NOTES AND QUERIES

No. 3 – Guillaume II de Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia (*Lindsay L. Brook*)

Who were the parents of the three mysterious nieces of Guillaume II de Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia (died 1278)? Sanudo (1873) tells how Prince Guillaume sent for three of his nieces from Burgundy and Champagne to marry three prominent nobles of Frankish Greece. Loernertz (1975, pp.446-448) discusses the problems arising from Sanudo's account in some detail.

Briefly, the first niece is said to have married Guy I de la Roche, Great Lord then Duke of Athens, probably between 1245 and 1248 (Longnon, 1937); we know now that she was called Agnès (Longnon, 1973, p.80). Another niece is said to have married an Autremencourt, Lord of Salona, almost certainly Thomas II (Longnon, 1937, p.26). A third niece - now known to be called Catherine - married first Guglielmo II da Verona, Triarch of Euboea (Negrepont); after his death in battle in 1271, she married Jean de Saint-Omer, hereditary Marshal of Achaia (Loenertz, 1975, p.448). A fourth niece Simone, said by Sanudo to be the wife of Guglielmo I da Verona, appears to be apocryphal.

According to Petit (p.24) Guillaume II de Villhardouin had two brothers, Geoffrey II Prince of Achaia and Théodore, Patriarch of Antioch. Both seem to have died childless. But he also had one and possibly two sisters. One was Alice who married Hugues de Briel-sur-Barse, a champenois noble who succeeded his brother Renaud as Lord of Skorta in Greece (Evergates, pp.100-101 and *passim*). But it seems likely that any daughters of this couple would have born and lived in Achaia, not sent for from Champagne. Petit gives Guillaume another (unnamed) sister, wife of 'Géofroi de Cicon, fils d'Eudes de Cicon'. The family is Burgundian and founded a dynasty in Frankish Greece, but to my knowledge a reliable genealogy of this family has yet to be established. There is just the possibility that Géofroi de Cicon, should he exist, is the father of Guillaume II's nieces.

We have another clue. The niece Catherine was related in the fourth degree to her second husband Jean de Saint-Omer, hereditary Marshal of Achaia (Loenertz, 1965). Investigation of Jean's ancestry may provide a solution to the puzzle. So this is very much 'work in progress'.

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