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## **Dynasty and diaspora in the Latin East: the case of the Sourdevals**

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Though primarily a pious exercise, the First Crusade formed part of a broader medieval ‘aristocratic diaspora’ – a movement often attributed to those from Normandy – and offered enterprising figures the chance of a new life in the East. This article examines how one such figure, the Italo-Norman Robert of Sourdeval, whose wider kinship group was also found throughout the Anglo-Norman world, forged a career in the newly-formed crusader states. It outlines how his descendants continued, and built upon, Robert’s foundations, securing influence in the Latin East during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by demonstrating an impressive ability to cross political divides, forge political relationships, and to use periods of turmoil to their advantage. Through this family, therefore, important insights can be gained into the dynastic strategies deployed by crusading nobles seeking to forge positions of power, but also, more broadly, into the nature of the so-called Norman diaspora.

**Keywords:** crusades; principality of Antioch; family; the Normans; diaspora; kingdom of Jerusalem; the military orders; lordship

When Pope Urban II (r.1088–99) launched the First Crusade at the council of Clermont in November 1095, he created an opportunity. Primarily, this was a spiritual opportunity, for participants in the proposed venture were offered the remission of sins in return for their

suffering, but for others it was also an opportunity for political advancement. Although current scholarship has comprehensively dismissed earlier notions that those who went on the First Crusade were land-hungry younger sons, driven by a sense of *Wanderlust* born from the fact that they would not inherit at home, it would be wrong to say that there were not those who, as part of a wider process which Robert Bartlett has classed as an ‘aristocratic diaspora’, also saw the chance to forge a new life in the East.<sup>1</sup> For the First Crusade, this can be most obviously seen amongst the crusade’s leadership, for example those, like Bohemond of Taranto (d.1111), Raymond of Saint-Gilles (d.1105) and Godfrey of Bouillon (d.1101), who helped found and govern the newly-formed crusader states.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the significance of the crusading movement to cementing and increasing familial prestige can be seen throughout the traditional crusader period (1095–1291) and beyond.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, while a significant number of surviving first crusaders returned to the West, many others remained in the East to help populate, expand and govern the newly-formed crusader states at Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and, eventually, Tripoli.

This paper examines the dynasty of one such crusader and settler, Robert of Sourdeval. Moreover, it explores how, through his emigration from southern Italy to northern

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1130* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 24–59. On the debate over crusader motivations, see Jonathan S.C. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Marcus G. Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: the Limousin and Gascony, c.970–c.1130* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Conor Kostick, ‘*Iuvenes* and the First Crusade (1096–99): Knights in Search of Glory?’, *Journal of Military History* 73 (2009): 369–92.

<sup>2</sup> On the actions of the leaders on the First Crusade and their role in creating the Crusader States, see Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Crusades: the War for the Holy Land* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 33–153; Malcolm Barber, *The Crusader States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 1–148.

<sup>3</sup> On the interplay between crusading and family, see e.g. Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, especially 81–105. For broader ideas of dynastic crusading memory and strategies, see Nicholas L. Paul and Jochen Schenk, ‘Family Memory and the Crusades’, in *Remembering the Crusades and Crusading*, ed. Megan Cassidy-Welch (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 173–86; Guy Perry, *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175–1237* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Nicholas L. Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps: the Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families: Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c.1120–1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Syria during the First Crusade, and the actions of his descendants, the Sourdevals became an influential lordly house, one whose importance, though seen most obviously in the principality of Antioch, also brought them into contact with the kings of Jerusalem and the Armenian rulers of Cilicia. The Sourdevals thus act as an important case study of the internal politics of Antioch and the wider socio-cultural processes which underpinned the development of the Latin East, as well as the ways in which ambitious medieval families, particularly those of Norman descent, could look to expand their power bases in key frontier zones.<sup>4</sup>

### Origins

That the Sourdevals – who originated in Sourdeval-la-Barre in the *département* of La Manche in Normandy – are such a useful exemplar is not simply because of their involvement in the First Crusade, but also because this was just another step in a wider diasporic process.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, members of this kinship group are known to have followed Norman lords throughout Europe. For example, after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, a Richard of Sourdeval was seen holding lands across Yorkshire, and by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the family had also acquired lands in Wales and Ireland. The settlement of Swordlestown or ‘Sourdeval’s Town’ in County Kildare is even said to have taken its name from its founder,

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<sup>4</sup> On dynastic politics in the West, see e.g. Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 24–59; Kathleen Thompson, *Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France: the County of the Perche, 1000–1226* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Sadly, very little is known on the dynastic origins of the Sourdevals in Normandy, how they came to prominence outside of northern France, or on the inter-relationships between the family’s disparate members. However, it is far from uncommon for Norman families, largely unseen within the early duchy, to establish themselves as a result of the diasporic process: David Bates, *The Normans and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), especially 64–159. On the Sourdevals more generally, see Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 29–30; Alan V. Murray, ‘How Norman was the Principality of Antioch? Prolegomena to a Study of the Origins of the Nobility of a Crusader State’, in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: the Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 349–59 (356–7); Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098–1130* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 165–6; Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 100–1, 221.

one Hugh of Sourdeval.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, rather than staying in Normandy, Robert of Sourdeval himself migrated to southern Italy, which had come under Norman control through the auspices of the adventurer Robert Guiscard (d.1085) in the 1060s and 1070s.<sup>7</sup> Thence, Robert appears to have joined the retinue of Guiscard's brother, Count Roger of Sicily (d.1101), and acted as one of the leading generals at the siege of the Sicilian coastal city of Catania in 1081.<sup>8</sup> Charter evidence suggests that Robert had been preceded by one Roger of Sourdeval, perhaps his father, and we know of other members of this family populating southern Italy, such as the William of Sourdeval present at the Sicilian court in the 1090s, and a Samson of Sourdeval, who carried his family's influence into at least the 1120s.<sup>9</sup> However, by 1095 and the call to crusade, Robert was part of the inner circle of Guiscard's son, Bohemond of Taranto, with whom he was reportedly besieging Amalfi when news arrived of Urban's call to arms.<sup>10</sup> That Robert is one of only two named Norman first crusaders to be identified by

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<sup>6</sup> Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 24–5, 29–30; Murray, 'How Norman was the Principality of Antioch?', 356–7; Margaret L. Faull and Marie Stinson, eds., *Domesday Book: Yorkshire*, 2 vols. (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986), 1: 298a, b; 305b–c, d; 305d; 306a–306b; 306c, d–306d; 307a; 307c; 307d; 308a–c; 2: 373a, 373c–d; William Farrer, Charles T. Clay and Edith M. Clay, eds., *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., 1939), 6: 4; Hubert Hall, ed., *Red Book of the Exchequer*, 3 vols., Rolls Series 99 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896), 2: 602; John T. Gilbert, ed., *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas Dublin*, Rolls Series 94 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), nos. 106, 349–50.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Jotischky and Ewan Johnson, 'Les normands de l'Italie méridionale et les états croisés au XIIe siècle', in *911–2011: Penser les mondes normandes médiévaux*, eds. David Bates and Pierre Bauduin (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2016), 62–75 (64–5, 68–9). On the conquest and settlement of southern Italy and Sicily, see Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow: Longman, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi ducis fratris eius auctore Gaufrido Malaterra monacho Benedictino*, ed. Ernesto Pontieri. *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 5 (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1927–8), 1–108 (75–6).

<sup>9</sup> Rocco Pirri, *Sicilia sacra disquisitionibus et notitiis illustrata*, 2 vols. (Palermo: Petri Coppulae, 1733), 2: 770–2; Leon-Robert Ménager, 'Inventaire des familles normandes et franques émigrées en Italie méridionale et en Sicile (XIe–XIIe siècles)', in *Roberto il Guiscardo e il suo tempo: relazioni e comunicazioni nelle prime giornate normanno-sveve*. *Fonti e studi del Corpus membranarum italicarum* 11 (Rome: Centro di studi normanno-suevi, Università degli studi di Bari, 1975), 259–387 (346); Salvatore Cusa, *I diplomati greci ed arabi di Sicilia* (Palermo: Stabilimento tipografico Lao, 1868), 383–5 (385); Carlrichard Brühl, ed., *Rogerii II. regis diplomata Latina* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), 22–3. Sadly, for much of the twelfth century and beyond, the charter material for Sicily becomes problematic, so it is hard to trace the Sourdevals' presence here over the longer term. See Graham A. Loud, 'The Charters and Chancery of the Kings of Sicily (1130–1212)', *English Historical Review* 509 (2009): 779–810.

