13TH CENTURY MARRIAGES BETWEEN THE ANGLO-NORMAN AND POITOU FAMILIES OF VIVONNE, FERRERS AND ROCHECHOUART

by Margaret Schooling [1]

ABSTRACT

When William "*le Fort*" de Vivonne died in 1259, Henry III granted his estates and the marriages of his four daughters to four of his household knights. However, in 1248 Henry had allowed William to inherit and hold family lands in Poitou as well as those he already held in England, so those lands were also part of their inheritance. Henry may have seen these arrangements as part of his policy of consolidating his hold on the Aquitaine, but the girls' mother, Matilda de Ferrers, managed to regain control. The daughters eventually married other men and the inheritance was divided according to whether the daughters and their husbands lived in France or England.

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Background

From the late 12th and early 13th centuries a conflict of interest grew between the Angevin-Plantagenet kings and their Anglo-Norman nobles. These descendants of 11th century Norman invaders were beginning to think of themselves as "English", especially after King John's loss of Normandy and their lands there in 1204. As hopes of regaining Normandy faded, Henry III annoyed Anglo-Normans by pursuing a costly policy of reconquest of Aquitaine: to them it was a foreign, far-flung, unfamiliar place and the more the king pursued his policy of reconquest there – especially as it habitually ended in disaster – the more the Anglo-Normans felt used and abused.

The Plantagenet (English-born) king Henry III saw things differently: for him kingship was a personal, family matter; England and Aquitaine were one and the same thing and had to be kept united. To this end, to please his wife and to satisfy his own emotional needs, he gave preference to Eleanor's Savoyard relatives and to his own Lusignan half brothers from Poitou, with rich English marriages, lands, and powerful English offices.

An early example of the contradictions and difficulties that Plantagenet connections with the continent created appears in 1215 when rebel barons demanded that after the revolt (headed by the French prince Louis they had invited to England) all foreign officials, soldiers and mercenaries should be removed from England. They made similar demands in 1258 and petitioned that only English-born men should hold strategic castles and marry English women. By this time, however, things had come to a head and (French born) Simon de Montfort led the second barons' revolt 1258-1265 that ended the king's forty-two years of "personal rule". It was during these years of upheaval that the futures of William de Vivonne's daughters were settled.

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The family of Joan, Sybil, Mabel and Cecily de Vivonne

Hugh de Vivonne (? - bef.16 Oct 1249)

In 1220 during the aftermath of civil war in England, the foreign-born Poitevin soldier, Hugh de Vivonne was in charge of Bristol castle. The few traces of Hugh so far found in the archives allow only an incomplete and tentative reconstruction of his origins,[2] but fortunately traces of his career, marriage, and even his letters do survive in the English archives.

Hugh supported the king in England and the Plantagenet cause on the continent, and when he first made his mark in English history his situation was not to be envied. He may have arrived in England as part of a force of men under the command of Savaric de Mauleon that King John had called for. When John died in 1216 Hugh was put in charge of the castle, standing in for Savaric who had been called away to arrange the funeral and had then gone home to Poitou. Hugh had been promised payment for the upkeep of the castle but had received nothing, so he was using the income from a group of properties known as the Bristol Barton.

Each year since 1217, the regent William Marshal had ordered him to restore the Barton to Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, but Hugh refused until he was paid as promised. In 1220, when he was threatened with the seizure of his lands, Hugh wrote to the king saying that he did not think he deserved it: "*For my family and I, in the service of King John … and yourself, have lost across the seas more fruitful and richer lands than I will ever have in England*".[3] The fact that five years earlier Gilbert de Clare had been one of the Magna Carta rebels who invited the French prince Louis to invade England and claim the English crown must have made Hugh's sense of grievance even more difficult to swallow.

After making this stand at Bristol Hugh went on to become a well-respected soldier and king's officer, even if he remained (for some) nothing more than *"a Poitevin mercenary captain"*.[4] He did return home - but as Henry's seneschal in Gascony and Poitou, and he was at Henry's side during his campaigns there, including Taillebourg in 1242.[5]

His new home was in Somerset, holding several manors there by right of his wife Mabel Malet. He also acquired in his own right tenancies confiscated from families who had rebelled or otherwise displeased the king: one of them, Corton Denham, had been held by the Saint Hilaire family. It was granted to Hugh in 1246 who gave it to his daughter Sybil and her husband Anselm de Gourney. In 1269 and 1280 the Saint Hilaires reclaimed the manor, leaving useful evidence of Hugh's granddaughters' marriages in the records of the Somerset Pleas.

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2 Charles Cawley, "Poitou," *Medieval Lands* (v.2.0 January 2011). http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/AQUITAINE%20NOBILITY.htm

3 Walter Waddington Shirley, ed. *Royal and other historical letters illustrative of the reign of Henry III* (1862), p.90; David A Carpenter, *The minority of Henry III* (1990), p.105.

4 *VCH Cambridgeshire*, Vol.6: "Dullingham manor" (1978). http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66718

5 *CPR Henry III*, 3: 401.

