvanizing the troops with the moral support and direction that they needed.

Even the ballad *Jean o' the Flame* formulaically presupposes Joan of Flanders, a literary virago, as its heroine of the popular female warrior story, because she excelled in her tests of love and glory, disclosed her disguise (military alteration) and met with success or happy ending.<sup>29</sup> Female warrior popular ballad requires those three elements. According to the ballad, in the three stanzas noted, one sees that: "while waiting for her ally, the countess had to break a siege at Hennebont on the Brittany coast. Wearing a suit of armor with a mail shirt and iron plates...she rode a war horse through the streets, rallying the citizens to defend themselves."<sup>30</sup> Those are two elements, breaking the siege for the love of country and family and Joan of Flanders donning armor and riding the war horse is her military transformation. Lastly after discovering the Charles de Blois-French faction had left their camp exposed, "she led three hundred horsemen and charged into the enemy camp, setting it on fire. Seeing the flames, the Blois abandoned the assault and the countess escaped to Brest where she

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Diane Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 72.

<sup>30</sup> DePauw, *Battle Cries*, 95.

received the English army.”<sup>31</sup> The routing of the Blois faction is the perfunctory happy ending. Joan of Flanders was considered a virago, not only by the elites of power but in popular culture, which shows how pervasive was her identity or reputation.

However, before there was Joan of Flanders, there was Sikelgaita of Salerno. Eleventh-century Lombard princess and the second wife of the Norman conqueror Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia, she routinely accompanied him in battle, wearing full armor. “He spent a few days waiting for his wife Gaita (for she too accompanied her husband her husband, and when dressed in full armour the woman was a fearsome sight). After he had embraced her, then both started with all the army again for Brindisi.”<sup>32</sup> Like Joan of Flanders, Sikelgaita was considered to be a fierce warrior by contemporaries and was a trusted confidant of her husband. Anna Komnena, the late eleventh-century Byzantine princess and historian who wrote the *Alexiad* as an account of her father Alexios I’s reign, stressed Sikelgaita’s fighting spirit, elevating it to mythological proportions.

There is a story that Robert’s wife Gaita, who used to accompany him on campaigns like another Pallas,<sup>33</sup> if not a second Athena, seeing the runaways and glaring fiercely at them, shouted in a very loud voice, ‘How far will ye run? Halt! Be men!’-not quite in those Homeric words, but something very like them in her own dialect. As they continued to run, she grasped a long spear and charged at full gallop against them. It brought them to their senses and they went back to fight.<sup>34</sup>

Note the obvious similarities to Joan of Flanders. Sikelgaita led a charge, galloping on horseback, and she gave a rousing speech that buoyed the troops. Joan of Flanders did the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad*, ed. and trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: Penguin, 2004), Book I.15.

<sup>33</sup> Greek mythological daughter of Triton.

<sup>34</sup> Komnena, *Alexiad*, IV.6

exact same things three hundred years later. Sikelgaita, like Joan of Flanders, comes across as a Valkyrie, much admired for her warrior spirit.

Joan of Flanders possibly inherited her military might from her grandfather Robert III, Count of Flanders, known as the “lion of Flanders.” Count Robert III's nickname comes from his heroic feats in the Battle of Courtrai, otherwise known as the Battle of the Golden Spurs, July 11, 1302. As previously mentioned, the Flemish townspeople fought back against French hegemony and decimated an army of French knights and nobles, owing their victory largely to the “lion of Flanders.” Known as the “deliverer of Flanders” Count Robert III, like his granddaughter who had the “heart of a lion,” was said to have earned his name because of his wondrous feats of arms.

Nineteenth-century, Belgian author Hendrik Conscience claimed that Robert III's reputation had preceded him from an early age, as he had led the French army in Sicily against the Hohenstaufens in 1265. In the foreword to 1838 *The Lion of Flanders*, Conscience says: “Woe the enemy who dared to attack such men on their own territory: the sons of the Lion were not easily tamed.”<sup>35</sup> Should Count Robert III ever be conquered, he would have gnawed at his chains in anger filled with the courage of steel by the memory of his former greatness.<sup>36</sup> It was that same courage and determination that Joan of Flanders had, since she was said to have had the “courage of a man.” She must have received it from her Flemish forefather, whose heroism and mettle were renowned.