<sup>10</sup> Rosalind M.T. Hill, ed. and trans., *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 7. See also Evelyn Jamison, 'Some Notes on the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, with Special Reference to the Norman Contingent from South Italy and Sicily on the First Crusade', in *Studies in French Language and Mediaeval Literature presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope*, ed. O. Rhys (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939), 183–208 (207); Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 221; Jean-Marie Martin,

Jonathan Riley-Smith as coming from the island of Sicily, as opposed to those who heralded from the southern Italian mainland, is testament to the reputation he enjoyed by this point.<sup>11</sup> While there is little evidence for the Sourdeval estates in Sicily, it is inconceivable that Robert was a figure without wealth or stature. His participation in the crusade can therefore be viewed as a symbol of the same piety which drove other crusaders and had also seen him make a personal donation to the Sicilian abbey of Lipari in 1094.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that other factors also lay behind this, for Robert's move into Bohemond's circle could be taken as evidence of a falling out with Count Roger, but there is no evidence for this.

The fact that he was willing to risk it all in the East nevertheless indicates similar ambition to that which had driven him, and his wider family, to spread across Europe. Consequently, some historians have considered Bohemond's subsequent creation of the principality of Antioch as part of the Norman diaspora, and a key stage in the so-called 'Norman achievement', which also incorporated the conquests of Britain, southern Italy, Sicily and Spain.<sup>13</sup> This stems, at least in part, from contemporary writers like Henry of Huntingdon (d. c.1157), who noted that the Normans had subjected the lands of Normandy, England, Apulia, Calabria, Sicily and Antioch to their rule.<sup>14</sup> However, the belief that this whole gamut of conquests was a concerted, perhaps even imperial, effort of cohesive and singularly defined *Normannitas* has now been convincingly challenged by David Bates –

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'Les structures féodales normanno-souabes et la Terre Sainte', in *Il mezzogiorno normanno-svevo e le crociate: atti delle quattordicesime giornate normanno-sveve Bari, 17–20 Ottobre 2000*, ed. Giosué Musca (Bari: Dedalo, 2002), 225–50 (234–6).

<sup>11</sup> Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 100–1, 221.

<sup>12</sup> Pirri, *Sicilia sacra disquisitionibus et notitiis illustrata*, 2: 770–2. Italo-Norman crusader piety has often been – and continues to be – doubted, particularly in relation to Bohemond of Taranto. Yet, Robert's actions show the same correlation between pious donations to monasteries and crusade participation seen elsewhere. See Bull, *Knightly Piety*, 114–281; Alan V. Murray, 'The Enemy Within: Bohemond, Byzantium and the Subversion of the First Crusade', in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, eds. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), 31–47.

<sup>13</sup> For an overview of the historiography, see Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 1–7. More specifically, see also Murray, 'How Norman was the Principality of Antioch?', 349–59; Luigi Russo, 'La diaspora normande vue par les marges: le principauté d'Antioche entre histoire et historiographie', *Tabularia* 16 (2016): 157–75.

<sup>14</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Dianne E. Greenway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 402–3, 714–15.

although he does accept that ideas of a Norman diaspora still hold, particularly in the case of southern Italy and Sicily.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a thorough analysis of the Sourdevals' career in the East and any potential relations with their Western kinsmen can provide a valuable additional insight into this diasporic process as well as the ways in which the conquests heralded by the First Crusade sat within it.

### **The First Crusade and the early years of Frankish settlement**

Unfortunately, nothing definitive is known of Robert's exploits on the crusade, save for the reality that he survived it – which was itself an impressive achievement. Given his links to Bohemond, Robert will have fought alongside him in the desperate defensive action against the Seljuk Turks at the battle of Dorylaeum in July 1097, and throughout the siege of Antioch from October 1097 to June 1098. It might even be posited that, owing to Robert's experience and stature, he would have been one of the small band of knights who accompanied Bohemond onto the walls of Antioch after the Norman leader had secured the complicity of a traitor called Firuz, who let down the ladder to the crusaders which foreshadowed the city's conquest.<sup>16</sup> He was very close to Bohemond at this juncture, acting as the lead secular witness to his first surviving charter at Antioch in July 1098.<sup>17</sup> This could indicate that Robert chose to remain at Antioch rather than following the other crusaders to Jerusalem, for Bohemond argued that he must stay behind to retain the city and prevent the Latins from being outflanked by Muslim powers.<sup>18</sup> However, the lack of any further documentary evidence from within Antioch during this early period means that it cannot be ruled out that he travelled south alongside other southern Italian Normans, such as Bohemond's nephew,

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<sup>15</sup> Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 160–90. See also the concluding remarks to this article.

<sup>16</sup> Asbridge, *Crusades*, 57–82.

<sup>17</sup> Dino Puncuh, ed., *Liber privilegiorum ecclesiae Ianuensis* (Genoa: Fonti e studi di storia ecclesiastica, 1962), no. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Asbridge, *Crusades*, 82–8.

Tancred of Hauteville (d.1112).<sup>19</sup> Indeed, because Robert does not appear again in an Antiochene context until 1114, it is tempting to link him to the ‘Robert, the distinguished soldier from Apulia’, who Albert of Aachen notes was given a money fief at Arsuf by Godfrey of Bouillon, ruler of Jerusalem, in 1100.<sup>20</sup>

Potential ties with the fledgling kingdom of Jerusalem could explain why it is that Robert does not appear in any of the (admittedly limited) documents which Tancred issued as prince of Antioch between 1105 and 1112: Tancred had a particularly feisty relationship with both Godfrey and King Baldwin I over long-standing tensions which emerged during the First Crusade and in response to their opposition to his attempt to create a Norman principality in the Galilee.<sup>21</sup> There are other explanations for Robert’s absence, beyond mere coincidence or poor documentary survival rate. For example, it is possible that he spent time in Muslim captivity – either in 1100–3, when Bohemond was defeated and incarcerated by the Danishmend Turks, or in 1104 when Antiochene forces were again taken prisoner after the disastrous Latin defeat at Harran – or he may have temporarily travelled to the West with Bohemond in 1105 in support of a new ‘crusade’ against the Byzantine Empire.<sup>22</sup> Given that Robert does not appear in the sources detailing this visit, or Bohemond’s subsequent defeat

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<sup>19</sup> Other Italo-Normans are known to have done this. See Alan V. Murray, ‘Norman Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099–1131’, *Archivio Normanno-Suevo* 1 (2008): 61–85.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Roberto, militi preclaro de Apulia’: Albert of Aachen, *Historia Hierosolimitana*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 502. See also Hans Eberhard Mayer and Jean Richard, eds., *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, 4 vols. (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2010), 1: no. 6. Given that Robert appears primarily to have made his name in Sicily, as opposed to the southern Italian mainland, his ties with Apulia appear unlikely; but it is quite possible that Albert, hearing that Robert was part of Bohemond’s contingent, assumed that he too was from Apulia. Nevertheless, Alan Murray has offered the plausible suggestion that he may instead have been another Italo-Norman who accompanied Bohemond, Robert of Anzi. See Alan V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: a Dynastic History, 1099–1125* (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2000), 225; and Murray, ‘Norman Settlement’, 71–2.

<sup>21</sup> Steven Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099–1291* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11–12. For Tancred’s longer-term relationship with Jerusalem’s rulers, see Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 16–24, 107–23.