Mabel Malet (c.1200 - probably before 1248)

The Malet family had been close to the kings of England since before the Norman Conquest. Mabel's ancestor William was a companion of William the Conqueror in 1066, is said to have been a brother of the legendary Lady Godiva and to have died fighting the insurgent Hereward the Wake. A great landowning family in Somerset, the Malets sometimes held high office, sometimes rebelled, and Mabel's father William had himself experienced these uncomfortable about-turns in fortune. Having joined the rebels in 1215 his lands were confiscated and King John granted them to Hugh on 20 December that year. Then after the death in 1221/22 of Mabel's first husband, and before 18 November 1223, Hugh and Mabel were married.[6]

For all the revenues his marriage and this transfer of the Malet lands would have brought him, Hugh could not or would not pay a debt of 2000 marks to the Exchequer that William had owed to king John, and there are records in the Fine Rolls of how this and other debts were offset by his service in Gascony. The archives in England for this period are littered with examples of the debt-ridden life that the feudal system created for military tenants and their families, and Hugh was no exception.

William "*le Fort*" de Vivonne (?-1259)

Hugh's son William was known by various forms of the nickname "*le Fort*" ("*des Forz*" or "*de Fortibus*", etc. or in France as "*de Fors*").[7] When he married Matilda de Ferrers some time after July 1248, he was probably in his twenties, a fully trained knight and landowner in his own right, having inherited his mother's Malet estates.

William also inherited the "*more fruitful and richer lands*" that Hugh had lost years earlier. In April 1248, he had permission from the king "*to go to his own parts of Poitou and there acquire as best he can the lands belonging to him by inheritance through the death of Emery de Vivona, uncle of the said William, and hold those lands with the lands in England falling to him by inheritance*".[8] Records before he died show that he retrieved land on the island of Oléron that had belonged to "*Hugues de Vivonne, son grand père (patris sui?)*",[9] and woods near Vivonne.[10]

The Fine Rolls show the classic accumulation of debts William took on once he had given the king his oath of allegiance, taking over his father's debts and then adding his own.[11] We also learn that he spent much of his time in Gascony - in

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6 Charles Cawley, "Untitled English Nobility L-O," *Medieval Lands,* (v.2.1 June 2011). http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/ENGLISHNOBILITYMEDIEVAL3L-O.htm

7 There is often confusion between William de Vivonne and William earl of Aumâle, the same variations of "*le Fort*" being used for both men. Possibly they came from the same family but no connection has been definitely established – see Charles Cawley, "Normandy Nobility," *Medieval Lands,* (v.2.2 May 2011).

8 *CPR Henry III*, 4: 13. According to Carpenter, encouraging William to hold lands in France and in England may have been part of Henry's policy of shoring up "*the northern frontiers of Gascony*" (David Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (1996), 93).

9 Société des archives historiques de la Saintonge et de l'Aunis, Saintes. "Revue de Saintonge & d'Aunis," *Bulletin de la Société des archives historique* (1876), 72. The authors do not explain why they assumed Hugh was his grandfather.

10 Charles Cawley, "Poitou", *op.cit*.

11 *CFR 34 Henry III*, 61, 180, 329; *35 Henry III*, 76.

1255, for example, he was there with Edward, the king's son, and that in exchange for this service his debts were held in respite[12] (like his father's had been twenty years earlier).

When he died in 1259 William had considerable estates both on the continent and in England. The lands his four young daughters inherited straddled the domains of Henry III – the Vivonne lands in Gascony with the Malet and Vivonne lands in England.

Matilda (or Maud) de Ferrers (c.1230-1299)

Furthermore, the daughters were also heirs to their mother's Pembroke inheritance. Matilda de Ferrers was related to many of the most powerful Anglo-Norman families in England. Interestingly, her grandfather was the same William Marshal who had ordered Hugh to hand over the Bristol Barton nearly thirty years earlier.

Matilda's mother Sybil, one of the Marshal's ten children, married William de Ferrers earl of Derby. They had seven daughters and when Sybil died, probably about 1238, the earl remarried and finally had a male heir, Robert.

So Matilda, born probably about 1230, one of seven daughters of a mother who was one of ten children, five of them sons, did not start out with a particularly promising inheritance in prospect. By 1245, however, that had changed dramatically and Matilda had become a substantial heiress in her own right. In that year Anselm, the last of her five Marshal uncles, died and none of them had left any legitimate children as heirs. So in 1245, the Pembroke estates[13] were broken up to be divided between the Marshal sisters or their descendants, including Matilda.

Some time in May 1248 when she was about 18, Matilda's first, childless marriage ended with the death of her husband, Simon de Kyme. Two months later the king gave her marriage to William le Fort, and she swore her oath of allegiance.[14]

Eleven years later William was also dead. Matilda did not remarry for five years until 1264 when she contracted her third marriage to the recently widowed Aimery [IX] viscount of Rochechouart. There is no evidence that Matilda and Aimery had any children together but the marriage lasted over twenty years until Aimery died some time in or after 1283. After 1269, entries in the CPR show that the couple travelled to and from England several times, usually because of legal issues and transactions dealing with the family estates in England.