Joan of Flanders's visceral connection with the public has largely been due to Froissart. Scholars have widely recognized that Jean Froissart did much for Joan of Flanders' acclaim.

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<sup>35</sup> Hendrik Conscience, “Foreword to *The Lion of Flanders*,” in *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History 1780-1990*, ed. Theo Herman (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), Document 10, 86.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

“The siege of Hennebon is one of the most romantic episodes of history in history learned or absorbed unconsciously in childhood... memory in the hearts of all who love the brave days of old because of the genius of Froissart.”<sup>37</sup> Froissart’s affinity for Joan of Flanders is unquestionable. “It was her intransigence, and the opportunism of Edward III, who seized this chance to intervene in Brittany, as a means of reopening the war with France that insured that there would be a war between ‘the two Joans’ as seen largely through Froissart’s prism.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, audiences have viewed Joan of Flanders as a virago, with pure warrior spirit never to be unrivaled. Villemarqu , in his foreword to his ballad *Jean O’ The Flame*, acknowledged that was Froissart’s vivid storytelling of the siege that was the inspiration for the ballad dedicated to Joan of Flanders and its continued popularity.

As stated in Chapter Four, Froissart revered Joan of Flanders because her heroism reflected the mores of the chivalric age and of all those who espoused those moral and ethical codes. Despite being a woman she was a textbook case. Paraphrasing Froissart, Villemarqu  said that it was Joan of Flanders who told her forces not to be disheartened by the loss of her husband. “For he was but one man. See here my little son, who shall restore him if it pleases God, and do you much good. I have means now, whereof I will give freely, and promise you such a captain and guardian as shall mightily comfort you all.”<sup>39</sup> It was and still is the power of Froissart’s words that continues to draw audiences into the Siege of Hennebont. While Froissart may have had a few incidences wrong, he perhaps better than any other contemporary reflects the attitudes and feelings of the era and has been able to catch the

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<sup>37</sup> Butler, *Women of Medieval*, 294.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Jones, “Ancenis, Froissart and the beginnings of the War of Succession in Brittany (1341),” in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Villemarqu , *Ballads*, 135

“flavor of the war, reflect on contemporary awareness of suffering and cruelty that war caused.”<sup>40</sup> Whatever the inconstancies, confusions, and miscalculations in place and time, Jean Froissart obviously esteemed Joan of Flanders and it through his account that the panorama of the Breton conflict can be seen.

While Joan of Flanders, despite her being shrouded in mystery post-Hennebont, has had largely positive acclaim, women like Margaret of Anjou have not. To show how being on the winning side can shape one's reputation for posterity, as it worked for Joan of Flanders, let us compare the example of Margaret of Anjou. Margaret has been reviled throughout history largely due to William Shakespeare. Wife of Henry VI of England at the end of the Hundred Years War, Margaret of Anjou's character has been assailed by chroniclers living a hundred years or more after her death. Often pilloried as a “she-wolf of France” Margaret of Anjou was never afforded the comfort that Joan of Flanders received.

Margaret of Anjou, the leader of the Lancastrian forces during the Wars of the Roses, was loathed for her warlike tendencies and agency, primarily due to Shakespeare's account of the history. “Of all Shakespeare's female characters. Margaret of Anjou stands out as one of the most evil and sadistic, capable of committing any heinous crime in order to achieve her ends. She is the ‘warlike Queen,’ the leader of the Lancastrian army in contrast to her feeble-spirited husband. Clarence calls her ‘Captain Margaret,’ York speaks to the ‘army of the Queen.’”<sup>41</sup> Contrast the empathic attitude towards the incompetent Henry VI of England, unwittingly taken advantage of by his wife and the attitude that Froissart had regarding the captured John de Montfort who is no less out of the picture while his wife continues the fight.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>41</sup> Diana Dunn, “The Queen at War: The Role of Margaret of Anjou in the Wars of the Roses,” in *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* ed. Diana Dunn (Liverpool: Liverpool Press, 200), 141.