<sup>22</sup> Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 50–6, 109–10. For modern interpretations of Bohemond’s visit to the West, see e.g. Nicholas L Paul, ‘A Warlord’s Wisdom: Literacy and Propaganda at the Time of the First Crusade’, *Speculum* 85 (2010): 534–66; Jay Rubenstein, ‘The *Deeds* of Bohemond: Reform, Propaganda, and the History of the First Crusade’, *Viator* 47, no. 2 (2016): 113–36.



by Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (d. 1118) at Devol in 1108, he may instead have returned to Sicily or southern Italy to collect his family and bring them back to the East.<sup>23</sup>

Whatever the case may be, Robert only reappears in the documentary record at Antioch in 1114, when he was mentioned in a charter issued by its prince, Roger of Salerno (d.1119). In this document, Roger confirmed the gift of an estate called *Anadi* that a Robert *de Laitot*, or Laitor, had granted to the Jerusalemite abbey of Notre Dame de Josaphat.<sup>24</sup> While this Robert is not explicitly described as a Sourdeval, later charter evidence – to be discussed below – demonstrates that the family held the site of Laitor, so there is little reason to challenge Thomas Asbridge’s belief that they were the same person.<sup>25</sup> By 1114, therefore, Robert was established as one of the principality’s few named landholders, which implies a certain level of status. Sadly, the exact extent of his domains is unknown, as mystery surrounds the form and location of Laitor, the place from which he and his successors at times took their name. That the Sourdevals identified with Laitor in such a way as to adopt it as a locative surname does not necessarily mean that it was their most prestigious or valuable possession. Rather, it is possible that, as Alan Murray has argued for other families who migrated to the East (albeit primarily those of a lower social class), it symbolised a desire to forge a new identity and relinquish any potential inferiority attached to their Western surname, with Laitor chosen probably because it was the family’s initial holding.<sup>26</sup> However, this does not necessarily support Murray’s assertion that such actions reflected a conscious

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<sup>23</sup> See especially, Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad*, trans. Edgar R.A. Sewter and Peter Frankopan (London: Penguin, 2009), 395–6.

<sup>24</sup> Henri-François Delaborde, ed., *Chartes de Terre Sainte provenant de l’Abbaye de N.-D. de Josaphat* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1880), 26–7.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, *Les archives, la bibliothèque et le trésor de l’Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem à Malte* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1883), 142–4; Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 165.

<sup>26</sup> Alan V. Murray, ‘The Prosopography and Onomastics of the Franks in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099–1187’, in *Onomastique et parenté dans l’Occident médiéval*, eds. Katherine S.B. Keats-Rohan and Christian Settapani (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2000), 283–94. This offers similarities with the lords of Ibelin in the kingdom of Jerusalem, who held lands far more important than the castle from which they took their name having been granted it by King Fulk of Jerusalem. See Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships*, 43–6, 77–8; Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191–1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 39–40.

decision to break from Norman roots or identity, to be subsumed instead into a common ‘Frankish nationality’.<sup>27</sup> Given the interchangeability of Laitor and Sourdeval over the broader period, this seems unlikely, although Robert’s status as a veteran of the First Crusade might also account for the enduring value of the Sourdeval name. Perhaps, instead, the use of Laitor over Sourdeval indicated that it was theirs through conquest and so carried enough symbolic value to be worthy of mention on several occasions, even if it was not used exclusively. This presents a rather more fluid view of dynastic identity in Outremer.

Returning to Laitor, the evidence of the Antiochene chronicler, Walter the Chancellor (*fl. c.* 1120s), suggests that it was in the region to the north of the coastal port of Latakia, an area where the family had a strong level of influence.<sup>28</sup> Following Paul Deschamps, Balázs Major has recently suggested that it should be identified with a site called Tūrus, which is 40 km north-east of Latakia and just under 20 km from the coast.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, given that the status of the Sourdevals relied on coastal possessions of unknown military value – unlike the principality’s other major noble families (such as the Masoires of Margat, the Fresnels of Harim, or the lords of Saone), who controlled important military installations – their position perhaps instead related to revenues acquired from trade or travel.<sup>30</sup> In spite of this, Robert maintained his significant military reputation within the principality. Thus, in detailing a battle between Prince Roger and the Muslim ruler Bursuq of Hamadan at Tell Danith in 1115,

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<sup>27</sup> Murray, ‘How Norman was the Principality of Antioch?’, 358–9.

<sup>28</sup> Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Innsbruck: Wagner’sche Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1896), 258.

<sup>29</sup> Sadly, however, the ravages of time, and the ongoing war in Syria, mean that nothing remains on this site to indicate crusader settlement and it is not accessible for further investigation. See Balázs Major, *Medieval Rural Settlements in the Syrian Coastal Region (12th and 13th Centuries)* (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, 2015), 145 and map; Paul Deschamps, *Les châteaux des croisés*, 3: *La défense du comté de Tripoli et de la principauté d’Antioche* (Paris: Geuthner, 1973), 79. See also Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l’époque des croisades et la principauté franque d’Antioche* (Paris: Geuthner, 1940), 166–7, 535; Andrew D. Buck, *The Principality of Antioch and its Frontiers in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017), 131. In contrast, Thomas Asbridge believed it to be in the Jabal as-Summaq, a plateau to the east of the River Orontes. See Thomas S. Asbridge and Susan B. Edgington, *Walter the Chancellor’s The Antiochene Wars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 141, n. 148.

<sup>30</sup> For the other families, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 128–63.

Walter the Chancellor described Robert as a ‘distinguished knight’, who led his own band of forces and did not fear to seek out battle.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, that ‘Robert did not hold back from avenging the blood of his men by fighting zealously, but after his horse’s reins were cut through, he was wounded by an arrow and died, while his cohort was utterly routed.’<sup>32</sup>

With this, Robert’s long military career was at an end, but the fragmentary evidence we have offers the portrait of a figure whose military and political ambition, as well as his piety, led him to travel vast distances and to cross political divides. This willingness to adapt to changing circumstances was to become the template for his family in future generations; indeed, this was just the beginning of the Sourdevals’ adventures in the Latin East.

### **The next generations: Walter and Robert II of Sourdeval**

The career of Robert’s son, Walter, offers further insights into this family’s complex history and how they sought to cement and further their status. This began after Prince Roger and thousands of Antiochenes were killed fighting the Muslim ruler of Mosul, Il-Ghazi, who invaded the principality to stem Latin aggression and achieved a devastating victory at the aptly named battle of the Field of Blood in 1119.<sup>33</sup> Thus, when King Baldwin II of Jerusalem (d. 1131) came to Antioch to act as regent, Walter used this opportunity to his advantage by securing from him a palace at Latakia at some point during the regency (1119–26).<sup>34</sup> A palace would have been a significant urban dwelling, and so this gift denotes the family’s growing influence here, and may also have been the result of the potential earlier ties between Robert

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<sup>31</sup> ‘milites egregii’: Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, 73–5 (75).

<sup>32</sup> ‘Rotbertus vero non moratus suorum ulcisci sanguinem strenue decertando, succisis loris equi sui, sagitta sauciatus occidit, cohorte illius penitus dissipata’: Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, 75.

<sup>33</sup> Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 73–89, 126–7. More specifically, see Thomas S. Asbridge, ‘The Significance and Causes of the Battle of the Field of Blood’, *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997): 301–16.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, ed., *Cartulaire général de l’ordre des hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100–1300)*, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1894), 1: no. 109.

of Sourdeval and Baldwin's kinsman, Godfrey of Bouillon.<sup>35</sup> Given that Walter is not to be found in any of the (again, admittedly limited) charters of Bohemond of Taranto's son, Bohemond II (d. 1130), who came from southern Italy to rule Antioch in 1126, this relationship may even have caused tension within the principality.