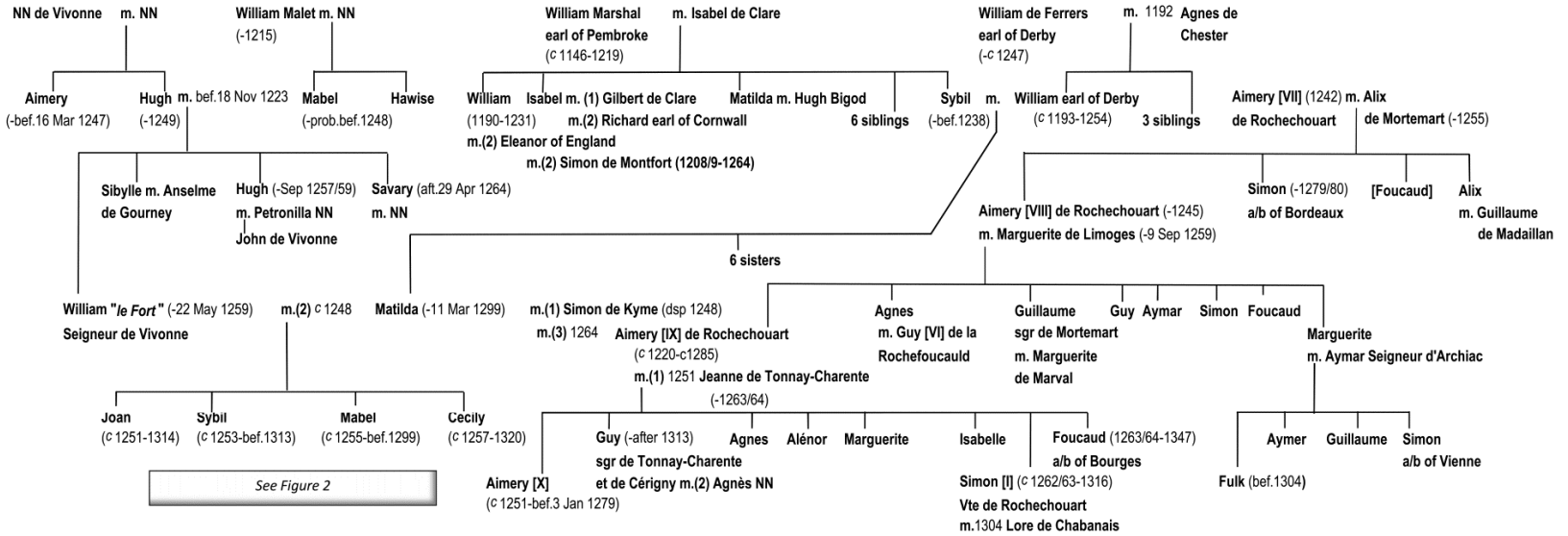
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12 *CFR 39 Henry III*, 618.

13 Estates in Dorset, Kent, Wiltshire, Bedford, Norfolk, and Kildare, Ireland. Matilda's aunt Eleanor (by marriage to William Marshal), the king's sister and wife of Simon de Montfort, had dower in the estates but the Marshal heirs managed to avoid paying it.

14 *CPR 32 Henry III*, 4: 23.

Fig 1. The families of Joan, Sybil, Mabel and Cecily de Vivonne and the Rochechouarts



Wards of Court, 1259 to 1264

William's death left his four underage daughters and their inheritance subject to the Anglo-Norman feudal system of wardship. Estates held by a tenant in chief reverted to the king, along with the marriages of underage heirs. The king would distribute custody both of the estates and the marriage of heirs: in this way he controlled their monetary value, military disposition and loyalty of tenants; he could pay off debts, give gifts, advance the careers of favourites and young knights, maintain a kind of standing army and ensure a steady source of income. If an heir refused a marriage, they had to compensate the custodian: if not, and if the custodian did not personally use the marriage, they could dispose of it within their own family or sell it on to someone else. To protect these transfers and ensure that the arrangements went to plan, the children were to be delivered by their mother into the king's household.[15]

On 2 August 1259 the custody of William's estates in Surrey, Somerset and Devon, from which Matilda's dower would first be taken, was given to three of the king's household knights, Ingram de Percy, Peter de Chauvent and Imbert de Muntferaunt. Ingram was given the marriage of the eldest daughter, Peter could choose from the three others, and so on. A fourth knight, Laurence son of Nicholas de Sancto Mauro was granted, for "services" he had already given, the marriage of the fourth daughter, with her part of the estates reserved for that marriage.[16]

The income from the custodies was to be "in lieu" of the fees Ingram, Peter and Imbert were drawing from the Exchequer, so William's death and the minority of his daughters were largely used to save the Exchequer money. In Ingram's case this had been 60 marks a year since December 1257, the same for Peter since August 1254.[17] No entry has been found about what Imbert drew but it was presumably more or less the same, while the fact that Laurence did not have custody of any estates would imply that the value of his services was not the same. The arrangements suggest that the yearly income from the inheritances was at least a hundred and eighty marks.