That viewpoint of Shakespeare was patronizing while Froissart gave John de Montfort a pass which could have been because of the respective authors' attitudes towards those men's wives Margaret of Anjou and Joan of Flanders, respectively. Remember Joan of Flanders is performing gallant deeds, climbing towers to see her troops equip themselves, and galloping ahead of her forces (amidst blazing tents).<sup>42</sup>

William Shakespeare's contempt for Margaret of Anjou and her "unwomanly behavior" was not just her taking up of arms; he found her not to be a virago but rather revolting. As the Duke of York curses her in *Henry VI, Part III*:

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France  
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!  
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex  
To triumph like an Amazonian trull  
Upon their woes who Fortune captivates!<sup>43</sup>

Shakespeare's imagery of Margaret of Anjou was so powerful that it has colored and marred all subsequent portrayals and depictions of her.<sup>44</sup> Historian Agnes Strickland's 1848 multivolume work *Lives of the Queens of England* parroted Shakespeare's characterization of Margaret of Anjou and said that "martial fever was epidemic in Margaret of Anjou and the war-like blood of Charlemagne was thrilling in her veins."<sup>45</sup> Strickland bemoaned that Margaret's nature was to be expected because she was a countryman of Joan of Arc, a most

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<sup>42</sup> Jean Froissart, *Froissart's Chronicles*, ed. and trans. John Jolliffe (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), 122-23.

<sup>43</sup> William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part III*. (Filiquarian Pub., LLC., 2007), 38.

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, "The Queen," 142.

<sup>45</sup> Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England, From the Norman Conquest* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1885), 2:229.



successful general against the English.<sup>46</sup> That speaks to the power of words and how the attitude of a particular chronicler or historian can shape the version of events.

Margaret of Anjou had come into prominence and was forced to act as regent for her son Prince Edward, because of the intermittent catatonia and mentally defectiveness of her husband Henry VI of England, the grandson of Charles VI of France. It was the height of the Wars of the Roses (1455-85) and English society was completely polarized between the Houses of Lancaster and York, the great-grandsons of Edward III. Her last attempt to cement her son's place on the throne in 1471, while he was well above military age, made her appear to some as "inclined to war."<sup>47</sup> The problem is typical of medieval records and historical evidence, there are so few surviving administrative documents and thus the sway of contemporary narratives become, like the official account. In contemporary narratives of the Wars of the Roses, unlike with Joan of Flanders or even Sikelgaita, there are virtually no mentions of Margaret of Anjou's movements as queen and it was generally assumed that she was not present on the battlefield.<sup>48</sup>

While most historians today have put Margaret of Anjou in her proper context, the damage to her reputation may have already been done. A noblewoman, like Joan of Flanders or the earlier mentioned Eleanor of Provence, taking the lead in a time of war was not always castigated. The problem was that Margaret of Anjou, despite the ultimate Lancastrian victory, ended up on the losing side, and to the victor go the spoils. Throughout history, a weak king provided an opportunity for his queen to exercise power but that power had to be

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae.*, ed. S.B. Chrimes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2-3, 16-19.

<sup>48</sup> Dunn, "The Queen," 156.

exercised effectively.<sup>49</sup> As in the case of Joan of Flanders, contemporaneous judgments reflected the attitudes and values of the times and in the case of Margaret of Anjou, those prejudices may not have provided a fair assessment of her character.<sup>50</sup> As for Joan of Flanders, even if the chroniclers overstated her military exploits, she put up an expected resistance that slowed the French advance; she “sent at least two embassies to England,” thereby cementing her place in history.<sup>51</sup> So while, Margaret of Anjou has suffered the perils of historical reputation, Joan of Flanders’ eminence comes through.

Joan of Flanders for all of her accolades fell prey to the machinations of Edward III. She was a political pawn and disposed of when she was no longer needed or became too much of a liability. Yet, her brief career on the world stage was remarkable and still stands the test of time. Because of her heroism at Hennebont, Edward III knew that she was no shrinking violet and could not take a chance with her liberty. All too often this is a familiar tale of expendability of people, particularly women and all too often during wartime, for power, land and status. The Middle Ages are replete with “maidens in the tower,” elite women forcibly detained for retribution, retaliation, control or sheer covetous. Wartime made such practices even less suspect, easily disguised and quite frankly diverted attention away from such nefarious deeds. With the true motivations of political imprisonment occluded, rulers like Edward III of England could act with impunity and get away with almost anything. We are not that far removed from our medieval forefathers, as our society still grapples with the issues of gender, polity and power.