Interestingly, when Bohemond II's death in battle in 1130 signalled another internal succession crisis and a dispute with the kingdom of Jerusalem, Walter and his family can again be found looking to gain from instability. In this period, Princess Alice of Antioch (d. c.1145), daughter of Baldwin II and now widow of Bohemond II, had seemingly used her husband's demise to make a bid for power. The later Jerusalemite chronicler, William of Tyre (d. c.1184), portrayed Alice as a megalomaniacal virago, one who would go to any lengths to secure her position, even to the extent of disinheriting her daughter, Constance (d. c.1164), against the wishes of the Antiochene nobility and Baldwin II, whose entrance into Antioch she now forcibly barred.<sup>36</sup> However, Asbridge has convincingly demonstrated that William's account cannot be trusted, not least because of his silence on the role of the principality's other ruling elites in this episode – a silence which implies, at the very least, a level of neutrality on their behalf, but probably indicates a general desire among the Antiochenes to use this opportunity to control the terms of Jerusalem's involvement at Antioch.<sup>37</sup> Whether or not Alice had the widespread support or complicity of the principality's nobility, it is noteworthy that when she subsequently retired from Antioch to govern her dower lands, the coastal cities of Latakia and Jabala, Walter of Sourdeval can be found with her soon after.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> On palaces in the Latin East, see Adrian Boas, *Domestic Settings: Sources on Domestic Architecture and Day-to-Day Activities in the Crusader States* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 71–81.

<sup>36</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. Robert B.C. Huygens. *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 63/63A, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), 623–5.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas S. Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch: a Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century', in *The Experience of Crusading 2: Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, eds. Peter W. Edbury and Jonathan P. Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29–47; Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 70–1, 191–2, 221–2.

<sup>38</sup> Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', 40–1. It is possible, if unknowable, that Walter's ties to Baldwin II influenced this.

This may not have been an immediate move, for he was not listed amongst Alice's accomplices in a northern Syrian revolt against the new king of Jerusalem, Fulk of Anjou (d. 1143), in 1132. Instead, if William of Tyre's report of Alice's rebellion can be trusted, and extreme caution must be stressed when doing so, then the key players were Counts Joscelin II of Edessa (d. c.1159) and Pons of Tripoli (d. 1137), as well as a different Antiochene nobleman, William of Saone (d. 1132).<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Walter was not present for the earliest surviving charter which Alice issued at Latakia, which dates to January 1134.<sup>40</sup> Still, it cannot be ruled out that Walter was involved with her lordship from the start, and by July 1134 he appeared as constable of Latakia in a charter issued by Alice, which his son, Robert II, also witnessed.<sup>41</sup> The position of constable was a prestigious one, and probably made Walter Alice's commander-in-chief in military matters, which is testament to the fact that he was the highest status figure within her household; to the personal bond between him and the princess; and to the family's growing influence, especially around Latakia.<sup>42</sup> Walter's status continued into 1135, when he again appeared in a Latakian charter as constable, this time confirming his personal donation to the Hospitallers of the palace given to him by Baldwin II, with the support of 'my lady, princess Alice', as well as his wife, Sybil, and his sons.<sup>43</sup> This was a demonstration of Walter's personal piety and wealth (for it cannot have constituted too sizeable a portion of his personal possessions), and also represents an attempt to increase his status by establishing ties with one of the newly-formed military orders – a common trend

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<sup>39</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 635–7. See also Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', 37–9; Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 24–5, 96–7, 117, 130–1, 139, 222–4, 231.

<sup>40</sup> Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Varia Antiochena: Studien zum Kreuzfahrerfürstentum Antiochia im 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhundert* (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1993), 110–12.

<sup>41</sup> Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 113–14.

<sup>42</sup> On Alice's household, which included several minor figures, occasional Jerusalemite exiles, like Hugh of Jaffa, as well as a chancellor and *dux* (or duke), see Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', 39–44.

<sup>43</sup> 'domine mee principissa Adelicie': Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 109. Sadly, the reference to Walter's wife, Sybil, represents one of the very few instances – bar, perhaps, for another Sybil (see below) – whereby a Sourdeval woman can be identified. It is thus difficult to ascertain whether they played a dynastic role similar to that of many aristocratic women elsewhere in the medieval Latin world. On this, see Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 54–235.

amongst elites in the Latin East and the West.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in spite of the Sourdevals' ties to Alice – who William of Tyre consistently portrays as a rebel, and in 1136 is said to have again tried to incite a revolt at Antioch, this time to prevent her daughter from marrying the Western nobleman, Raymond of Poitiers (d.1149) – this does not appear to have prevented Walter's involvement in the princely court after this date.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in 1140, when Raymond and Princess Constance issued two highly prestigious documents confirming the rights and possessions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Antioch, which heralded the coming to court of nearly all the major figures in the principality (albeit not Alice), Walter appeared as the second secular witness, which clearly denotes his social standing.<sup>46</sup> Whether or not the presence here of Alice's supposed allies, including Garenton, lord of Saone, means that by this point relations with her court had softened (and that historians must therefore again re-appraise her career), or that in 1140 Raymond sought to reconcile himself with those close to the princess, it does at least demonstrate that Walter, like his father, had the willingness and ability to traverse political boundaries when chances arose.<sup>47</sup>

There were potential limitations to this, for neither Walter nor Robert II appeared in any other of Raymond's subsequent documents – although it should be noted that the Antiochene nobility were, on the whole, only infrequent attestors to princely charters throughout the twelfth century.<sup>48</sup> Yet, further evidence of the Sourdevals' adaptability and standing can be seen in the wake of Raymond's death at the battle of Inab in 1149, when

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<sup>44</sup> On the ways in which donations to the military orders affected noble patterns of pious gifts, see Schenk, *Templar Families*, 1–265; Tom Licence, 'The Military Orders as Monastic Orders', *Crusades* 5 (2006): 39–53.

<sup>45</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 657–9. That Raymond's appointment as prince seemingly came at the expense of any Italo-Norman claim to the principality through Roger II of Sicily, is an important further signal that ideas of a cohesive 'Norman Empire', which included Antioch, cannot be sustained. See note 15 and Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 69–77.

<sup>46</sup> Genéviève Bresc-Bautier, ed., *Le cartulaire du chapitre du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem* (Paris: Geuthner, 1984), nos. 76–7.

<sup>47</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 69–71. See also Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', 43–6.

<sup>48</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 95–101.

another interregnum struck Antioch.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, when King Baldwin III of Jerusalem (d. 1163) came north c.1151 to aid in the withdrawal of Latin refugees from the now-defunct county of Edessa, which was to be sold to the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel I Komnenos (d. 1180), Robert II of Sourdeval reportedly led Antiochene forces sent to support the monarch.<sup>50</sup> Such was Robert's reputation, William of Tyre, who rarely commented on individual nobles from the principality, described him as a 'noble and powerful man'.<sup>51</sup> William also noted that Robert argued, with support from the Jerusalemite nobleman, Humphrey of Toron (d. 1179), that he should be allowed to maintain the fortress of Aintab – an important settlement at the north-westernmost edge of the principality's sphere of influence – for fear that the Greeks would not have the strength or commitment to retain these lands in the face of Muslim aggression.<sup>52</sup> While it is possible that William created this narrative to support his wider belief that Byzantium should not be trusted with physical possession of Latin territory in the East, and there is nothing to suggest that Robert's request was granted, it is far from surprising that concern might be expressed for Aintab. Indeed, the aggressive expansionism of the Muslim Zengid rulers of Aleppo and Mosul during the 1140s and early 1150s had led to the severe territorial contraction of Frankish interests and left Antioch's northern frontier severely weakened.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, while the Antiochene nobility were broadly open to closer ties with Byzantium, it is plausible that the Sourdevals themselves held a more anti-Greek stance, one stemming from the fact that early imperial incursions against the principality, as well as a potential raid on the northern Syria coast ordered by Manuel Komnenos in 1144 had often centred on the area around Latakia, where the Sourdevals had their power base.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 36–41, 77–80, 226–8; Alex Mallett, 'The Battle of Inab', *Journal of Medieval History* 39 (2013): 48–60.

<sup>50</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 782–5.

<sup>51</sup> 'vir nobilis et potens': William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 783.

<sup>52</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 783. On Aintab, see Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 115–16.

<sup>53</sup> On William of Tyre, see Peter W. Edbury and John G. Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 130–50.

<sup>54</sup> John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. Charles M. Brand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 35–6; Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans.