Matilda's right to first refusal and the custodians right to compensation was confirmed - "*Maud de Kyme, their mother, shall have preference over others if she shall wish to buy the said marriages, provided always that she give as much for them as others would*".

Although the estates these marriages represented were valuable and the chances that Matilda could buy all four daughters back were probably slight, this may have been one of the delaying tactics she used to get the better of the system, because in this case it did not work as intended. Entries in the CPR and CCR show that for nearly three years Matilda managed to avoid giving up her children despite repeated orders from the king, with complaints at the way she would promise to deliver the girls and then not do so.

Possibly, however, her trump card was the girls' inheritance in France of the "*more fruitful and richer*" Vivonne estates the king had encouraged William to hold in 1248. There the feudal system did not apply, and Henry could not sell the

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15 This summary of the feudal wardship system is based on an article by Danaya C Wright, "De Manneville v. De Manneville: Rethinking the Birth of Custody Law under Patriarchy," *Law and History Review* 17(2), (1999).

16 *CPR 43 Henry III*, 5: 36.

17 *CPR Henry III*, 4: 608, 320.

custody of lands in Poitou as he could in England; such decisions and those about the marriage of underage, fatherless children were decided by the family. The question must have been raised about who had the right to decide who should marry William's daughters and so acquire their Vivonne estates in France - the king in England or their Vivonne family in Poitou.

Some kind of plan seems to have been taking shape within a year of William's death, as by August 1260 two of the girls were already with the Vivonne family in France. In that month Matilda, "*entering the king's presence, swore a corporal oath before him that Sibyl and Mabel, two of the aforesaid daughters, are in parts beyond the seas in the control and keeping of certain relatives of the said William, so that she has no power to give the said two daughters up to the king or anyone else …*" At the same time she promised to deliver Joan and Cecily – a promise guaranteed by her cousins, the anti-alien Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk and Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester.[18] There is no explanation of how the children came to be in France or why the sisters were separated, but we do learn later that the "relatives" involved would have been William's younger brother, Savary.

Whether Matilda never intended to hand Joan and Cecily over or something happened to make her change her mind, once again she did not deliver them, and in December 1261 the king again complained that he was "troubled" about prevarication, and broken promises. This time the sheriffs of Surrey and Lincolnshire (presumably in relation to her Kyme dower) were ordered to seize her income.[19] This *CFR* entry reads as if all four daughters were available to him in England but the next entries seem to show that this is unlikely and possibly they explain something about what was happening.

On 10 March 1262, Joan's marriage was yet again confirmed to Ingram de Percy and for the first time we learn that Peter de Chauvent had chosen Cecily's marriage.[20] A possible reason for this entry is that it records a situation before it was changed. Although Ingram's custody of Joan's marriage is finally followed by their marriage, Peter's choice of Cecily is not - instead, her marriage was at some point acquired by Eleanor of Castile and it looks as if it was at this time that this happened and Peter was, presumably, compensated.

Two months later, on 10 May 1262 Imbert de Muntferaunt's grant was restated. As the marriages of Joan and Cecily had been taken Imbert could have chosen between Sybil and Mabel but they were in France and not available. Without the marriage the value of the grant was dramatically cut, reduced to the custody of a third of the estates until the heiress in question came of age or married. There is, perhaps, a tone of resignation in the entry of 10 May when Imbert is told he can "*assign the wardship* [of the marriage] *to whom he will*" and he can "*do what seems best to him*" with his custody of "*a third part*" of the inheritance, suggesting that the ground had been prepared for their formal transfer to William's brother, Aimery.[21]

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18 *CCR 44 Henry III*, 11: 88, "*ad presenciam regis accedens, corporale prestiterit sacramentum coram eo quod Sibilla et Mabilia due filiarum predictarum sunt in partibus transmarinis in potestate et custodio quorundam parentum dicti Willelmi, ita quod ipsa potestatem non habet dictas duas filios regi vel alii restituendi…*" Translation: Matt Tompkins, soc.genealogy.medieval, 19 Aug 2011.

19 *CFR 46 Henry III*, C60/59: 136.

20 *CPR Henry III*, 5: 205.

21 *CPR Henry III*, 5: 212.

The absence of Laurence de Sancto Mauro from these negotiations possibly reflects the fact that in all likelihood his grant had become worthless, as in his case, without the marriage there would be no estates. Presumably, it is even possible that Matilda had nothing to compensate.

Possibly the background of revolt was having an impact on the writing and archiving of records, resulting in an absence of entries that might otherwise have explained what happened. Given what records we have, however, it does look as if it was at this time that Eleanor of Castile, and possibly her mother in law, queen Eleanor, became directly involved in what Matilda had, presumably, planned and that the marriages and estates were discreetly rearranged.

