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Nieus, Jean-François

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Jean-François NIEUS

**SIGARD'S BELT: THE FAMILY OF CHOCQUES
AND THE BORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD (CA. 980–1100)**

Starting from the remarkable late tenth-century mention of one Sigardus militaris cingulo laboris innexus in the liber traditionum of St Peters Abbey in Ghent, which seems to acknowledge the early presence of “knightly” profiles in the entourage of Count Arnulf II of Flanders (965–88), this chapter aims to provide new insight into the Flemish aristocracy and its involvement with warfare during the tenth and eleventh centuries. After discussing the literary and social context of Sigard (I)’s mention in the liber, this case study moves to the identification and characterisation of his eleventh-century descendants, who settled in the Artois region—especially Sigard (III) of Chocques (attested between 1065 and 1096), whose prominent career in Flanders, Hainault and England can be fairly well reconstructed. By shedding light on Sigard (I)’s descendants, on their achievements, involvement with local lordship, aristocratic networks, princely patronage and, ultimately, the “high politics” of their time, this study also sheds retrospective light on the status of their tenth-century ancestor. This man, considered in previous scholarship to be a lowly individual because of his supposedly subordinate military activities, must in fact have been a very prominent member of the Flemish nobility of his day.

The counts of Flanders have a reputation of being ambitious and powerful princes whose successes relied upon their extensive military resources. Count Arnulf I, styled “the Great” (918–65), indeed made considerable—though in part ephemeral—southward territorial expansion by warfare.¹ A century later, his successors were routinely awarded an ample money fief by the Anglo-Norman monarchs in exchange for the service of hundreds of knights: the oldest recorded agreement, in 1101, stipulates that no fewer than 1,000 knights or

1. Anton C.F. Koch, “Het graafschap Vlaanderen van de 9^{de} eeuw tot 1070,” in *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15 vols. (Haarlem: Fibula-van Dishoeck, 1977–83), I (1980): 354–83, at 367–69; Jean-François Nieus, “Montreuil et l’expansion du comté de Flandre au X^e siècle,” in *Quentovic. Environnement, archéologie, histoire. Actes du colloque international de Montreuil-sur-Mer, Étaples et Le Touquet et de la journée d’études de Lille sur les origines de Montreuil-sur-Mer (11–13 mai 2006 et 1^{er} décembre 2006)*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, Bruno Béthouart, and Laurent Verslype (Lille: Éditions du Conseil scientifique de l’Université de Lille 3, 2010): 493–505, at 494–98; Fraser McNair, “The Young King and the Old Count: Around the Flemish Succession Crisis of 965,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 95 (2017): 145–62.

mounted soldiers (*milites, equites*) were to be supplied within forty days of a summons.² The mobilisation of such an impressive force was only conceivable in a very deeply militarised society. However, the military organisation of tenth- and eleventh-century Flanders, as well as its politically, socially and culturally correlated features, remains effectively beyond the reach of today's historians.³ Extremely scarce evidence even makes the simple study of the noble class, which must have been the backbone of Flemish armies, difficult before the twelfth century.⁴ In this context, investigating the early relationship between aristocratic status and military practice in this part of Europe sounds like an impossible challenge; however in one case at least something can be said.

This case study starts from the examination of a high-ranking *miles* (although that particular substantive was not applied to him) in the entourage of Count Arnulf II (965–88), before moving on to the identification and characterisation of his descendants in the eleventh century. By shedding light on his descendants' achievements in this period, on their involvement with local lordship, aristocratic networks, princely patronage and, ultimately, "high politics" of their time, this study also sheds retrospective light on the status of their tenth-century ancestor. Very few great noblemen came out of nowhere in the Middle Ages. They were the beneficiaries of generations of local competition and acquisitions. This man, then, considered in previous scholarship to be a low-profile individual because of his supposedly subordinate military activities, must in fact have been a very prominent member of the Flemish nobility of his day.

2. Pierre Chaplais, ed., *Diplomatic Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office. Vol. 1: 1101–1272* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1964), 1–4, no. 1. See Eljas Oksanen, *Flanders and the Anglo-Norman World, 1066–1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 54–68.

3. This early period is virtually absent from the classical study by Jan-Frans Verbruggen, *Het leger en de vloot van de graven van Vlaanderen vanaf het ontstaan tot in 1305* (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 1960). Only sporadic pre-1100 evidence surfaces in Dirk Heirbaut, "De militaire rol van de feodaliteit in het graafschap Vlaanderen gedurende de 11^{de} en 12^{de} eeuw," *Revue belge d'histoire militaire* 29 (1992): 311–18, and Jean-François Nieus, "Avouerie et service militaire en Flandre au XI^e siècle," in *Nouveaux regards sur l'avouerie. Les avoués des abbayes et des sièges épiscopaux entre Loire et Rhin (fin XI^e–milieu XIII^e siècle). Acte du colloque de Namur, 4–5 février 2016*, ed. Nicolas Ruffini-Ronzani (Turnhout, Brepols: forthcoming).

4. As exemplified by the monumental study by Ernest Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel vóór 1300*, 3 vols. (Handzame: Familia et Patria, 1968). English translation: *The Flemish Nobility Before 1300*, 4 vols. (Kortrijk: G. Desmet-Huysman, 1974–76).

The Question of Sigard's Belt

The earliest mentions of *milites* in Flemish charter material are relatively late and inconsistent. They increase slowly from the 1040s and 1050s onwards,⁵ in contexts where they seem to refer more to vassal dependence than to a personal or corporate status focused on martial activities.⁶ Narrative sources such as the much-studied *Miracula sancti Ursuari* (ca. 1060) and *Vita sancti Arnulfi Suessoniensis* (after 1087) may well throw slightly more light on early “kighthood” or warring elites in Flanders, yet they do not predate the second half of

5. An isolated, though interesting, exception is provided by a 1016 charter in which appears a *Walonem quendam nobilem militem*, apparently a substantial landowner in the region of Saint-Omer. This charter has long been suspect (mainly because of its very unusual vocabulary), but its authenticity has been confirmed in recent scholarship: Benoît-Michel Tock, “Les mutations du vocabulaire latin des chartes au XI^e siècle,” *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 155 (1997): 119–48, at 142–48 (with an edition); Laurent Morelle, “Pratiques médiévales de l'écrit documentaire. Conférences de l'année 2014–2015,” *Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes études. Résumés des conférences et travaux* 147 (2016): 155–60 (draws on a lecture given by Jean-Charles Bédague, who completed a Ph.D. on the archive of Notre-Dame of Saint-Omer in 2014). It is now established that the 1016 charter was copied in a now-lost eleventh-century hagiographical manuscript of Notre-Dame. According to Bédague, the charter may have been composed by the author of a *vita* once preserved in this manuscript, hence it unusual, “literary” vocabulary.