Robert's actions are nevertheless in line with the wider Antiochene aristocracy, who took it upon themselves to lead the principality through times of crisis from at least the early 1130s.<sup>55</sup> In this context, although Claude Cahen argued that Robert's position at the forefront of Antioch's response to Baldwin III's actions demonstrates the extent of the Sourdevals' power, it is equally plausible that this reflects an attempt to use this opportunity to augment the family's status, perhaps even by playing on longer term ties to the kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>56</sup>

This does not mean, however, that Walter of Sourdeval had disappeared. Conversely, once Constance married another Western nobleman, Renaud of Châtillon (r.1153–61), in 1153, Walter appeared as a high-status witness to three princely documents issued in the immediate aftermath of Renaud's coronation between 1153 and 1154, including one involving all of Antioch's major families.<sup>57</sup> This could indicate that Robert II made a separate bid for power to emerge from his father's shadow in 1151, but given that he appeared alongside Walter in two of the documents in 1153–4, it is more likely that Walter, perhaps now in his early 50s, was simply too old to perform active military service.<sup>58</sup> This conclusion is supported by the fact that he disappears from the documentary record after this point, and by 1155 Robert II was the lone Sourdeval in a princely charter confirming a gift made to the Hospitallers. Once again, he was given a high position in the witness list.<sup>59</sup> Throughout this period, the Sourdevals had thus secured and demonstrated their standing in the principality, showing an aptitude for transcending wider divisions and for not falling foul of such disputes.

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Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 31. See also Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 47–8, 52–3, 56, 59, 62–5, 69; Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 189–217.

<sup>55</sup> On the growing role of the nobility, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 69–84, 95–101.

<sup>56</sup> Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 388, 539.

<sup>57</sup> Gottlieb L. F. Tafel and George M. Thomas, eds., *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig: mit besonderer Beziehung auf Byzanz und die Levante vom neunten bis zum Ausgang des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1856), 1: no. 55; Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 222; Giuseppe Müller, ed., *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città Toscane coll' Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXI* (Rome: Società multigrafica editrice, 1966), no. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren*, 1: no. 55; Müller, *Documenti sulle relazioni*, no. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 231.



### **The rise of Bohemond III and the cementing of a dynasty**

When Prince Renaud was taken prisoner by Muslim forces during a raiding expedition in November 1161 and another succession crisis struck the principality, the Sourdevals again sought to use this to their advantage.<sup>60</sup> Bohemond III (d. 1201), Antioch's male heir and son of Raymond of Poitiers and Constance, was not yet of age (15), so his mother retained control for herself.<sup>61</sup> However, once Bohemond reached maturity c.1163, he appears to have made a play for power, establishing dominion over Latakia and Jabala before finally seizing the princely throne in 1164. It is likely that Constance was at least partly motivated by concern over her son's age and his suitability to lead the principality at a time when Antioch was subject to external interference or threat from Byzantium, Jerusalem, and the Muslim world.<sup>62</sup> As can be gleaned from two documents Bohemond III issued at Latakia in 1163, the majority of nobles sided with Constance, with the most high-profile exception being Robert II of Sourdeval, who appeared as a high-status witness on both occasions.<sup>63</sup> This might again tie into familial views of Byzantium, as the Jacobite chronicler, Michael the Syrian (d. c.1199), commented that those who supported Bohemond feared that Constance might surrender Antioch to Manuel Komnenos – to whom she had just married her daughter, Maria.<sup>64</sup> Given the Sourdevals' Apulian ties, it is also of interest that one of these charters related to the holdings of the Amalfitan church of St Andrew at Latakia, although there are no suggestions

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<sup>60</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 41–8.

<sup>61</sup> For the Antiochene age of majority, see Leon Alishan, ed. and trans., *Assises d'Antioche* (Venice: Impr. arménienne médaillée, 1876), 16.

<sup>62</sup> On these events, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 80–4; Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 55–64; Alan V. Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch (1130–1164): Ancestry, Marriages and Family', in *Anglo-Norman Studies* 38 (2016): 81–96 (94). On Antioch's political status and its relations with other Near Eastern powers during this period, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 36–45, 199–212, 226–30.

<sup>63</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 311; Matteo Camera, ed., *Memorie storico-diplomatiche dell'antica città e ducato di Amalfi*, 2 vols. (Salerno: Stabilimento tipografico nazionale, 1876–81), 1: 202.

<sup>64</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. and trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905), 3: 324. See also Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 209–12.

that residual Western links played a role in this. More likely is that, as a figure of significant standing around Latakia and Jabala, it was difficult for Robert *not* to support Bohemond. In the context of the family's earlier political moves, however, it is hard not to see in this another attempt at social advancement. That the Sourdevals become the most frequent noble attestors of Antiochene princely charters in the following decades further supports this, though any subsequent growth in status was short-lived for Robert, who disappears from the documentary record after 1163. The appearance of a Roger of Sourdeval in a charter of 1167, the first of 13 charter attestations throughout his life (the most of any single figure in Antioch during the twelfth century), indicates that the family had not suffered a total loss in status, even if he often appeared lower on the list than any previous Sourdeval.<sup>65</sup> Rather, it seems that Robert II either died of natural causes or was killed or taken prisoner alongside Bohemond III at the disastrous battle of Artah in 1164, when the young prince was roundly defeated after rashly chasing the Muslim ruler of Aleppo and Damascus, Nur al-Din (d. 1174), as he withdrew from the principality following a raid.<sup>66</sup> At this juncture, Roger then took on the mantle of the Sourdeval representative at the princely court.

In this regard, the position and role afforded to Roger – who is unlikely to have been Robert II's son or heir – offers some interesting insights into the broader status of the Sourdevals and the ways in which kinship groups worked to retain aristocratic power. The issue centres on a charter of 1179, in which Bohemond III confirmed Walter II of Laitor, son of Robert II of Sourdeval and grandson of Walter I of Sourdeval, in possession of a major money fief at Jabala.<sup>67</sup> While Roger of Sourdeval bore witness to this document, he was demonstrably not part of the familial succession, with Walter II the sole heir to a dynastic line

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<sup>65</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren*, 1: no. 61. For his other appearances, see below. **On the problems of witness lists, and the insights that can come from them**, Nicholas Vincent, 'The Court of Henry II', in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 278–334 (284–8).

<sup>66</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 46–8, 117–18.

<sup>67</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Les archives, la bibliothèque*, 142–4.

of inheritance which stretched back to the early decades of Latin settlement. Yet, while Roger was never afforded an office in the princely household, as already noted his career at court was more prolific and longstanding than any other Antiochene noble throughout the twelfth century. Given that his included the granting of trading rights to the Italian city states of Venice, Genoa and Pisa, as well as several gifts to the Hospitallers, he was thus evidently someone of significance – although quite why this was is difficult to gauge, for no narrative sources mention Roger's existence.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, whereas Roger was ever-present at the princely court between 1167 and 1183, by comparison Walter II appeared only once in this period, in the confirmation of his money fief. This does not mean that Walter was at odds with the prince, rather it might be that Roger's position – or, possibly, his skills – made the former's involvement at court unnecessary, with the family estates prioritised instead.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, at least until 1179, it may even have been a matter of age: given that Walter was confirmed in possession of the money fief roughly 15 years after his father's death *c.* 1164, it is possible that he had been an infant or unborn child at that point and only came of age in 1179.

This then raises the question: who was Roger? His status in the witness lists was not always as prestigious as his kinsmen (although at times it was), and his position in the line of inheritance makes it highly unlikely that he was Robert II's son. It remains possible that he was a Western cousin, arriving from Europe following Robert II's death; yet, the Amalfitan charter notwithstanding, the relationship between the principality of Antioch and southern Italy is believed to have been highly limited during this period, while the name Roger is not

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<sup>68</sup> For Roger's charter appearances, see Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren*, 1: no. 61; Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: nos. 391, 475, 522, 546, 614; and 2: no. 23; Dino Puncuh, ed., *I libri iurium della repubblica di Genova*, 8 vols. (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 2002), 1, part 2: no. 340; Müller, *Documenti sulle relazioni*: no. 13; Emmanuel G. Rey, *Recherches géographiques et historiques sur la donations des latins en Orient* (Paris, 1877), 22–3; Delaville Le Roulx, *Les archives, la bibliothèque*, 142–4; Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 114–21.