The king made no further demands on Matilda: on the contrary, a *CCR* entry of 20 May 1262 records that she had permission to go to Poitou to determine the extent of her daughters' heritage.[22] On the other hand Ingram was, very briefly, married to Joan, and on 10 October, newly widowed, her remarriage was granted to queen Eleanor.

Joan (Jeanne) de Vivonne (c.1251-1314)

Some time after 8 July 1262, the king, queen Eleanor and Eleanor of Castile all went to France with Ingram among their entourage.[23] This is probably where he died. At Saint Germain des Près on 10 October, the custody of the eleven year old Joan's second marriage was given to queen Eleanor.[24]

Whatever the reasons the king had for giving Joan's marriage to the queen, the result was, it seems, a compromise that Matilda could agree to - or as seems more likely, that Matilda organised with the cooperation of both the queen and Eleanor of Castile. This apparently involved the formal transfer of the custody of Joan, Sybil and Mabel to their relative there, their uncle, Savary de Vivonne.

For nineteen months there are no entries concerning either Matilda or her daughters. Then in April 1264 the story is taken up in the Rochechouart family archives when Simon de Rochechouart (future archbishop of Bordeaux) recorded the marriage contract between his recently widowed nephew, Aimery [IX] viscount of Rochechouart and Matilda. Furthermore the marriages of their two eldest children were agreed - Aimery [X] to marry Joan, and Guy to marry Sibyl. Two weeks later, their guardian, Savary de Vivonne, transferred to Aimery [IX] "*all the rights held by the daughters of the late William de Vivonne, seigneur de Fors, whose wardship and custody he held, in all the land and seigneury of Vivonne.*"[25]

Matilda's interests in one of her Pembroke estates, Caerleon, was given *in preciput* to Joan, but none of William's estates are mentioned in the contract. Later on the many legal transactions and complications concerning the English estates first of the Vivonne, then the Pembroke families in England provide evidence that the marriages contracted in Rochechouart did take place and that with their husbands, the daughters came into possession of their estates.

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22 *CCR 46 Henry III*, 12: 126.

23 *CPR Henry III*, 5: 220.

24 *CPR Henry III*, 6: 735.

25 Louis-Victor-Léon de Rochechouart, ed., *Histoire de la Maison de Rochechouart* Vol. II (1859), 282, "*Noble homme, messire Savary de Vivonne, chevalier, cedda à noble homme, messire Aimery vicomte de Rochechouart, tous les droits que les filles de feu messire Guillaume de Vivonne, seigneur de Fors, dont il avoit la garde et tutelle, avoient en la chatellenie et toute la terre de Vivonne*."

Two CPR entries of 1265 about Joan's inheritance are difficult to reconcile; on 22 August 1265 Bartholomew le Peytevin was granted wardship of her lands in Chewton, Somerset,[26] whereas on 8 November the king confirmed that Ingram's custody of her lands passed to his heir, his brother William.[27] Again, this was possibly confirmation of the situation before it changed and Joan's estates were restored to her on coming of age or, perhaps, on her remarriage.

In February 1269, the young couple Aimery [X] and Joan accompanied their parents to England, where the visit of "*Emericus de Ripa Cauardi junior et Johanna uxor ejus….*" was recorded.[28] Then in the Somerset Pleas for 15 July 1269, "*Emery de Roche Chaward, son of Emery de Roche Chaward, and Joan his wife, Sibyl, Mabel and Cecily, the daughters and heirs of William de Fortibus*" were called to answer a claim by Peter de Saint Hilaire on the manor of Corton Denham.[29]

His claim having presumably failed Saint Hilaire tried again in 1280 but then Joan's husband is the ageing knight, Reginald FitzPiers. Another dispute, this time about the manor of Chewton, shows that Reginald and Joan were already married by 3 January 1279.[30] Unfortunately no primary source has been found either of the date Reginald's first wife died, or when he married Joan.

The death (but not the date) of the young Aimery is confirmed in his father's will of 1283, naming his grandson, Aimery [XI] as heir and making Matilda guardian of their two grandchildren.[31] The last entry in the French archives about Joan is a 1304 agreement between Aimery [XI] and his sister Jeanne whereby "*after the death of their mother, Jeanne de Vivonne*" Jeanne would have the 200 livres from the viscountcy of Rochechouart that was Joan's dower.[32]

After Reginald died, Joan travelled "overseas" in 1290, 1292, 1301, and finally in 1307[33] about the time of the death of Aimery [XI]. She would by then have been in her late fifties. In all probability, Aimery [XI] and Jeanne had been born during the early 1270s in which case there was enough time for Joan to marry FitzPiers and have children by him before his death in 1286.

Although they both married, Aimery [XI] and Jeanne died childless, and on Aimery's death in 1306/7 the viscountcy passed to his uncle Simon. A question that has yet to be answered is why it was not Simon's older brother, Guy, and Sybil (or Agnès, his second wife) who became the next viscount and viscountess of Rochechouart.[34]

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26 *CPR Henry III*, 5: 442.