6. A preliminary search through the charter texts encoded or calendared in *Diplomata Belgica. The Diplomatic Sources from the Medieval Southern Low Countries*, ed. Thérèse de Hemptinne, Jeroen Deploige, Jean-Louis Kupper, and Walter Prevenier (Brussels: Royal Historical Commission, since 2015), accessed 1 March 2018, <http://www.diplomata-belgica.be>, suggests that, apart from an isolated case in 1016 (see above, n. 5), the earliest reliable mention of *milites* is to be found in a 1042 comital charter for Saint-Bertin, whose witness list ends with the names of five men, each styled *miles*, who were vassals of the local advocate: J.-F. Nieuw and Steven Vanderputten, “Diplôme princier, matrice de faux, acte modèle. Le règlement d'avouerie du comte Baudouin V pour Saint-Bertin (1042) et ses réappropriations sous l'abbatiate réformateur de Lambert (1095–1123),” *The Medieval Low Countries* 1 (2014): 1–59, at 50–53. Later on, in 1051, the Count of Saint-Pol (in the southern part of Flanders) is reported to have enfeoffed land *cuidam suorum militum*: Daniel Haigneré, ed., *Les chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le grand cartulaire de Dom Charles-Joseph Dewitte*, 4 vols. (Saint-Omer: Société des Antiquaires de la Morinie, 1886–99), 1: 26, no. 73. In 1051 again, Robert, subadvocate of Saint-Amé in Douai, is styled *miles* in a witness list to his own charter, which possibly refers to his being a vassal of both the castellan of Douai and the Count of Flanders: Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, 1 G 194, no. 1004 (see Cédric Giraud, Jean-Baptiste Renault, and Benoît-Michel Tock, eds., *Chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées en France* (Nancy: Centre de médiévistique Jean Schneider/Orléans: Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, 2010), accessed 1 March 2018, <http://www.cn-telma.fr/originaux>, no. 374). Robert's probable predecessor *Witselinus* also appears as the castellan's *miles* in an undated deed: Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, 1 G 194, no. 1005 (see Giraud, Renault, and Tock, eds., *Chartes originales*, no. 372). Further *milites* sporadically pop up in the entourages of the bishops of Thérouanne and Cambrai during the 1060s.

the eleventh century.⁷ Therefore, the remarkable appearance of a certain *Sigardus, militaris cingulo laboris innexus*, in a Flemish diplomatic document dating back to the late tenth century deserves our special attention. The celebrated *liber traditionum* of St Peter's Abbey in Ghent, a unique source for the history of Flanders at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries, actually mentions this Sigard on three occasions.⁸ In what appears to be a shortened version of a solemn charter dated 982, we can see this Sigard, "equipped with the belt of military duty," giving the monks his allodial *villa* of Boëseghem with its dependencies, including a church, a mill and several tenants, in the presence of Count Arnulf II.⁹ Thirteen years later, in 995, Sigard, presumably the same man, donated another estate located in the eastern part of the county, in Bambrugge.¹⁰ And finally, in 1002, Sigard, then styled *vir quidam divę memorię* (hence probably on his deathbed), added to his previous gifts a church in Terdeghem, with the consent of his three sons Ermenfrid, Adam and Erluin.¹¹ Terdeghem, designated as Sigard's *hereditas*, is located near Cassel, some fifteen kilometres north of the aforementioned *villa* of Boëseghem (Fig. 5.1).

7. For the *Miracula Ursmari*, see now Paulo Charruadas, "Principauté territoriale, reliques et Paix de Dieu. Le comté de Flandre et l'abbaye de Lobbes à travers les *Miracula S. Ursmari in itinere per Flandriam facta* (vers 1060)," *Revue du Nord* 89 (2007): 703–28; Jehangir Malegam, "No Peace for the Wicked: Conflicting Visions of Peacemaking in an Eleventh-Century Monastic Narrative," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 39 (2008): 23–49. The *Vita Arnulfi* has been recently republished: Lisiardus and Hariulfus, *Vita, Miracula, Translatio et alia Hagiographica sancti Arnulphi episcopi Suessoniensis*, ed. Renée I.A. Nip, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis 285 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

8. Arnold Fayen, ed., *Liber traditionum Sancti Petri Blandiniensis* (Ghent: F. Meyer-Van Lood, 1906), 96, no. 91 (982); 94, no. 102 (995); 100, no. 106 (1002). This is actually St Peter's second *liber traditionum*, compiled in the 1040s: Georges Declercq, "Monastic Cartularies, Institutional Memory and the Canonization of the Past. The Two *Libri Traditionum* of St Peter's Abbey, Ghent," in *Manuscript and Memory in Religious Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Renée Nip (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015—special issue of *The Medieval Low Countries* 2 (2015)), 37–72, at 56–62; idem, "La mise en livre des archives du haut Moyen Âge: le cas du second *liber traditionum* de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin (milieu du XI^e siècle)," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 171 (2013, published 2017): 327–64.

9. Fayen, ed., *Liber traditionum*, 96, no. 91. For the identification of *Busingim* with Boëseghem (Fr., dép. Nord, arr. Dunkerque, cant. Hazebrouck): Maurits Gysseling, *Toponymisch woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West-Duitsland (vóór 1226)*, 2 vols. (Tongeren: Belgisch Interuniversitair Centrum voor Neerlandistiek, 1960), 1: 157.

10. Fayen, ed., *Liber traditionum*, 94, no. 102. Bambrugge: Belg., prov. East Flanders, arr. Aalst.

11. *Ibid.*, 100, no. 106. Terdeghem: Fr., dép. Nord, arr. Dunkerque, cant. Wormhout.

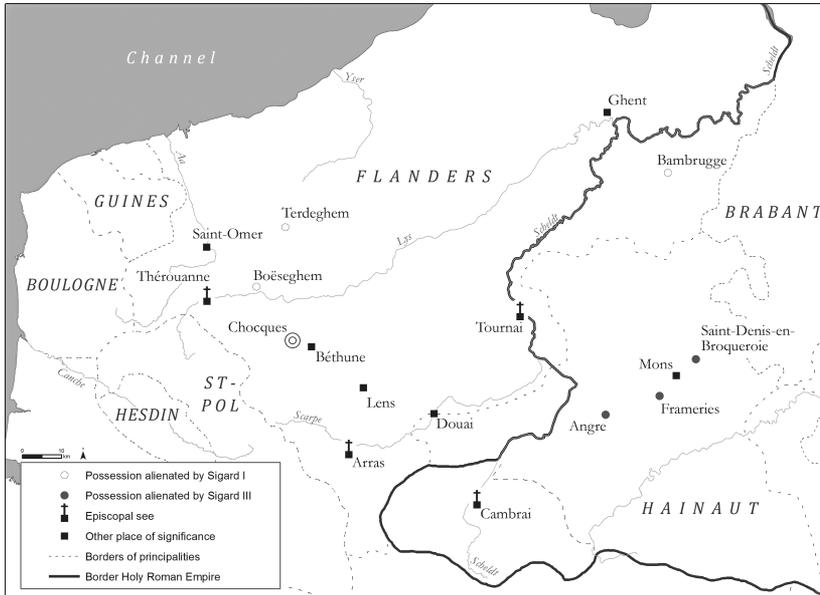


Fig. 5.1—Possessions of the family of Chocques (Map: Hans Blomme).

This man and his “belt of military duty” have attracted some (superficial) scholarly attention. Ernest Warlop, in his comprehensive study of the Flemish nobility, mentioned him only for observing that he was certainly not a noble, for St Peter’s *liber traditionum* does not tell us he was.¹² Warlop deduced from the epithet *militaris* (which he erroneously considered as referring to *Sigardus* himself) that Sigard was an early (and rich) knight. The French medievalist Régine Le Jan, for her part, has commented that Sigard’s designation as a man “equipped with the belt of military duty” is one of the earliest examples of a positive appreciation of the “military profession” (*le métier militaire*) north of the river Seine, a “profession” practised in this case by a “rich allodial landowner.”¹³ Le Jan’s understanding of warfare as a “professional” performance may of course need reassessment in this context, yet several objective conclusions can indeed be drawn from the Ghent *liber traditionum*. Firstly, Sigard can be described accurately as a substantial landowner. He did possess estates in several parts of the County of Flanders, although his core patrimony, with his allods and

12. Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel*, 1: 101 and 105 n. 369.

13. Régine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII^e–X^e siècle). Essai d’anthropologie sociale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de la Sorbonne, 1995), 151.

inherited lands, seems to have been concentrated in the southern part of the county, within the future castellany of Cassel. Secondly, Sigard must have been closely connected to the comital authority. Count Arnulf attended the ceremony when he gave Boëseghem to St Peter in 982, and the beneficiary of his repeated donations was a major Benedictine monastery in Flanders which enjoyed a privileged relationship with the prince.¹⁴ And finally, to the eyes of St Peter's monks, he was a man whose social identity was intimately associated with his commitment to warring activities.