<sup>69</sup> The nobles' prioritisation of their own lands over princely governance does appear to have been fairly prominent within Antioch. See Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 95–101, 133–40.

known amongst the Normandy branch of the family.<sup>70</sup> The most likely scenario is that Roger was one of the other sons alluded to by Walter I of Sourdeval in his donation to the Hospitallers at Latakia in 1135 (but who, unlike Robert II, was evidently too young to act as witness), and was Walter II's uncle.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, it can be argued that the practice of primogeniture, while still a complicated process in Western Europe, was well established amongst Antioch's nobility.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, it is evident that structures were in place to ensure that the broader kin maintained lordly estates and their status at court while an heir reached their maturity – as can also be seen, albeit in a slightly different form, in the Antiochene lordship of Harim.<sup>73</sup> There were limits to this: we know of a certain Robert of Sourdeval, who became a Templar prior to c.1179, as attested in a letter written between 1179 and 1184, which recorded him being deprived of his habit for an unspecified offence.<sup>74</sup> Given the date, it is nearly impossible that this was Robert II of Sourdeval, but it may be his younger son (especially given that the name of the head of the family appears to have alternated between Walter and Robert), or even another son of Walter I, or of Roger, who joined the Templars

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<sup>70</sup> Camera, *Memorie storico-diplomatiche*, 202; Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 69–77. On the relationship between Norman Italy, the Crusades and the Latin East more generally, see note 15 and Graham A. Loud, 'Norman Italy and the Holy Land', in *The Horns of Hattin: Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1992), 49–62; Joanna H. Drell, 'Norman Italy and the Crusades: Thoughts on the "Homefront"', in *Crusades and Crusading in the Norman World*, eds. Hurlock and Oldfield, 51–64; Paul Oldfield, 'The Use and Abuse of Pilgrims in Norman Italy', in *Crusades and Crusading in the Norman World*, eds. Hurlock and Oldfield, 139–58; Luigi Russo, 'Bad Crusaders? The Normans of Southern Italy and the Crusading Movement in the Twelfth Century', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 38 (2016): 169–80. The likelihood of Roger being part of the Normandy branch of the family is made unlikely by a lack of evidence for this name in this group. On Normandy, see Julien Pitard, *La noblesse du Mortainais*, eds. Victor Gastebois and Hippolyte Sauvage (G. Fayolle: Paris, 1923), 445–6; Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 29–30.

<sup>71</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 109.

<sup>72</sup> On the debate regarding Western primogeniture, see David Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900–1300* (Harlow: Longman, 2005), 87–170. The processes of Antiochene lordly succession are discussed in Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 140–59.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew D. Buck, 'The Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim and the Frankish-Muslim Frontier of Northern Syria in the Twelfth Century', *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 28 (2016): 113–31 (124–9).

<sup>74</sup> Marie-Luise Bulst-Thiele, ed., *Sacrae domus militiae templi Hierosolymitani magistri: Untersuchungen z. Geschichte d. Templerordens 1118/19–1314* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1974), 360, no. 1. See also Félix-Marie Abel, 'Lettre d'un templier récemment trouvée à Jérusalem', *Revue Biblique* 35 (1926): 288–95; Jochen Burgdorf, *The Central Convent of the Hospitallers and Templars: History, Organization, and Personnel (1099/1120–1310)* (Brill: Leiden, 2008), 540; Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'Vestiges of Templar Presence in the Aqsa Mosque', in *The Templars and Their Sources*, eds. Karl Borchardt and others (London: Routledge, 2017), 3–24 (5–7, 18).

having realised his chances of holding a personal fief were limited – which could indicate potential limitations to the family fortune. In the context of Walter I's earlier donation of his palace to the Hospitallers in 1135, Robert's involvement with the Templars also suggests continued attempts to foster closer ties with the military orders as a means of dynastic legitimacy.<sup>75</sup>

Of greater interest to the discussion on the Sourdevals' political strategies is the fact that Roger clearly stayed loyal to Bohemond III during a noble rebellion which erupted between late 1180 and early 1182. This revolt was sparked by Bohemond's decision to reject his Byzantine wife, Theodora, in favour of a Latin woman, Sybil, described in the sources as a witch and a prostitute.<sup>76</sup> His actions led the patriarch of Antioch, Aimery of Limoges (d. c.1196), to excommunicate the prince, who responded by launching violent attacks against the Church. It also caused the rebellion of a powerful aristocratic faction led by Renaud II Masoir (d. c.1185), lord of the fortress of Margat, who were angered by the prince's failure to consult them on a marriage union which had an impact on internal power structures and threatened to damage the ties with Byzantium that they had earlier played an important part in creating.<sup>77</sup> Yet, in spite of wider noble anger, Roger remained amongst the witnesses to documents issued by Bohemond during this conflict and in its immediate aftermath. Furthermore, as he appears as either first or second witness in these charters, Roger's status actually seems to have grown – as demonstrated by the contrast between these documents and his mid-ranking position, far behind the soon-to-be rebel leader, Renaud II Masoir, in a

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<sup>75</sup> It is known that Western knights, perhaps even including the famous William Marshal, performed temporary service in the military orders (a service called *milites ad terminum*) but it may be that, in the Latin East, the vested interest of local families in defending the region led to more permanent postings. See Schenk, *Templar Families*, 70–4; Nicholas L. Paul, 'In Search of the Marshal's Lost Crusade: the Persistence of Memory and the Painful Birth of Crusading Romance', *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014): 292–310 (296–7). See also note 44.

<sup>76</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 1012; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 3: 388.

<sup>77</sup> On noble motivations and the rebellion more broadly, see Andrew D. Buck, 'The Noble Rebellion at Antioch, 1180–82: a Case Study in Medieval Frontier Politics', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 60 (2016): 93–121. See also Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 162–83.

charter Bohemond III issued just before the revolt in September 1180.<sup>78</sup> Walter II's absence could indicate that he had instead supported the rebels, but he was rarely seen at court even before this. Walter's collusion is also made unlikely by suggestions that Bohemond used Latakia as his base of operations during the conflict, and because he later appeared in the prince's charter confirming the sale of the Masoir lordship to the Hospitallers in February 1187. Indeed, this latter event appears to have allowed the return to court of a number of exiled figures, expelled from Antioch for their part in aiding the prince as part of the settlement with the rebels (albeit not Roger, who never returned after 1183, probably having died).<sup>79</sup> Given the Sourdevals' earlier support for Bohemond in his bid for power in 1163, as well as potential familial distrust of Byzantium, it is unsurprising that they would continue to show allegiance to one who had clearly rewarded their loyalty. However, Roger's career and the Sourdevals' potential involvement in the noble rebellion again demonstrate their aptitude for political manoeuvring during times of crisis, as well as the varied avenues to success available to families in the Latin East.

### **The evolution of a dynasty**

Another potential reason behind the Sourdevals' actions in the early 1180s, one which could attest further to their ambitious politicking, is the possibility that they were related to Sybil. In a charter of 1236, mention is made of a Beatrice, daughter of Walter of *Ledur* and, according to certain recensions of the *Lignages d'Outremer* (a text describing the various families of the Crusader States, first composed *c.* 1270 but copied and altered as late as the

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<sup>78</sup> For the documents issued during and after the rebellion, see Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 614; and 2: no. 23; Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 118–21. For the September 1180 document, see Mayer, *Varia Antiochena*, 114–17.

<sup>79</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 1016; Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 1: no. 783. See also Buck, 'Noble Rebellion', 109–16.

