LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bajamonte Tiepolo and Bohémond de Brienne

I should like to congratulate Lindsay Brook for his article [*Foundations* (January 2004) **1**(3): 200-207] on Bajamonte Tiepolo and Bohémond de Brienne, an original subject for which the solution remains obscure.

Here is a hypothesis: that Bohémond de Brienne is identical to Gautier IV de Brienne, posthumous son of Gautier III de Brienne and Albéria/Elvira de Hauteville. His **double** forename recalls both his paternal family, Gautier, and his maternal family through Bohémond.

The marriage of Gautier III and Albéria de Hauteville seems to have produced two children: Gautier IV and Marguerite, wife of Balian de Sagette. This union lasted five years. Is there then a place for an Agnès, recalling Gautier III's mother, Agnès de Montbéliard? In this hypothesis, Agnès is the sister of Bohémond de Brienne, the niece of Jean de Brienne and the first spouse of Lorenzo Tiepolo, who remarried Marchesina Ghisi. Alternatively, Agnès could be the daughter of Bohémond de Brienne. The chronology should clarify this.

Concerning the king of Rascia, I have no explanation.

The Tiepolo are not the only Venetian family to claim a matrimonial alliance with the family of King Tancrède of Sicily: beside Valtrada (a forename unknown among the Hauteville but widespread in Italy) wife of Giacomo Tiepolo, another daughter of Tancrède (forename unknown) is said to be the wife of Marino Basegio. In this same Basegio family, Maria, daughter of the procurator Pietro Basegio is the wife of the Doge Pietro Ziani (data found on the internet). We should however note that the documented wife of Pietro Ziani is Constance, daughter of King Tancrède!

On another subject, the chronology does not support the view that Théodora de Montferrat, wife of Ghérardo della Gherardesca was the daughter of Boniface de Montferrat and Marguerite/Maria of Hungary.

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The Daughter of Isaac Comnenus

During the reign of King Stephen of England [r.1135-1154] the Comptroller of His Royal Household was Sir John de Stapleton. Sir John's eldest son , Sir Miles de Stapleton, is on record as a crusader, and, it is said, "*upon his return from the Holy Land, espoused Penrodas, daughter of the King of Cyprus*" (Burke).

Until 1183 Cyprus had been part of the Byzantine Empire. in that year Isaac Comnenus, the governor of Cyprus, declared the island's independence under him as its King, and, later, Emperor. His wife was a Princess of Armenia. In 1191 Richard the Lionheart conquered Cyprus, put Isaac in silver chains and imprisoned him in the Levant. We are told that Isaac's very young daughter was entrusted to the care of, and education by, Richard's sister, Joanna, Dowager Queen of Sicily, who later remarried Raymound VI Count of Toulouse.

I have been unable to discover the actual Christian name of the daughter of Isaac Comnenus, although she is mentioned in several volumes dealing with the period. Kenneth Fenwick's book *The Third Crusade* (Folio Society, 1958) states incorrectly that *she* married Raymond of Toulouse, when in fact it was her guardian. However, Fenwick then adds that the Cypriot princess remarried "a Flemish knight".

I have examined all the subsequent Cypriot Royal Houses and the marriages of their daughters who, almost universally, have very latin Christian names. Given the Stapleton dates I am inclined to believe that it was the Third Crusade which Sir Miles embarked upon and the only daughter who could have been a princess of Cyprus, notably with a Greek Christian name, at the time he returned, was the daughter of Isaac Comnenus.

The Stapletons are an ancient and much noted family from which numerous great English houses can trace a descent. I would like to clear this marriage up, and track down the Comnenus child, if possible,

I should appreciate any assistance.

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Agatha, Mother of St Margaret

I was impressed by the scope of William Humphreys' article [*Foundations* (January 2003) **1**(1): 31-43] on Agatha, wife of Edward 'the Exile', and particularly his analysis of the sources which make reference to her ancestry. However, I disagree with two of his conclusions.

It does not seem to me at all likely that Agatha was instrumental in facilitating the marriage of Gytha, daughter of Harold II, to Vladimir of Kiev (p.32, note 10). Harold and his family had, both before and after the Norman invasion, failed to support Edgar Aethling's claim to the throne and one might suppose that Agatha was not inclined to do them any favours. Furthermore, Ian W Walker (1997) in *Harold: The Last Anglo-Saxon King*, (Sutton Publishing Ltd) refers on p.194 to sources which state that Gytha's marriage was arranged by Swein Estrithson, King of Denmark. This seems far more likely: Swein was Harold's first cousin, and Gytha's brothers had sought military assistance from him in their attempts to re-establish themselves in England.

I am also not convinced that the paucity of detail regarding Agatha's relations can be attributed to the "frozen knowledge" of her children in 1057 (Humphreys, p.40).

Agatha was alive at least until 1068, by which time her children were probably in their teens and early twenties. I cannot believe that for over a decade she would never have discussed her family with her children. St Margaret named her first four sons after her direct male ancestors, and was clearly proud of her English heritage; it seems improbable that she knew nothing of her mother's family.

Is it by any chance possible that Agatha was merely from a noble background, with perhaps only distant connections to royalty? Most male members of the House of Wessex chose their wives from amongst the English nobility and Edward 'the Exile' would not have been disgraced by marrying a woman whose status did not match that of his own.

By the early twelfth century Agatha's descendants were keen to emphasise the good qualities of St Margaret and the family's descent from the House of Wessex. Might it be the case, therefore, that the statements made about Agatha's ancestry were intentionally vague for the simple reason that there was nothing about her background which was worthy of promotion?

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Agatha's Date of Death

I refer to your editorial in *Foundations* (July 2003) **1**(2): 74.

It has been some time since carrying out the basic research on Agatha's contemporary chroniclers, a summary of which appeared in *The Scottish Genealogist* (September 2002) **49**(3), and I cannot presently locate the notes. But to answer the question put as to Agatha's death, I was unable to find it.

I have not consulted the works of Turgot, Queen (Saint) Margaret's confessor, and it is possible he might mention it. Certainly we know that Agatha was alive in 1068, that is well noted. Symeon of Durham (*Historia Regum*, vol.II, pp.190-192) said that in 1070 Edgar Atheling "*with his mother Agatha and his two sisters, Margaret and Christina*" &c., were waiting in Scotland for a favourable voyage to carry them away from that place. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records in 1074 that "*in this year Edgar [Atheling] came from Flanders into Scotland, and Malcolm the King and [Edgar's] sister Margaret received him with great warmth.*" The passage is very long and continues with the story of how Edgar was again sent forth *en route* to France. But there is absolutely no mention of Agatha or "*his mother*", either accompanying him, or staying behind on this occasion. Possibly Agatha had died by 1074. Certainly I have found no mention of her after c.1070.

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Editor's note

As Mr Lauder-Frost mentions, we commented on the Agatha question in *Foundations* **1**(2): 74. William Humphreys provides further analysis on pp.275-290 of this issue. As he points out there are diverse views among experts in the field, and it seems unlikely that a final solution will ever be found.