27 *CPR Henry III*, 5: 499/500.

28 *CCR 53 Henry III*, 14: 101.

29 Lionel Landon, ed., *Somersetshire pleas from the Rolls of the Itinerant Justices (41 Henry III to the end of his reign), Vol 2.* Somerset Record Society 36 (1923): 96-97.

30 *CCR 7 Edward I*, 1: 551.

31 Rochechouart, *op.cit.,* 285.

32 Rochechouart, *op.cit.,* 291.

33 *CPR Edward I*, 2: 409, 481; *Edward I*, 3: 602, *Edward II*, 1: 4.

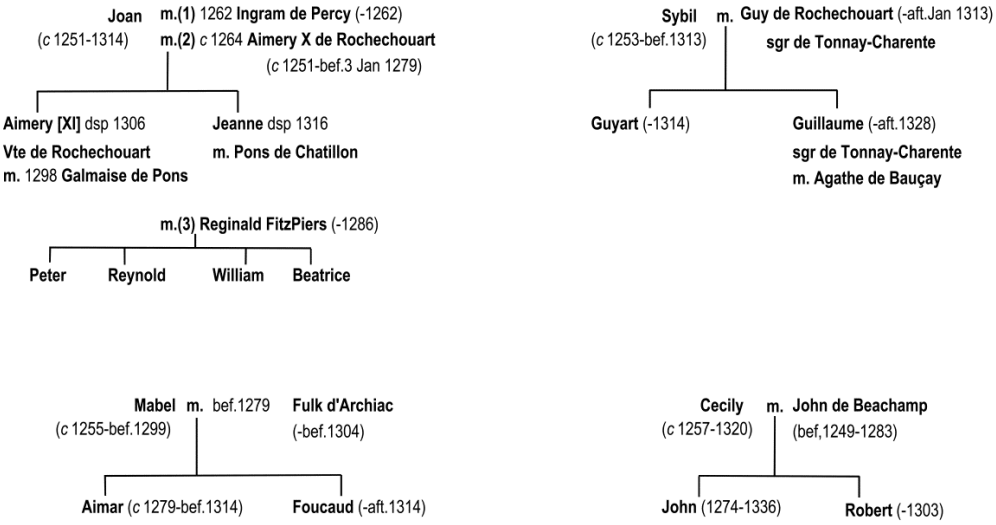
34 Most of the Rochechouart documents were destroyed during the Revolution and this is only one of many questions that remain unexplained.

Sybil de Vivonne (c.1253 - before 1313)

Sybil married Guy de Rochechouart as required in the 1264 contract between their parents. The 1269 entry in the Somerset Pleas show Sybil as still unmarried but according to the Rochechouart archives they were married by 1279,[35] confirmed in the 1280 Somerset Pleas and numerous mentions in the CPR. The last mention of Sibyl is on 2 July 1306,[36] but when Guy, seigneur de Tonnay-Charente, made his will in 1313 he had remarried: he did not name his parents or mention Sibyl or Guillaume, his surviving son.[37]

The 1279 entry in the Rochechouart archives is a note about the exchange between Sybil and Cecily of the rights to their estates, involving those of their mother in England and their father in Vivonne and Poitiers, separating them according to where they lived. The estates that Sybil transferred to Cecily at this time appear as Dullingham, Cambs., and Walneton, Dorset. That estates from Mathilda's Pembroke inheritance were exchanged is confirmed by the CPR of 22 June 1301[38] noting the grant made by Sibyl and Guy de Rochechouart to Cecily, and the next day this grant is identified as Sibyl's share in the Pembroke estate of Luton, Bedfordshire.

Fig 2. The marriages of Joan, Sybil, Mabel and Cecily de Vivonne



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35 Rochechouart, *op.cit.,* 284.

36 *CCR 34 Edward I*, 5: 403.

37 Rochechouart, *op.cit.,* 296 These omissions and the fact that his uncle Simon succeeded to the viscountcy, as well as genealogies by Père Anselm and Moréri, suggest the possibility that Guy, the husband of Sybil de Vivonne belonged to other branches of the Rochechouart family. However, no evidence has been found to substantiate this. The seigneury of Tonnay-Charente came into the Rochechouart family with Guy's mother Jeanne, and passed to Guy in Aimery [IX]'s will of 1283: at least for the time being, it is safer to accept that Sybil's husband Guy was the son of Aimery [IX].

38 *CPR 29 Edward I*, 3: 599.

Mabel de Vivonne (*c.*1255 - before 1299)

It is from biographies of French cardinals that we learn that Mabel also married into the Rochechouart family. The mother of Archbishop Simon d'Archiac is called "*a daughter of a Rochechouart viscount*", and more specifically that she was Marguerite de Rochechouart, a sister of Aimery [IX].[39] If so, then Mabel's husband, Fulk d'Archiac was a brother of Simon and cousin of the men Joan and Sybil married.