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), a cousin of Princess Sybil of Antioch.<sup>80</sup> For Wipertus-Hugo Rudt de Collenberg, *Ledur* is a corruption of Laitor, and Sybil's mother was either Walter II's sister, or the Sourdeval lord had married the princess' aunt. The most likely scenario, he argues, is that Beatrice, along with an apparent sister – one Sybil, a daughter of Walter of Laitor mentioned in charters of 1220 and 1235, as well as in a retrospective confirmation of a document of 1216 – were nieces of the Antiochene princess.<sup>81</sup>

There are some problems with this theory, though. For one, while the status of Sybil, daughter of Walter II of Laitor, is unquestionable, it is not certain that *Ledur* relates to Laitor, despite some phonetic similarities to the latter's apparent modern equivalent: Ṭūrus. Walter *Ledur* could thus instead be Walter Durus, who acted as the marshal of the kingdom of Jerusalem during the mid-1180s and then of Tyre in the 1190s.<sup>82</sup> Yet, it must be noted that nowhere is the marshal's name spelled in this way, so the likelihood remains that this is Walter of Laitor. That the name Sybil was previously known in the Sourdeval family lends support to potential ties, while it is possible that, rather than being Walter II's sister, Princess Sybil was instead the daughter of Roger of Sourdeval, an obvious favourite at court and at the heart of the faction supporting her candidacy in the early 1180s. Another problem, however, is the *Lignages*' suggestion that the Princess Sybil to whom Beatrice was related, called 'Isabelle' in the text, was in fact a fourth wife, taken by Bohemond (probably c.1199) and, according to a very late Italian version, a relation of the Farabel family of the county of Tripoli.<sup>83</sup> This is seemingly supported by a document dated to either March 1200 or March 1201, in which the princess is called Isabelle; though, as Claude Cahen has convincingly

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<sup>80</sup> Ernst G. W. Strehle, ed., *Tabulae ordinis Theutonici* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1869), no. 84; Wipertus-Hugo Rudt de Collenberg, 'A Fragmentary Copy of an Unknown Recension of the "Lignages d'Outre-Mer" in the Vatican Library', *English Historical Review* 387 (1983): 311–27 (317–18); Marie-Adélaïde Nielen, ed., *Lignages d'Outremer* (Paris: Geuthner, 2003), 76, 83, 173.

<sup>81</sup> Rudt de Collenberg, 'Fragmentary Copy', 317–18. For Sybil of Sourdeval, see Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 2: nos. 1684, 2129; and 3: no. 3021.

<sup>82</sup> Mayer and Richard, *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, 2: nos. 452, 454, 530, 533, 537–9, 541, 543, 568, 570, 572. My thanks to Peter Edbury for this suggestion.

<sup>83</sup> Nielen, *Lignages d'Outremer*, 83, 173.

argued, the interchangeability of ‘Sybil’ and ‘Isabelle’ in this period is such that they are likely to be the same person.<sup>84</sup> The situation is made even more complicated by non-Latin authors who recorded that the Princess Sybil who Bohemond married in late 1180 was also related to the governor of the fortress of Bourzey (who wed her sister), and Leon of Armenia (d. 1219) (whose first wife was her niece, Isabella), meaning that the potential kinship group expands even further.<sup>85</sup> In some respects, this makes the union more understandable, for the fact that Bohemond III’s first spouse, Orgeuillse of Harim (d. c.1176), was also taken from within the ranks of the principality’s increasingly independent and influential nobility, makes it is easy to believe he would later seek to strengthen ties to another key aristocratic dynasty – especially one as seemingly well-connected and loyal as the Sourdevals.<sup>86</sup> It would appear, therefore, that the Sourdevals’ familial ties were fairly widespread towards the end of the twelfth century (even if links to Farabels now seem unlikely), and due to this they were able to secure a marriage alliance with the princely house. The nature of the evidence necessitates that these conclusions remain speculative; yet, whether through family ties or not, there is other evidence which indicates the Sourdevals’ links with Sybil.

The context for this was the so-called ‘War of Succession’, which created deep rifts within the principality after Bohemond III’s death in 1201 and stemmed from Leon’s capture

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<sup>84</sup> Müller, *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città Toscane*, no. 50; Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 456, n. 6. However, the ruling over Sybil and Isabella is complicated by the issue of Baldwin IV of Jerusalem’s sisters, who also carried these names: see Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and his Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), viii. On the *Lignages*, see Rudt de Collenberg, ‘Fragmentary Copy’, 316–18 – though it should be noted here that the *Lignages’* information regarding Bohemond III’s marriages was confused in other ways (Buck, ‘Noble Rebellion’, 96–7).

<sup>85</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi’l-Ta’rikh*, ed. and trans. Donald S. Richards, 3 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 2: 351–2; Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Saladin*, trans. Henri Massé (Paris: Geuthner, 1972), 139–40; Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. D.S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 86; Abu Shama, ‘Le livre des deux jardins’, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens orientaux*, vol. 4 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1898): 372; Edgard Blochet, ‘L’histoire d’Alep’, *Revue d’Orient Latin* 4 (1896): 189; Sempad the Constable, *La chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, trans. Gerard Dédéyan (Paris: Geuthner, 1980), 65, 68. Regarding Bourzey, it is likely that its governor was not an enfeoffed noble, but rather a member of Bohemond III’s household *familiares* sent to act as its castellan. See Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 92–5

<sup>86</sup> Buck, ‘Castle and Lordship of Hārim’, 127–8. On the independence of Antioch’s nobility, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 68–85, 95–101, 128–60.



of the Antiochene prince during an ambush near to the fortress of Baghras in 1193.<sup>87</sup> Conflict had been simmering between the pair after Bohemond had earlier captured and tortured Leon's brother, Rupen III (d. 1187). Accordingly, the Armenian had seized Baghras – which was of key strategic importance due to its close proximity to Antioch – when its Muslim governor, who had been handed it after the invasions of 1188 by the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin (d. 1193) had wiped away most of the principality, then abandoned it in 1189.<sup>88</sup> Intriguingly, the Old French continuation of William of Tyre, known as the Lyons *Eracles*, suggests that Sybil colluded with Leon in this subterfuge because she was angered that Bohemond had not provided for her son, while the thirteenth-century Armenian chronicler, Sempad the Constable, argued that she turned to Leon due to his marriage with Isabelle.<sup>89</sup> Whatever the case, the prince was eventually released, albeit not before it was agreed that his eldest son, Raymond II, would marry Leon's niece, Alice, and their offspring would rule after Bohemond. When the pair had a son, Raymond-Rupen (d. c.1221), and Raymond II died in 1197, it looked as if the former would become heir to the principality. However, rather than honouring these terms, Bohemond instead expelled Alice and Raymond-Rupen in favour of his younger son, Bohemond IV (d. 1233), now count of Tripoli. On the prince's death in 1201, Bohemond IV thus moved quickly to enter Antioch and was duly appointed ruler: a move which sparked nearly two decades of conflict, during which Leon frequently attacked the principality and, in 1215, finally placed Raymond-Rupen on the princely throne. Yet,

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<sup>87</sup> For a narrative overview of the events of the War of Succession, see Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 582–643; Jochen Burgdorf, 'The Antiochene War of Succession', in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian J. Boas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 196–211.

<sup>88</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 29–30, 54–9.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Margaret R. Morgan, ed., *La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)* (Paris: Geuthner, 1982), 165–72; Sempad the Constable, *La chronique*, 65, 68. Interestingly, no other versions of *Eracles*, nor the other continuation of William of Tyre, known as *Ernoul*, carry this story, which may relate to the possibility that the Lyons text's author was a cleric, and sought, because he shared William of Tyre's dislike for Sybil (due to her uncanonical marriage and subsequent effect on princely relations with the Church), to sully her name further. That Sempad adds confirmation of her involvement means we should not necessarily doubt its occurrence, though we may question the reality of her motives. My thanks go to Peter Edbury for providing his advice on this.

Raymond-Rupen's reign was short-lived, as he fell out with his Armenian kinsman in 1219, at which point Bohemond IV precipitated a *coup* and resumed power. Of interest here is that in April 1215, when Raymond-Rupen issued what were probably his first charters as prince, amongst the witnesses was a Walter of Laitor. A later document confirms that this was the Walter II of Sourdeval not seen since 1187.<sup>90</sup> Given that an invasion of the principality by Saladin in 1188 had caused the loss of nearly all Antiochene lands, including the Sourdeval estates at Laitor, Latakia and Jabala, it would perhaps follow that their role at court had diminished and alternative paths to influence would be explored.<sup>91</sup> Regardless, Walter II's move to side himself with the Armenian faction – albeit far from unique amongst the Latins of the principality – raises several interesting points of speculation regarding the Sourdevals and their political machinations.