Can we go further? On Sigard's account *stricto sensu*, without any further information in surviving records, the answer is no. It can only be added that the wording *militaris cingulo laboris (innexus)* was certainly not invented by St Peter's monks. It appears in a letter from Alcuin of York to Charlemagne, in an opposite formulation (*militaris cingulo laboris deposito*) metaphorically applied to Abbot Alcuin himself, and meaning something like "now in a retired veteran's life."¹⁵ What we can read here is thus a learned reference looking back to the Carolingian era. More broadly, this deliberate and thoughtful expression ostensibly echoed the antique *cingulum militiae*, worn by those entrusted with military responsibilities and somehow committed to public (or princely) service.¹⁶ But how should we interpret it in this case? In Warlop's mind, it makes Sigard a socially obscure knight in service to Count Arnulf II. Indeed, Warlop, writing in the 1960s, shared the then mainstream view that tenth- and eleventh-century *milites*—a term he mechanically associated with knighthood—were dependent, lower rank "professional" mounted warriors, as opposed to the count's *proceres*, i.e. the nobility, whose ostensible participation in warfare resulted from its social superiority, not from necessity.¹⁷ This traditional view has been widely challenged in recent historiography.

14. See Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process. Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900–1000* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2013), *passim*. One can add that Sigard also occurs among Count Arnulf's followers in a 983 document, where he is listed in a fairly prominent position: Fayen, ed., *Liber traditionum*, 97, no. 93.

15. *Alcuini sive Albini epistolae*, ed. Ernst Dummler, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Karolini Aevi 2* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 385–86, no. 240: "Ecce Flaccus effeto corpore militaris cingulo laboris deposito." See Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, "Les motifs épistolaires dans la correspondance d'Alcuin," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 111 (2004): 193–205, at 199.

16. Jean Flori, *L'essor de la chevalerie, XI^e–XII^e siècles* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 46–48.

17. Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel*, 1: esp. 33–34 and 95–108.

Dominique Barthélemy and others have emphasised both the polysemy of the *militia* lexical register and the persistent social importance of military action for all noblemen, from kings to petty lords, which implied an overall prevalence of the nobility in warfare.¹⁸ Accordingly, the Carolingian-style expression used in the Ghent *liber traditionum* might well have been intended to describe Sigard as a high-ranking military commander in service to the Count of Flanders.

This hypothesis can be indirectly substantiated. We have seen that Sigard had three sons, who were still alive in the early years of the eleventh century. Starting from this key information, it is possible to reconstruct Sigard's descent up to the early twelfth century. This is quite fortuitous, since Flemish sources do not usually allow us to discover biological continuities across the Year 1000.¹⁹ Nor do they otherwise unveil the identities of most of the aristocrats cited in comital documents—generally using a single name—well up to the mid-eleventh century. Exploring Sigard's offspring is the business of the rest of this paper. By reconstructing Sigard's family and the territories and interests it commanded throughout the eleventh century, we can get a retrospective view of Sigard's own place in his world, and what sort of a man might be a *miles* at the court of Arnulf I.

Sigard's Inheritance

“Sigard” (*Sigardus*, *Segardus*) appears to be an extremely rare name in Flanders, which obviously facilitates the genealogical side of the investigation.²⁰ A man called Sigard surfaces in two mid-eleventh

18. See especially Dominique Barthélemy, “Qu'est-ce que la chevalerie, en France aux X^e et XI^e siècles?,” *Revue historique* 290 (1993): 15–74; idem, “Note sur le ‘titre chevaleresque’, en France au XI^e siècle,” *Journal des savants* (1994): 101–34; and the relevant chapters in idem, *La mutation de l'an mil a-t-elle eu lieu? Servage et chevalerie dans la France des X^e et XI^e siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), and idem, *La chevalerie, de la Germanie antique à la France du XII^e siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Perrin, 2012). For a recent state of the debate: Richard W. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 63–84.

19. Despite exhaustive research, Ernest Warlop only found two or three ascertainable tenth-century ancestors of Flemish noble families: Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel*, 1: 38–54.

20. The only “Sigard” mentioned in Warlop's dissertation is our Sigard I: *ibid.*, 101 and 105. A certain canon of Thérouanne named *Seigardus* or *Sichardus* (fl. 1073) may have been a relative, as also one *Sicardus*, dean of Notre-Dame of Saint-Omer (fl. 1076): Théodore Duchet and Arthur Giry, ed., *Cartulaires de l'église de Térouane* (Saint-Omer: Société des antiquaires de la Morinie, 1881), 3–4, nos. 3–4; Jean-Charles Bédague, “Grégoire VII contre les évêques de Thérouanne. Les chanoines séculiers de Saint-Omer

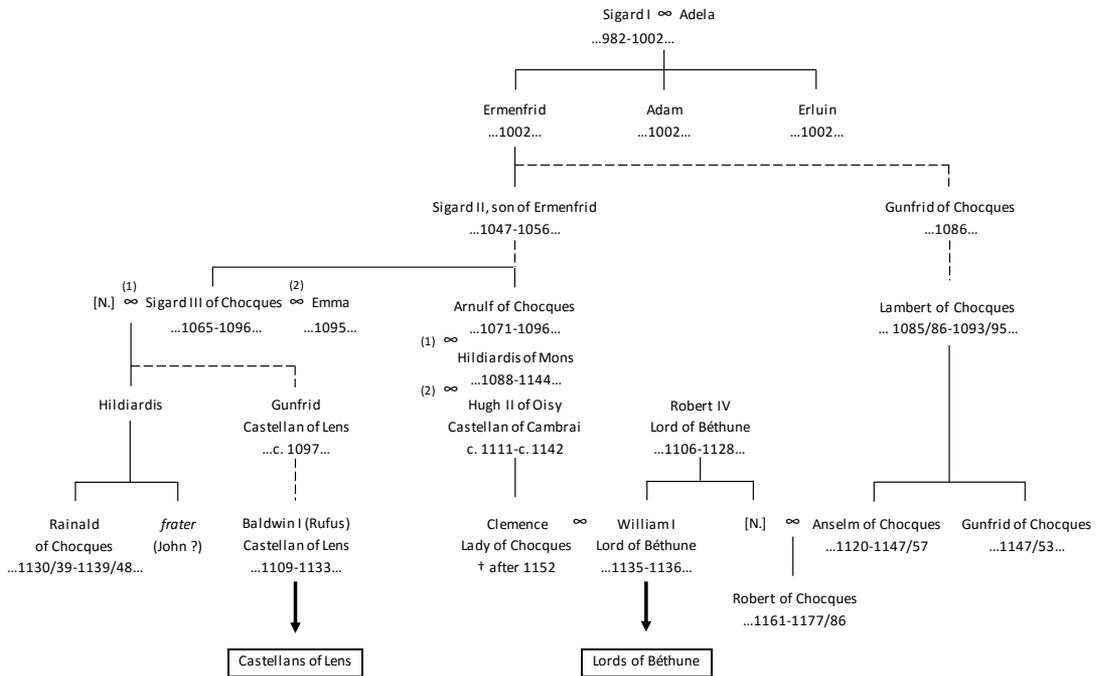


Fig. 5.2—Sigard I's descendants up to the twelfth century.

century comital charters—which may be regarded as significant, for a mere six authentic charter texts have been left from Count Baldwin V's government (1035–67).²¹ Both documents were issued by Baldwin V for St Peter's Abbey, and both deal with the advocacy of St Peter's *villa* of Harnes in the region of Lens.²² In the second charter,

au secours de la papauté," in *Schismes, dissidences, oppositions. La France et le Saint-Siège avant Boniface VIII. Actes de la 6^e Table Ronde sur la Gallia Pontificia, 29 mai 2009*, ed. Bernard Barbiche and Rolf Grosse (Paris: École Nationale des Chartes/Deutsches Historisches Institut, 2012), 59–94.