Evidence for Mabel's marriage is the same as for her sisters – the Somerset Pleas and entries in the CPR. In 1269 she was still single but in 1278 Fulk established his claim to the manor of Woodmansterne, Surrey by right of his wife, of which one third was held by Matilda in dower. In 1294 only Fulk is mentioned,[40] so Mabel had probably died by then – the only daughter who did not survive her mother.

In 1283 an Adémar d'Archiac and probably viscount Aimery [IX] or (possibly) [XI] disagreed about the succession of Simon, archbishop of Bordeaux (who had died in 1279) and they appointed arbitrators.[41] The outcome is not recorded, nor is the basis of the dispute, nor which Adémar (Aymer) is involved, but it is evidence that the Archiacs were members of the Rochechouart family.

All available records of the transfers of Mabel's title to her estates in England show they were made by her sons. An inquisition of 1304 after Fulk's death confirmed that Aymer d'Archiac was Mabel's son but had been born abroad so he had to prove his age before the king accepted his homage, needed to hold rights to the manor of Woodmansterne. Four years later on 3 December 1308 Aymer transferred to "Joan de Vivonia" at least some of his rights to the Vivonne/Malet lands in England, and to the Pembroke lands in England and Ireland.[42] There is no evidence of what Joan presumably transferred to Aymer in exchange.

It looks as though Mabel's Archiac descendants felt they had not got their due share of the inheritance in England. First Aymer d'Archiac, then when he died, his brother Fulk, wanted to keep, or have the right to sell, the manor of Woodmansterne in Surrey and, as we shall see, the manor became the subject of a prolonged dispute between Fulk and his aunt Cecily de Beauchamp.

Cecily de Vivonne (*c.*1257 - 1320)

Although in March 1262 Cecily's marriage had been confirmed to Peter de Chauvent, the next we hear of her is in 1265 (so aged about 8) when she had "long" been in the "keeping" of Eleanor of Castile. On 20 March that year a CPR entry notes that Eleanor had "*incurred great expense over the wardship*" and she was granted Cecily's lands to pay for the cost of her keep.[43] Then on 30 April the king "*committed the hundred and manor of Somerton with appurtenances to Eleanor ….. for as long as it pleases the king*".[44] It may be significant to our understanding of how the wardships

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39 Salvador Miranda, *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church*. http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1320.htm

40 *CPR 22 Edward I*, 3: 66.

41 Rochechouart, *op.cit.,* 285.

42 *CPR 22 Edward II*, 1: 147.

43 *CPR 46-47 Henry III*, 5: 415.

44 *CFR 49 HENRY III*, C 60/62: 409.

were re-arranged, that a year later, on 7 April 1266, the gift was made "*for life*".[45] Despite there being no entry about the transfer of custody from Peter to Eleanor it is reasonable to assume it happened in 1262 at the same time as queen Eleanor took custody of Joan.

Cecily probably never left England and Eleanor arranged her marriage to John de Beauchamp of Hatch Beauchamp, Somerset who died in 1283. Cecily would still have been a young woman but she never remarried; she survived all her sisters, seems to have spent much of her forty years of widowhood acquiring property and these acquisitions led to disputes. Still in her twenties, a 1286 record in the Register of the Abbey of Athelney, Somerset has a trace of her dealings with the Abbot in the following entry:-

"The lady Cecilia de Beauchamp has found pledges, Robert de Ashford, etc. for saving her default before the date of the next court, or that she will come to the Abbot of Athelney, and there save it, as appears in the Hock-term Court (roll) of 14 Ed. I (1286)"[46]

It is tempting to read something of the strong characters of William Marshal and Hugh de Vivonne passing down to their granddaughters – as a note about Cecily in the Register shows:

"This recalcitrant lady was the widow of John Beauchamp I, who died at Hatch 24 October 1283. She was the second [sic] daughter of William de Vivonia and Matilda de Kyme his wife, who to quote the words of Camden 'derived descent from Sibilla, co-heiress of William Marshall, that puissant Earl of Pembroke, William de Ferras, Earl of Derby, Hugh de Vivonia, and William Malet – men of great renown in ancient times.' And what is more to the point, she brought her husband a share of the barony of De Fortibus. The Abbot evidently had a hard struggle with this daughter of a hundred Earls to acknowledge his superior position in the manor of Ilton."[46]

Cecily seems to have won her battles as by the time she died she had accumulated a large landed fortune for her de Beauchamp descendents. By 1284 she already held more manors from her father's Somerset estates than the quarter share she inherited in 1259 – holding most of the Glastonbury abbey tenancies listed as le Fort estates. Aimery [IX] and Matilda had dower in Cecily's manor of Shepton Malet and in Joan's Midsommer Norton estate, while Joan and Reginald held Chewton.[47] Normally we would expect to see William's estates distributed more or less equally between the four daughters or, if Sybil and Mabel had already exchanged their shares, an equal division between Joan and Cecily, but this is not the case.