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<sup>49</sup> Rachel Gibbons, “Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France (1385-1422): The Creation of an Historical Villainess: The Alexander Prize Essay.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 51-73.

<sup>50</sup> Dunn, “The Queen,” 158.

<sup>51</sup> John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 28.

Not that Joan of Flanders was any ordinary Rapunzel. Edward III had to go through some extreme measures to keep her in his midst. I have recounted these in my narrative of her life. I have tried to tell her story completely without presupposition. I have hoped in some way to have fulfilled the aspirations of Nineteenth-century historian Jean- Baptiste Lesbroussart in terms of his history of Joan of Flanders. "For me I am only drawing an outline, sketching the picture (of this celebrated heroine by some more eloquent writer) that a more skillful hand would draw richer colors."<sup>52</sup> Joan of Flanders was not given notice for masculine qualities, but rather her spirit that reflected the essence of the age of fourteenth- century of Europe; plague, war, destruction and survival, perseverance, overcoming, for latter qualities she rightly has deserved notice.

She [Joan] yielded to the data's demand for sensitivity to the 'complexity and ambiguity'; we have come to recognize that 'the experience of women, even of the women of the noble elite, was diverse and sometimes contradictory'- sometimes the same.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Lesbroussart, *Precis*, 248.

<sup>53</sup> Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady & the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), XV-XVI, XVII.

## Appendix A:

### Crown Payments to Joan of Flanders' Custodians: 1343-1374

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Payment</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
William Frank	Oct 10, 1343 - Nov 18, 1346	5 marks/wk	charges of DOB/Household
	October 22, 1343	12 pounds	divers charges of DOB
	December 1, 1343	100 shillings	carriage/chests of DOB
	December 1, 1343	40 pounds	charges of DOB
	March 4, 1344	53 pounds 6 shillings 4 pence	contained expenses
	June 26, 1344	26 pounds 13 shillings 4 pence	contained expenses
	December 14, 1344	66 pounds 13 shillings 4 pence	contained expenses
	May 12, 1345	66 pounds 8 pence	contained expenses
	August 1, 1345	37 pounds 19 shillings 8 pence	contained expenses
	August 22, 1345	50 pounds	contained expenses
	February 18, 1346	71 pounds 3 shillings 5 pence	contained expenses
	February 28, 1346	13 shillings 4 pence	contained expenses
	March 1, 1346	10 pounds	contained expenses
	August 2, 1346	45 pounds	contained expenses
	Total: 557 pounds, 2 shillings, 5 pence halfpenny (162 weeks)		
Thomas de Haukeston	Nov 19, 1346- Nov 20, 1356	5 marks/wk	expenses of DOB/Household
	1346-1350 Total:	539 pounds, 13 shillings, 3 pence	
	1350-1355 Total:	567 pounds, 6 shillings, 5 pence	
	Average/Year:	105 pounds, 5 shillings, 9 pence	
John Delves	Dec 4, 1356-1369	as de Haukeston	expenses of DOB/Household
	Average/Year:	105 pounds	sustenance of DOB/ Household
	1356-1369 Total:	1365 pounds	
Rents and Issues from the following as long DOB is in his keeping:			
	Yearly	16 pounds	Manor Walton on Trent
	Yearly	40 pounds	wardship of lands of John de Langerville
	Yearly	81 pounds 17 shillings 10 pence	wardship of lands in Derby
	Yearly	39 pounds 6 shillings 3 pence	wardship of lands in Salop
Isabel Delves	Sept 12, 1369	105 pounds yearly	Executrix of will of John Delves
	September 12, 1369	as John	expenses of DOB/Household
	September 26, 1369 committed to keeping the DOB until further order as wife of late John Delves, by King's orders past, taking the same expenses as took for the Duchess 105 pounds yearly		
Godfrey Foljambe	Nov 12, 1370-1374	105 pounds yearly	keeping /expenses of DOB
	Total: 492 pounds		

**We know that Joan of Flanders was still alive as late as Tuesday, February 14, 1374 for there was another payment of 72 pounds to Godfrey Foljambe for the sustenance of the Duchess. She was 76 years old.**

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