21. Nieus and Vanderputten, "Diplôme princier," 20 n. 69.

22. Maurits Gysseling and Anton C.F. Koch (ed.), *Diplomata belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Belgisch Interuniversitair Centrum voor Neerlandistiek, 1950), 1: 201–2, no. 96 (1047: "signa ... Segardi"); Auguste Van Lokeren, ed., *Chartes et documents de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre, au Mont-Blandin, à Gand*, 2 vols. (Ghent: Hoste, 1868–71), 1: 95–96, no. 133 (1056: "Signum Segardi filii Ermenfridi"). The latter document has been reworked, but its witness list is reliable: Philip Grierson, "A visit of Earl Harold to Flanders in 1056," *English historical review* 51 (1936): 90–97; G. Declercq, "Van privaatoorkonde tot vorstelijke oorkonde. De oorkonden van de eerste graven van Vlaanderen, inzonderheid voor de Sint-Pietersabdij te Gent (10^{de}–11^{de} eeuw)," in *Chancelleries princières et scriptoria dans les anciens Pays-Bas, X^e–XI^e siècles*, ed. Thérèse de Hemptinne and Jean-Marie Duvosquel (Brussels: Commission royale d'his-

Sigard (II) is reported as “the son of Ermenfrid,” which makes him a probable grandson of Sigard (I) (Fig. 5.2). We know nothing about him, except that, in the footsteps of his grandfather, he attended the comital court and apparently had roots in southern Flanders. Later on, in the last third of the eleventh century, we have regular mention of a further Sigard, known as “Sigard of Chocques.”²³ There is every reason to think that this Sigard (III) was a son of Sigard (II). He has gained some notoriety among historians thanks to his inclusion as a “tenant-in-chief” in the English *Domesday Book*.²⁴

Things become interesting indeed with Sigard III, since there is an unusual amount of evidence available on him. First of all, he and his relatives were consistently associated in documents with the place-name Chocques (Table 5.1). This place, located between Lillers and Béthune in the Artois region (some twenty kilometres from Sigard I's *villa* of Boëseghem), has never been discussed by the historians of medieval Flanders.²⁵ Still, there are strong indications that Chocques played a significant role in the early shaping of regional powers in the southern part of Flanders. The Norman chronicler William of Jumièges reports that shortly before 1030 Count Baldwin IV (988–1035) was expelled from Flanders by his son, the future Baldwin V, and took refuge in Normandy. Duke Robert I (1027–35) then launched an attack on Flanders, aimed at restoring the old count. His campaign is described as a successful *Blitzkrieg*: he besieged and burned the castle of Chocques (*castrum quod Cioca vocabatur*) with its defenders, which immediately prompted other Flemish magnates (*reliqui proceres*) to ask for peace.²⁶ One can infer from William's nar-

toire, 2010— special issue of *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 176 (2010)), 41–77, at 58. Harnes: Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. Lens, cant. Harnes.

23. See below.

24. Katharine S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents, 1066–1166. I. Domesday Book* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 419–20.

25. Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. and cant. Béthune. Extant literature is limited to a bare notice by Adolphe de Cardevacque in the *Dictionnaire historique et archéologique du département du Pas-de-Calais. Arrondissement de Béthune*, 2 vols. (Arras: Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais, 1875), 1: 175–83.

26. William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, 6.6, ed. Elisabeth Van Houts, vol. 2 of *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 52–53: “Cuius [= Baldwin IV] calamitatem dux miseratus contractis militum viribus, velut turbo horridus a patria egressus, Flandoniam est adorsus, illam exterminans flammis exitialibus. Progrediensque ad castrum quod Cioca vocabatur, confestim illud subvertit, combustis omnibus in eo consistentibus. Videntes autem reliqui proceres et similia pati formidantes, relicto filio,

rative that Chocques was by 1030 a key stronghold in southern Flanders. Later records, from twelfth-century descriptions to as late as the “Napoleonic” cadastre, confirm that Chocques was indeed the site of a very significant fortification.²⁷ When registered on the map of early Flemish castles tentatively sketched by Adriaan Verhulst in 1976,²⁸ Chocques only looks like another link on a regular alignment of castles running from Saint-Omer to Douai, directly south of the “Neuf-Fossé,” a huge earthwork possibly dug in the mid-eleventh century for Baldwin V.²⁹ However, this alignment is not as consistent as it might seem at first sight. It is possible that by 1030 Chocques and Béthune were the only existing fortifications between Saint-Omer and Lens.³⁰ I would tentatively suggest that Chocques was built by the Counts of Flanders at an early date, conceivably as part of a strategic response to the formation of autonomous counties and lordships in the southern region. Béthune, for instance, might have been one of the targeted local lordships, as it is only four kilometres from Chocques.³¹ This theory, as fragile as it may seem, is nevertheless backed by the fact that

ad patrem sunt reversi, obsides dirigentes duci.” (“Full of compassion for the count’s misfortune the duke assembled all his warriors and like a fearsome whirlwind left the country for Flanders, which he wasted with fire. Upon his arrival at the stronghold of Chocques, he quickly seized it and burnt it down with everyone in it. Seeing this, the other magnates were terrified that they might be treated in the same way. They abandoned the son and returned to the father, handing over hostages to the duke.”) For the historical context, see Koch, “Het graafschap Vlaanderen,” 376, and Jean-François Nieus, *Un pouvoir comtal entre Flandre et France: Saint-Pol, 1000–1300* (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 2005), 54.

27. Raoul Van Caenegem, “The Sources of Flemish History in the Liber Floridus,” in *Liber Floridus Colloquium. Papers Read at the International Meeting Held at the University Library Ghent, 1957* (Ghent: Story-Scientia, 1973), 71–85, at her 84 (*Soccas* is cited in a 1120 list of major Flemish *castella*); André Duchesne, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Béthune* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1639), *Preuves*: 25–26 (1147 x 1163); Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 3 P 224, nos. 18–23 (“Napoleonic” cadastre, available online: “Plan cadastraux,” accessed 1 March 2018, <http://www.archivespasdecalais.fr/Archives-en-ligne/Plans-cadastraux>). The 1837 cadastre still shows the lineaments of large earthworks in the village centre, next to the parish church.

28. Adriaan Verhulst, “Die gräfliche Burgenverfassung in Flandern im Hochmittelalter,” in *Die Burgen im deutschen Sprachraum. Ihre rechts- und verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, ed. Hans Patze, 2 vols. (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1976), 1: 267–82.

29. Bernard Delmaire, *Le diocèse d’Arras de 1093 au milieu du XIV^e siècle. Recherches sur la vie religieuse dans le nord de la France au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols. (Arras: Commission départementale d’histoire et d’archéologie du Pas-de-Calais, 1994), 1: 27.

30. Aire and Lillers castles may not have existed before the mid-eleventh century: Brigitte Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem? Het ontstaan en de hervorming van de kanonikale instellingen in Vlaanderen tot circa 1155*, 2 vols. (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2000), 1: 483–86 and 496–99. Houdain could be even more recent: *ibid.*, 506–8.

31. The ill-documented, but definitely ancient, origins of Béthune are discussed by Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem?*, 1: 502–4. Béthune: Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. and cant. Béthune.

the Count of Flanders owned the church of Chocques until 1067.³² It would imply that Sigard and his heirs were initially entrusted with the custody of a princely fortress—or, at the very least, that they settled in this place with full comital support.