This discrepancy suggests the possibility that the marriages of the Vivonne daughters may have been settled at some point with parts of the quarter shares due to Joan, Sybil and Mabel. If so it would suggest that Cecily's marriage and her share of her father's inheritance were not part of the deal that brought about her sisters' marriages and the safe repatriation of the Vivonne lands to Poitou; that the bulk of William's Somerset estates remained with Cecily, part of them remained with Joan; that in exchange his Vivonne estates in Poitou remained with Joan, Sybil and Mabel, thus passing to the Rochechouart family..

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45 *CPR Henry III*, 5 580.

46 E H Bates, ed., *Two cartularies of the Benedictine abbeys of Muchelney and Athelney in the county of Somerset*, Somerset Record Society, No.14 (1899).

47 *Feudal Aids A.D.1284-1431 Vol.IV, Northampton—Somerset*, HMSO (1906).

The final episode concerns the dispute Cecily had with her Archiac nephew Fulk over the manor of Woodmansterne. As noted above, in 1278 his father Fulk had established his rights to Woodmansterne and the 1304 inquisition held on Fulk's death accepted his son Aymer's claim. Both Fulk and Aymer had died by 1314 so his second son, another Fulk, succeeded to the manor. Cecily, however, successfully claimed it for herself and obtained a writ of entry against Fulk dated 4 August 1314. But she complained to the king in 1315 that she had been thwarted by Sir William Inge, chief justice of the King's Bench and accused him of acting in collusion with Fulk. Inge, she said, had altered the date of the writ from 4 to 14 August, and during those ten days Fulk had sold him the manor. Apparently Inge was dead by this time and her complaint was accepted, so when she died five years later, it was Cecily who held the manor of Woodmansterne.[48]

Conclusions

The cost to Matilda of defying the king in terms of time, energy and peace of mind as well as money must have been very high, which suggests that her objections were fundamental. In the absence of evidence her motivations must remain unknown but we can speculate that perhaps things started badly if the king and council did not do Matilda the courtesy of consulting her. In 1269 her three younger daughters, either in her care or in Eleanor of Castile's, were still single suggesting that women disapproved of girl-child marriage more than men did; she may have expected to be trusted and allowed to keep her daughters with her; she probably had opinions on the choice of guardians.

Maybe anti-alien attitudes were involved that she would consider inappropriate,[49] especially as the Vivonne lands were in question. It is certainly likely that when William inherited his lands in Vivonne and worked in Gascony, he would have discussed his children's marriages with his family and maybe even come to an agreement. Matilda's background as coheir with her many sisters and aunts would mean she had experience of inheritance and land division so it is possible that the later separation of their inheritances had been planned before William died.

There is no reason to think that the final outcome was anything but acceptable to Matilda. Her own marriage to Aimery [IX] can only have been arranged after the death of his first wife in childbirth in January 1263 or 1264, and on the face of it there was no financial or property advantage. Nor is Joan's marriage to FitzPiers and return to England after Aimery [X] died explicable in any terms but an unrecorded, personal decision.

The settlement was unusual and evidence for it developed when Matilda declared in August 1260 that Sybil and Mabel were beyond the king's control. This meant that the custody of half the inheritance and two of the marriages had become detached. All four marriages were separated from the estates when queen Eleanor and Eleanor of Castile became the custodians of Joan and Cecily two years later, which presumably undermined their value - making them, perhaps, more affordable.

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[48] *VCH Surrey,* Vol.4: "Woodmansterne" (1912), 246-250. http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43059

[49] From 1258-1265 Henry usually had to rule with the consent of the council which had anti-alien elements as members – a possible influence on the Vivonne wardships.

Although queen Eleanor and Eleanor of Castile clearly played major parts in the settlement, especially after 1262, there are no details about what those parts were. There is, however, evidence that the two women could cooperate and use their influence in the interests of children. A study of the life of Eleanor of Castile[50] notes that when she acquired the custody of Cecily she avoided controversy and "*any suspicion of greed*", using "*shrewd planning*" to avoid it becoming publicly known. The queen had a great deal of experience and both women worked together when their aims coincided. During these years the queen often acted independently in both England and France, well placed to help Matilda out of her difficulties.

Joan's (and probably Sybil's) Rochechouart children all died without issue; Mabel did have descendants in France but beyond her sons they have yet to be satisfactorily identified. Since there were no more legal challenges from Mabel's sons or from any Poitevin heir to the English lands of William *le Fort* after 1314, there is no more help from the English archives, and if further evidence exists in French archives, it has yet to be brought to light. By the time Cecily died, a few years before the first battles of the hundred years' war, the four daughters or their heirs had, fairly or unfairly, exchanged their lands, separating those "*more fruitful and richer lands*" in France from those in England and Ireland - unlike the Plantagenets whose claims to Aquitaine would only finally collapse after defeat in the war that for so long blighted English and French history.

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[50] John C Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (1994), 35-6, 126.

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