However, what we can see in Chocques at a later stage strongly resembles what we see in every other castellan lordship in the Artois region. The castle of Chocques appears to be the heart of a coherent local barony,³³ whose lords apparently behaved just like other magnates in the area. The aforementioned *Gesta* of William of Jumièges inform us that it was held around 1030 by a *procer* who had joined Young Baldwin's rebellion. This *procer* was most certainly Ermenfrid or his son Sigard II. Indeed, what we can learn about the subsequent family history (notably thanks to the early charters of the abbey of St John Baptist in Chocques) reveals that Sigard II once held Chocques in shared lordship with a brother named Gunfrid (Illustration 5.2); this configuration necessarily implies that the whole barony had once been in the possession of their father Ermenfrid.³⁴ This situation of divided lordship, which would evolve by the 1060s into a further and long lasting division into three shares,³⁵ deserves a brief digression. Far from there being any strong impulse towards primogeniture at this time, division between multiple sons was a relatively common, though ill-studied, practice among Northern French aristocratic families in the eleventh century. It was by no means simply the sort of behaviour of lesser families indifferent to their lineage, for we can also observe it in the greatest of houses, where one would imagine that anxiety about

32. Alexandre Pruvost, ed., *Chronique et cartulaire de l'abbaye de Bergues-Saint-Winoc, de l'ordre de saint Benoît*, 2 vols. (Bruges: de Zuttere, 1875–78), 1: 57–63; Baldwin V gives away two-thirds of the local tithe, i.e. the *ecclesia*.

33. The components of this barony can be traced in the archive of St John Baptist, Chocques: Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 25 H. I am currently completing a critical edition of this archive.

34. Of critical importance in St John Baptist's archive are three episcopal confirmations of all donations made to this religious house by the late eleventh-century co-lords of Chocques and their successors: Abbé Robert, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Chocques, ordre de Saint-Augustin, au diocèse de Saint-Omer* (Saint-Omer: Société des antiquaires de la Morinie, 1876), 532–44, nos. 4, 5 and 7 (1120, 1138 and 1147). A careful analysis of these documents has shown that the late eleventh-century co-lords were Sigard III, his brother Arnulf and their uncle Gunfrid's heir Lambert. It also appears that the assets possessed by Sigard III and his brother originated from a coherent set of lands and rights, in all likelihood their father's own share of inheritance. For more details, see Jean-François Nieus, "Stratégies seigneuriales anglo-flamandes après 1066. L'honor de Chocques et la famille de Béthune," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 95 (2017): 163–92, at 173–8.

35. See above, n. 34.

the dignity of a lineage would demand the concentration of resources on one son in every generation.³⁶ Partable inheritance between several heirs, and especially between brothers, was indeed the practice in significant castellan lordships such as Picquigny in 1066 (with two *domini castri*), Ardres in 1070 (three relatives *Ardam tenentibus*), Aubigny-en-Artois in 1093 (three *seniores castri*), and even the County of Saint-Pol in 1078 (two brothers jointly styled *comites de castro Sancti Pauli*).³⁷ What the eleventh-century partitions of Chocques might also suggest is that, around the year 1000, Ermenfrid had not inherited the widespread estates of his father Sigard I, but only the portion of lands where the family fortress was to be erected before 1030.

Sigard III and the Destiny of Chocques

Let us now turn to the defining character of this family saga, namely Sigard III, alias “Sigard of Chocques.” A dozen of his attestations to princely charters, ranging from 1065 to the mid-1090s, have been collected (Table 5.1).³⁸ They give us a partial glimpse of the loyalties that

36. On this topic, see the fundamental study by Hélène Débax, *La seigneurie collective. Pairs, pariers, paratge: les coseigneurs du XI^e au XIII^e siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), which focuses on southern French “pariages,” but makes insightful comparisons with Northern France and the German Empire (especially at 80–87). I fully agree with Débax’s statement (86) that “le morcellement successoral et les coseigneuries ont été très largement sous-estimés par les historiens des régions septentrionales, bien souvent engagés dans cette voie par des codifications juridiques du XIII^e siècle—ou postérieures—qui énonçaient clairement des principes inverses. La coseigneurie générée par des partages successoraux semble beaucoup plus répandue qu’il n’a longtemps été affirmé.” For a comparable debate in English historiography, where the dominance of primogeniture in medieval society was an article of faith for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see the challenging study by James C. Holt, “Politics and Property in Early Medieval England,” *Past & Present* 57 (1972): 3–52, and for the historiographical background, David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900–1300* (Harlow: Longman, 2005), 116–21. See also Sara McDougall, “The Chivalric Family” in this volume.

37. Picquigny (Fr., dép. Somme, arr. Amiens, cant. Ailly-sur-Somme): *Gallia christiana*, 16 vols. (Paris: Typographia Regia, 1716–65), 10 (1751): *Instrumenta*, cols. 290–91, no. 9.—Ardres (Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. Calais, cant. Calais 2): Duchet and Giry, eds., *Cartulaires de l’église de Térouane*, 2, no. 2.—Aubigny-en-Artois (Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. Arras, cant. Avesnes-le-Comte): Fernand Vercauteren, ed., *Actes des comtes de Flandre, 1071–1128* (Brussels: Commission royale d’histoire, 1938), 54–57, no. 17.—Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise (Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. Arras, cant. Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise): Julius von Pflugk-Harttung, ed., *Acta pontificum Romanorum inedita. Vol. 2: Urkunden der Päpste vom Jahre c. 97 bis zum Jahre 1197* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1884), 134–35, no. 167.

38. 1065: Charles Duvivier, *Quelles étaient l’importance et les limites du Pagus Hainouensis jusqu’au XI^e siècle ?*, 2 vols., Mémoires et publications, 2nd s. 9 (Mons: Société des sciences, des arts et des lettres du Hainaut, 1863–64), 2: 411–12, no. 50.—1069: Aubertus

shaped his rich life story. He first appears in the entourage of Baldwin V's son in Hainaut, in the period when the soon-to-be Baldwin VI of Flanders (1067–70) was indeed still Baldwin I, Count of Hainaut (thanks to his marriage with Countess Richilde in 1051). A few years later, in 1071, he is seen with Baldwin I/VI's son, Count Arnulf III (1070–71), and next with his widow, Countess Richilde (d. 1087). These occurrences are followed by an eight-year gap, which is actually a fourteen-year gap, if we consider that in 1080, when subscribing a Flemish charter, Sigard was not really attending Robert the Frisian's (1071–93) court: he was only escorting Count Eustace II of Boulogne and Lens (1047–87) there. Afterwards, from 1086 on, Sigard occurs repeatedly not in Flanders, but in Hainaut, in the entourage of Count Baldwin II (1071–98), the surviving son of Baldwin I/VI. His apparent withdrawal and later repositioning in Hainaut³⁹ are obviously linked to the political turmoil after the death of Baldwin I/VI, which resulted in Robert the Frisian's accession in Flanders.⁴⁰ We know from the genealogical writing called *Flandria Generosa* that a contingent of men from Chocques, presumably led by Sigard and his uncle Gunfrid, fought at the Battle of Cassel (February 1071) on the side of Arnulf III and his mother Richilde, together with other contingents raised by the counts and castellan lords from southern Flanders, Artois and

Miraeus and Johannes Franciscus Foppens, *Opera diplomatica et historica*, 4 vols. (Louvain: A. Denique, 1723–48), 1: 158.—1071: *Gallia christiana*, 3 (1725): *Instrumenta*, cols. 855–56.—1071: Karl Hanquet, ed., *La chronique de Saint-Hubert dite Cantatorium* (Brussels: Commission royale d'histoire, 1906), 68 (I am grateful to Nicolas Ruffini-Ronzani for this reference).—1080: Vercauteren, *Actes des comtes*, 11–16, no. 5 (a later edition by Jan Dhondt, "Bijdrage tot het cartularium van Meesen (1065–1334)," *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis* 106 (1941): 95–234, at 164–71, gives a corrupt version of Sigard's subscription).—1086: Jules Dewez, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre d'Hasnon* (Lille: Imprimerie de l'Orphelinat de Don Bosco, 1890), 562–65, charter A.—1087: Miraeus and Foppens, *Opera diplomatica*, 1: 515; 1088: Duvivier, *Quelles étaient l'importance*, 457–58, no. 72.—1089: *ibid.*, 448–50, no. 68.—1091: Miraeus and Foppens, *Opera diplomatica*, 4: 186.—1086 x 1093: Duchet and Giry, eds., *Cartulaires de l'église de Térouane*, 5, no. 5.—1092 x 1096: Alphonse Wauters, "Exploration de chartes et de cartulaires belges existants à la Bibliothèque nationale à Paris," *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 4^e sér. 2 (1875): 78–198, at 182–84, no. 4.—1095 x 1096: Jean-Pierre Gerzaguët, *Les chartes de l'abbaye d'Anchin (1079–1201)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 104–5, no. 13.

39. This years-long "withdrawal" might partly result from a documentary bias, for we only have two charters issued by Countess Richilde and her son Baldwin for the period 1072–1085: Duvivier, *Quelles étaient l'importance*, 440–43, nos. 64–65 (1081 and 1082).

40. Thérèse de Hemptinne, "Vlaanderen en Henegouwen onder de erfgenamen van de Boudewijns, 1070–1244," in *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 2 (1982): 372–98, at 372–77.

Table 5.1—Attestations to charters by Sigard III, Arnulf and Lambert of Chocques.

| Date | Author | Beneficiary | Mention |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1065 | Hainaut (count) | St-Ghislain (abb.) | <i>Signum [...]</i> <i>Segardi de Mochis</i> (sic) |
| 1069 | Thérouanne (bishop) | Ardres (chap.) | <i>S. Sichardi de Scoches</i> |
| 1071 | Flanders-Hainaut (count) | Hasnon (abb.) | <i>Signum Segardi et Arnulphi de Joches</i> |
| 1071 | Hainaut (countess) | St-Hubert (abb.) | <i>testibus [...]</i> <i>Segardo, Arnulpho</i> (calend.) |
| 1080 | Flanders (count) | Messines (abb.) | <i>Signum Segardi</i> |
| 1086 | Hainaut (count) | Hasnon (abb.) | <i>Segardus, Arnulfus</i> |
| 1087 | Hainaut (count) | Hasnon (abb.) | <i>Signum Segardi de Joches [...]</i> , <i>signum Ernulphi de Joches</i> |
| 1088 | Hainaut (count) | Hautmont (abb.) | <i>Signum Sigardi, Signum Arnulfi</i> |
| 1089 | Hainaut (count) | St-Denis-en-Broqueroie (abb.) | <i>Signum Segardi de Ceocs</i> |
| 1091 | Hainaut (count) | Crespin (abb.) | <i>Signum Segardi de Crocs</i> (sic), <i>signum Ernulphi fratris eius</i> |
| 1086 x 93 | — (notice) | Thérouanne (bishop) | <i>Arnulfus et Segardus et Lambertus de Chochis</i> |
| 1092 x 96 | Hainaut (count) | Hasnon (abb.) | <i>Ernulfus de Crois</i> (sic) |
| 1095 x 96 | Flanders (count) | Hesdin (priory) | <i>S. Segardi et Arnulfi de Coches</i> |

References: see footnote 38.

Hainaut.⁴¹ For Sigard and his relatives Robert the Frisian's crushing victory generated a long-term estrangement from the Flemish branch of the comital dynasty. Likewise, many noble families from the southern part of Flanders rejected the new prince and searched for alternative patronage, especially in the contemporary Eldorado of the Anglo-Norman realms.

41. *Flandria generosa usque ad annum 1164*, chap. 19, ed. Ludwig C. Bethmann, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* (in Folio) 9 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1851), 313–25, at 322. This text was mainly written in the 1130s: Jean-Marie Moeglin, “Une première histoire nationale flamande: l’Ancienne chronique de Flandre (XII^e–XIII^e siècles),” in *Liber Largitorius. Études d’histoire médiévale offertes à Pierre Toubert par ses élèves*, ed. Dominique Barthélemy and Jean-Marie Martin (Geneva: Droz, 2003), 455–76, at 456–57. It speaks of *Jochenses*, which is an intriguing spelling, but some charters also have the form *Joches* (see Table 1).

Eljas Oksanen, in his recent study on the relations between England and Flanders, has skilfully outlined the massive participation of aristocrats originating from southern Flanders and Artois in the Norman conquest and colonisation of England—not least the very influential Count of Boulogne, Eustace II.⁴² Oksanen has also identified, within the Artesian group of Flemish participants, a nexus of people somehow linked to the former County of Lens (now in Eustace II's hands), perhaps brought together by Countess Judith, daughter of the last Count of Lens and one of the wealthiest Domesday tenants-in-chief.⁴³ Sigard III and his uncle Gunfrid were among those who crossed the Channel and chose to settle in England. Both are recorded in the *Domesday Book* as holding estates in Northamptonshire, the county where most Artesian immigrants were indeed granted land.⁴⁴ They were not major Domesday tenants, yet they did as well in terms of land grants as any other Flemish tenant-in-chief.⁴⁵ Since their activities in England are not further documented, we will pass by the question of why William the Conqueror favoured them. Their military skills were certainly to be employed as the Norman monarchy seized control of the English kingdom, but we should probably not forget that an ecclesiastic called Arnulf of Chocques (d. 1118) was at the time schoolmaster of the abbey of Holy Trinity in Caen and a tutor to William's daughter Cecilia.⁴⁶ Arnulf's parentage cannot be established, but he was most probably kin to the lords of Chocques—Sigard III had a brother named Arnulf.⁴⁷ Whatever the case, Sigard and Gunfrid's connections with

42. Oksanen, *Flanders*, esp. 178–208 and his chapter “Knights, Mercenaries and Paid Soldiers: Military Identities in the Anglo-Norman Regnum” in this volume. See also Johan Verberckmoes, “Flemish Tenants-in-Chief in Domesday England,” *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 66 (1988): 725–56.

43. Oksanen, *Flanders*, 203–4.

44. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, 239–41 (Gunfrid) and 419–20 (Sigard).

45. Verberckmoes, “Flemish Tenants-in-Chief,” 731 and 737–39; Oksanen, *Flanders*, 188–91.

46. He would later become Duke Robert Curthose's chaplain and Patriarch of Jerusalem: Raymonde Foreville, “Un chef de la première croisade: Arnoul Malcouronné,” *Bulletin philologique et historique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1953–4): 377–90; William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (c. 1050–1134)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), 165.

47. This brother was a layman and an assiduous follower of Sigard (see Table 1). He cannot therefore be identified with the cleric Arnulf of Chocques (*contra* David Douglas, “The Domesday Tenant of Hawling,” *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 84 (1965): 28–30, and Keats-Rohan, *Domesday people*, 420).

the immigrant community from Artois—and especially from Lens⁴⁸—certainly helped them find their fortune overseas.

Sigard and Gunfrid both left descendants in England, though it is not clear whether they took wives there or on the Continent.⁴⁹ Sigard, however, did not end his life in England. Shortly before the Conqueror's death in 1087, he was back on the Continent, engaged in a new, fully Hainautian, phase in his career. He had taken with him his younger brother Arnulf, and possibly other Artesian followers such as Walter of Douai (the similarly-named Domesday tenant?) and one Manasses of Béthune.⁵⁰ From 1086 on, Sigard was obviously a senior member of the entourage of Count Baldwin II of Hainaut. He witnessed most comital charters issued between 1086 and 1091, and this in a relatively prominent position.⁵¹ His full integration within the Hainautian political community is also reflected by his possession of substantial estates in the central part of the county. In 1089, he participated in a grant of local dependents to the newly-created monastery of Saint-Denis-en-Broqueroie near Mons.⁵² A later deed reminds us that he also held lands in Frameries.⁵³ Another charter was issued by Sigard himself in 1095, to record the donation of a mill and some land in Angre to the

48. Sigard and Gunfrid's ties to Lens (Fr. dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. and cant. Lens) can only be inferred from their descent: Sigard's presumed son apparently married the heiress to the castellany of Lens (see below, n. 60), while Gunfrid's probable son or grandson Lambert bears a name which suggests kinship to the Counts of Lens. Countess Judith (d. after 1086), daughter of Count Lambert II (d. 1054) and a niece of William the Conqueror, married Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria (d. 1076), whose vast landholdings ultimately came to her. She was the most prominent Domesday tenant-in-chief within the Artesian group of tenants. Her manors were mixed with those held by several immigrants from the Lens region—including Gunfrid—who she might have attracted in England to help her defending her interests. On her, see Oksanen, *Flanders*, 203–4.

49. See Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, 239–41 and 419–20; eadem, *Domesday Descendants: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents, 1066–1166. II. Pipe Rolls to "Cartae Baronum"* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 396–97. The genealogical reconstructions proposed by Keats-Rohan are at times inaccurate, especially with regard to the complex continental descent of Sigard and Gunfrid in the early twelfth century.

50. Both men repeatedly occur in Hainautian deeds along with Sigard, hence the supposition. On Walter, see (with caution, though) Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, 450–51.

51. Although his ranking appears unstable, perhaps due to the use of multiple columns for the witness lists on lost originals.

52. Duvier, *Quelles étaient l'importance*, 448–50, no. 68. Interestingly enough, there is a group of *Normanni* involved in the donation.

53. Léopold Devillers, ed., *Chartes du chapitre Sainte-Waudru de Mons*, 4 vols. (Brussels: Commission royale d'histoire, 1899–1913), 1: 52–53, no. 29: 1196 confirmation of an earlier deed, with mention of a *decimam terre Segardi de Czokes*. Frameries: Belg., prov. Hainaut, arr. Mons.

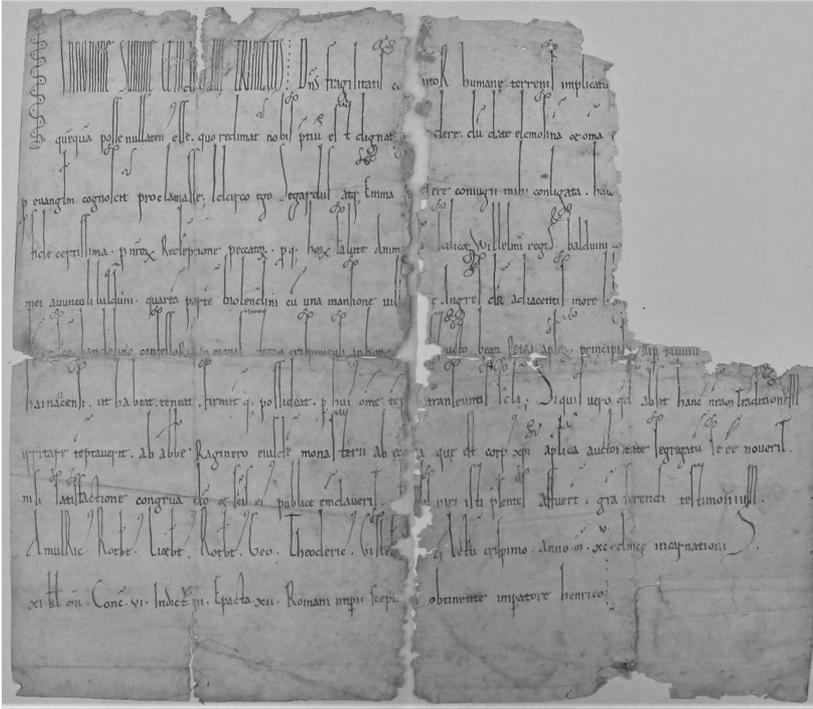


Fig. 5.3—Charter of Sigard III and his wife Emma for Crespin Abbey (1095). Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, 4 H 25, no. 190 (Photo: Aurélie Stuckens).

abbey of Crespin (Fig. 5.3).⁵⁴ This elegant piece is important to the present study, not only because it illustrates quite well its issuer's elevation in Hainaut at the time, but, more crucially, because it specifies that Sigard was acting for the souls of King William the Conqueror, Count Baldwin II and a third man whose name was regrettably torn away on the preserved original: *proque horum salute anim[ar]um, scilicet Willelmi regis, Balduini co[m]itis* [lacuna of about twenty letters] *mei, avunculi Balduini*. However, one can still read that this man was both close kin to Sigard (possessive pronoun *mei*), and the uncle of Baldwin II. He was in all likelihood Sigard's father-in-law, the father of his wife Emma who solemnly co-authored the charter (*ego Segar-*

54. Original: Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, 4 H 25, nr. 190. Edited by Michelle Courtois, "Chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées dans le département du Nord" (mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Nancy 2, 1981), 149. See also Giraud, Renault, and Tock, eds., *Chartes originales*, no. 423. Angre: Belg., prov. Hainaut, arr. Mons, comm. Honnelles.

... dus atque Emma <...>ere coniugii mihi conligata). Emma was presumably a niece of Countess Richilde, and therefore a high-ranking woman, who had made Sigard a significant baron and landowner in Hainaut.⁵⁵ Besides this, one can reasonably infer from later evidence that Sigard's brother Arnulf also got married in Hainaut in the 1080s to a daughter of the prominent baron Gossuin I of Mons (d. after 1088) called Hildiardis (d. after 1144) who would later remarry Hugh II of Oisy, castellan of Cambrai.⁵⁶ These distinguished alliances within the Hainautian upper aristocracy were most probably arranged by Count Baldwin II himself. They express the prince's determination to bind the Flemish family of Chocques to the post-1071 Hainautian political community.

Although the Crespin charter displays great reverence towards King William and Count Baldwin, and consequently highlights the importance, in Sigard's own eyes, of his Norman and Lotharingian connections, one should not assume that he and his relatives had by then lost contact with their fatherland. Sigard's last attestations to charters show him attending assemblies presided over by Counts Robert the Frisian and his son Robert of Jerusalem (1093–1111), with whom some sort of reconciliation had necessarily occurred in the meantime. Around 1090, we can even see all three representatives of the Chocques family, the then co-lords, at a judicial court in Théroouanne. Next to Sigard and his brother Arnulf stands one Lambert of Chocques, the presumed heir of Gunfrid.⁵⁷ This Lambert is known to have contributed to the foundation of a Benedictine priory at Labeuvrière, in the vicinity of

55. Richilde's parentage is unfortunately ill-documented. However, we do know that she had niece, called Ada, who married the castellan of Cambrai Hugh I of Oisy before 1071: Nicolas Ruffini-Ronzani, "Église et aristocratie en Cambrésis (fin IX^e–milieu XII^e siècle). Le pouvoir entre France et Empire au Moyen Âge central," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Université de Namur, 2014), 1: 170. The existence of another niece is therefore plausible.

56. Hugh II of Oisy was in 1120 one of the three co-lords of Chocques: Robert, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Chocques*, 532–35, no. 4. He certainly owed this position to his wife Hildiardis, whose personal landholdings in Chocques are cited in the same 1120 charter, and explicitly described as descending from Arnulf in a later deed: *ibid.*, 535–39, no. 5 (for a detailed discussion, see Nieus, "Stratégies seigneuriales," 175). Hildiardis was thus able to transfer her first husband's patrimony to her new husband. For her origins and family, see Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, 4 G 711, no. 7005, and 36 H 63, no. 674 (my thanks to Nicolas Ruffini-Ronzani for both references); Ernest Matthieu, "Les premiers châtelains de Mons et la famille des Gossuin de Mons," in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Charles Moeller à l'occasion de son jubilé de 50 années de professorat à l'Université de Louvain. Vol. 1: Antiquité et Moyen Âge* (Louvain-Paris: Université de Louvain-A. Picard et Fils, 1914), 377–92.

57. Duchet and Giry, eds., *Cartulaires de l'église de Térouane*, 5, no. 5 (1086 x 1093).

Chocques, about the same time.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Sigard, Arnulf and Lambert jointly promoted the installation (or restoration) of a chapter of secular canons within the castle of Chocques in the late eleventh century. This initiative is poorly documented, but it certainly accompanied, in the religious and symbolic sphere, a revival of local lordship after a probable period of vacuum.⁵⁹ And finally, still around the same period, Sigard must have negotiated the marriage of his son Gunfrid to the heiress to the castellany of Lens.⁶⁰ The Chocques family was still very active in southern Flanders during the last decades of the eleventh century.

After Sigard III's death (*ca.* 1096), however, the persistence of the divided lordship in Chocques eventually led to the absorption of its three main portions into external patrimonies, and the "Sigardian" dynasty similarly left the scene after its various branches on the Continent and in England became extinct or became involved with other lineages. Interestingly enough, however, the prestige that surrounded the old fortress of Chocques and its past lords long survived the fading of the Sigards in the early twelfth century. Not only did the insular descendants of Sigard III and Gunfrid preserve the memory of their Flemish roots by maintaining the reference to Chocques in their top-

58. Vercauteren, *Actes des comtes de Flandre*, 70–74, no. 24 (1100). This charter has been reworked, but the names of the nobles responsible for the foundation, which took place between 1085 and 1095, are reliable: Adriaan Verhulst, "La fondation des dépendances de l'abbaye poitevine de Charroux dans le diocèse de Thérouanne: Andres, Ham et La Beuvrière," *Le Moyen Âge* 69 (1963): 169–89, at 184–85. Labeuvrière: Fr., dép. Pas-de-Calais, arr. and cant. Béthune.

59. Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem?*, 1: 570–2; 2: 795–97 and 830–1. This secular chapter would later evolve into an abbey of regular canons affiliated to the order of Arrouaise.

60. The evidence is indirect but congruent. In 1120, the third co-lord of Chocques was one "Baldwin Rufus" (Robert, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Chocques*, 532–35, no. 4), to be identified with Baldwin I, hereditary castellan of Lens (before 1109–after 1133), whose son Baldwin II will claim Sigard's English honour in 1160, and whose later descendants will still possess shares of lordship on Chocques (on all this, see Nieus, "Stratégies seigneuriales," 174–5). Baldwin I's predecessor in Lens during the 1090s was one *Gonfridus*: Claire Giordanengo, ed., *Le registre de Lambert, évêque d'Arras (1093–1115)* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2007), 380, no. E.39. (A list of early castellans compiled by Pierre Feuchère, "L'origine et la formation constitutionnelle de l'office de châtelain à Lens," *Bulletin de la Commission départementale d'histoire et d'archéologie du Pas-de-Calais* 7 (1948): 463–73, lacks any ground.) This Gunfrid must be Sigard's son and heir, and the "missing link" who transmitted Sigard's share of lordship in Chocques to Baldwin "Rufus" of Lens. This Chocques-Lens connection is all the more plausible as, during the second half of the eleventh century, the former County of Lens belonged to the Counts of Boulogne, with whom Sigard seems to have been somehow acquainted (see the 1080 charter discussed above, and cited on n. 38).

onymy⁶¹ (a reference also preserved in the designation of their English fiefs, known for long as the “honour of Chocques,”⁶²) but several continental noble families made substantial efforts to recover parts of the Chocques legacy well up to the thirteenth century. Hugh II of Oisy has already been mentioned: he gained Arnulf of Chocques’ inheritance by marrying his widow Hildiardis of Mons around 1100. The castellans of Lens, whom we have identified as Sigard III’s descendants in the male line, inherited his third of the lordship of Chocques. Much later, in 1160, they also struggled to recover his English fiefs (initially conveyed to Sigard’s “English” daughter Hildiardis), but eventually were forced to abandon their claims in favour of the lords of Béthune.⁶³ The Béthunes were one of the most prominent, if not the most prominent noble family in Flanders until the early thirteenth century.⁶⁴ They deployed a fascinating long-term strategy aimed at taking over both the castle of Chocques (which abutted their estates) and the English honour of Chocques. Robert IV (d. *ca.* 1128) married his male heir to a daughter of Hugh II of Oisy, who abandoned his co-lordship of Chocques as her dowry. He also gave his daughter to one of Gunfrid’s “English” heirs (Fig. 5.2). Later on, Robert V (d. 1191) manoeuvred to acquire both Sigard III’s and Gunfrid’s English lands. His holding of the honour of Chocques indeed helped him to get a foothold in England, and eventually to become a major Anglo-Flemish baron by the end of his life.⁶⁵

61. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Descendants*, 396–97. Rainald of Chocques (fl. *ca.* 1130–50), son of Sigard III’s daughter Hildiardis, consistently bears his maternal surname.

62. See William Farrer, *Honors and Knights’ Fees*, 3 vols. (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., 1923–25), 1: 20–53.

63. Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, B 1005, no. 79. Calendared by John H. Round, *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France, Illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland. Vol. 1: A.D. 918–1206* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1899), 494, no. 1359. See also Benoît-Michel Tock (ed.), *Chartae Galliae* (Orléans: Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes, 2014), accessed 1 March 2018, <http://www.cn-telma.fr/chartae-galliae/charte212752/>, no. F12115.

64. A comprehensive study of this family is still lacking, though. See Duchesne, *Histoire généalogique*; Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel*, 2/1: 65–78, no. 20; Alain Derville, “Seigneurs, bourgeois et paysans (900–1500),” in *Histoire de Béthune et de Beuvry*, ed. Alain Derville (Arras: Westhoek Éditions, 1985), 29–78.

65. Nieus, “Stratégies seigneuriales,” 179–86. For the Béthune family’s growing influence in England, see also Oksanen, *Flanders*, 88–89 and 207–8.

Conclusion

Without doubt, the rich life story of Sigard III of Chocques is that of a man of high standing, and a leading magnate of his homeland. His attestations to princely charters after 1065 tell us that he was a peer of the most distinguished nobles in Flanders and Hainaut. Despite an initial setback in Flanders in 1071, he was very successful in attracting princely patronage and in building up a wide-ranging network of alliances. By the 1080s, his social and material resources were at once Flemish, Lotharingian and English—a true ubiquity, more widespread than the more usual duality of Anglo-Norman barons. What needs to be emphasised here is that this position did not come out of nowhere. Talented nobleman though he may have been, such a success within the aristocratic society of his time could only be achieved thanks to the inheritance of generations of distinguished forebears, their prestige and honours.

This observation brings us back to Sigard III's great-grandfather Sigard I and his evocative "belt of military duty." Reconstructing his line of descent can help us contextualise what he was in his own day. Clearly it was not just his genes he bequeathed to his descendants. His successes and standing in Flanders laid the ground work for his great-grandson's remarkable and wide-ranging career. So the story of the house of Chocques is definitely not one of upward social mobility by military service in a warband.⁶⁶ Seen through the lens of his own progeny, Sigard I does not match with Warlop's low-profile *miles*, nor with Le Jan's rich allodial landowner converted into a professional soldier. There is every reason to think that Sigard I belonged to the very top of the late tenth-century Flemish aristocracy, a social identity that self-evidently went along with the possession of large estates and with the performance of military activities. The refined Latin terms used by St Peter's monks were probably intended, as suggested in the introduction, to stress Sigard's commanding position within the army of Count Arnulf II. For all that, his descendants do not give the impression that they were particularly oriented towards military pursuits. The unnamed *procer* (Sigard I's son or grandson) besieged in Chocques by

66. It must be noted here that Ernest Warlop did not detect the presence of any "new men" among the eleventh-century Flemish nobles. He strongly believed that the entire Flemish aristocracy derived from the Carolingian or post-Carolingian nobility: Warlop, *De Vlaamse adel*, 1: 15–54.

the Normans around 1030 controlled a major castle in southern Flanders, but this only made him but one of the various castellan lords who prospered in Flanders at the time—among whom were the *castellani* officially appointed by the counts to keep their own castles, who had all been chosen within prominent noble families.⁶⁷ Nor does Sigard III appear to have been any kind of “*condotierre*.” He and his ancestors were nobles as much as, or indeed more than, warriors.

67. *Ibid.*, 1: 113–55.