Firstly, if Sybil was part of the Sourdeval family group, and they, in turn, were tied to Leon, this would help to explain Walter II's decision to side with Raymond-Rupen against Bohemond III's favoured candidate, Bohemond IV. Having shown loyalty to the Antiochene prince for so long, it would have taken something important to break this – particularly to the point of a marriage alliance with the Armenian ruling house. Moreover, if Walter II and Sybil were direct relatives, either as siblings or first cousins through Roger, then the niece and wife of Leon, Isabelle, might even be synonymous with the Sybil of Sourdeval witnessed in the 1210s–1230s. Indeed, while in November 1220 this Sybil was wife to Adhemar of Layron, the lord of Caesarea and, at one point, part of the household of the Western nobleman and king of Jerusalem, John of Brienne (d. 1237), it is possible that this was a second marriage following a divorce from Leon – who, in his forlorn quest to produce a male heir, took as his

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<sup>90</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 2: 1441–2. For the document confirming that he was Walter II of Sourdeval, see Delaville Le Roulx *Cartulaire général*, 2: no. 2129.

<sup>91</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 55–6.

second wife Isabelle of Lusignan c. 1210.<sup>92</sup> Enduring links between the Sourdevals and the Armenians are also suggested by a charter of 1235, in which Beatrice, the daughter of Walter *Ledur*, sold lands to the Teutonic Knights in the presence of Raymond-Rupen's mother, Alice, the now-widowed lady of her mother's lands in Toron.<sup>93</sup> This might explain why, in November 1220, a year after Bohemond IV re-secured power at Antioch at Raymond-Rupen's expense, Adhemar of Layron and Sybil sold to the Hospitallers the money fief at Jabala, which had been in the Sourdevals' possession since at least the time of Walter I of Sourdeval.<sup>94</sup> The fact that the charter confirming this notes that Bohemond IV had previously confirmed Sybil in possession of the (admittedly now only nominal) money fief – which can only have occurred once he returned to power in late 1219 – implies either that Walter II had died, or that he had been disinherited from this possession in favour of his daughter, who in turn was either pressured into surrendering it or may simply have preferred to withdraw to the kingdom of Jerusalem, courting ties to the Hospitallers in the process.<sup>95</sup> The decision to side with the Armenians had evidently come at a cost, and bar the sale, again to the Hospitallers, of a vineyard outside the St Paul Gate at Antioch (perhaps the last vestige of the familial estate) in 1235, those references which relate to the Sourdevals after this date deal with reconfirmations of much earlier donations, or with possessions in the kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>96</sup> Thus, alongside Beatrice and Sybil's marriages to members of the Jerusalemite nobility, the former's daughter, Margaret, married a knight of Tyre called Philip of

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<sup>92</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 2: no. 1684. For Adhemar, see Perry, *John of Brienne*, 43, 66–8. For Isabelle of Lusignan, see Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus*, 115.

<sup>93</sup> Strehlke, *Tabulae ordinis Theutonici*, no. 84. For Alice, see Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships*, 91–2.

<sup>94</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 2: no. 1684.

<sup>95</sup> Stipulations for such a matter do exist in the Antiochene law code, the *Assises d'Antioche*, which state that any liege man who left his lord's service without permission, and did not answer a summons to explain, could be removed from his lands provided the high court granted their assent to this and, that, if the liege man later returned after a set period, he could recover his position. This period, of a year and a day, appears roughly equivalent to the time between Bohemond IV's ascent to the throne and Sybil's sale of the lands. See Alishan, *Assises d'Antioche*, 12–14. For the notion that Walter was disinherited, see also Samuel J. Wilson, 'The Latin Principality of Antioch and Its Relationship with the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1188–1268' (Ph.D. diss., Nottingham Trent University, 2016), 45–6.

<sup>96</sup> Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général*, 2: no. 2129; 3: no. 3021.

Maugustel, a supporter of Emperor Frederick II's claim to the throne of Jerusalem.<sup>97</sup> The Sourdeval dynastic machine was therefore still at play within the complex political patchwork that was the thirteenth-century kingdom of Jerusalem. It is of interest that it was primarily through the female line that developments now occurred – for this confirms that women could inherit Antiochene fiefs and influence dynastic processes, even if our evidence for it happening remains regrettably slim.<sup>98</sup> However, the family's role in the principality appears to have come to an end once Bohemond IV recovered power.

### **Dynasty and diaspora**

That the Sourdeval family spread out of Normandy into the British Isles and southern Italy before forging a base of power in the newly formed Crusader States, should ensure their status as the embodiment of Norman adventurism and diaspora. However, to understand whether the Sourdevals, and indeed the principality of Antioch, can be considered as part of the coherent Norman whole some historians have sought to construct, it might prove instructive to test the evidence for this family against the methodology recently employed by David Bates of exploring the diasporic process through the 'life histories' of specific families.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, via this this method, Bates has argued that Norman families who settled in southern Italy and Sicily fit within the so-called 'Weberian "ideal type" of diaspora', in that while they adapted to local idiosyncrasies, they still retained links – in memory, culture, dynasty, empathy, and politics – to Normandy. In short, the diasporic settlers in the south remembered their homeland and showed an enduring concern and affinity for it.<sup>100</sup> Yet, while

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<sup>97</sup> Strehlke, *Tabulae ordinis Theutonici*, no. 84; Nielen, *Lignages d'Outremer*, 76, 83, 173. On Philip, see Jonathan S.C. Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem 1174–1277* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 180–1, 201–3.

<sup>98</sup> For the kingdom of Jerusalem during the thirteenth century, see generally Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, 1ff.; Tibble, *Feudal Monarchy*, 1ff.; Perry, *John of Brienne*, 51–121. On female succession in the principality, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 140–7.

<sup>99</sup> Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 28–31.

<sup>100</sup> Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 29, 181–3. See also Graham A. Loud, 'The Kingdom of Sicily and the Kingdom of England, 1066–1266', *History* 88 (2003): 540–67; Daniel Roach, 'Saint-Évroul and Southern Italy

the Sourdevals of Antioch retained the locative surname which evoked their ancestral homeland, this occasionally gave way to an identity with their new home, particularly, it would seem, with the initial stages of conquest. Likewise, although there are some enigmatic suggestions that ties with the West *could* have occurred, there is in fact no concrete evidence to suggest enduring communicative or empathetic links with the various Western branches of the family – a reality also recently noted for Antioch’s princely house.<sup>101</sup> This could be viewed as supporting Alan Murray’s conclusion that the Normans of Antioch were subsumed within the collective ‘Frankish nationality’ which appears to have come to dominate the Latin communities of the Crusader States.<sup>102</sup> However, while it is true that the Sourdevals cannot be considered part of the ideal type of diaspora utilised by Bates, it may be misleading to favour over-arching group terminology (used primarily by chroniclers) over the personal and emotional bonds forged between each settler and their homes (both ancestral and new).

Furthermore, the Sourdevals’ actions during and after the First Crusade carry similarities with other Norman conquests and the dynastic strategies employed by the enterprising Western aristocratic families who embodied Robert Bartlett’s diasporic ideal.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, from the First Crusade onwards, the Sourdevals demonstrated an astute ability to traverse political boundaries. In addition to establishing themselves in the principality of Antioch through Robert’s role in its conquest, there are suggestions that the Sourdevals also fostered close ties to the kings of Jerusalem. Likewise, the family can be repeatedly found at the centre of matters during periods of unrest, such as the various succession crises or internal conflicts which affected the principality, and on each occasion they appear to have used the opportunity to either cement relationships or to increase their standing. Even when they sat

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in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, in *Orderic Vitalis: Life Works and Interpretations*, eds. Charles C. Rozier and others (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016), 78–99.

<sup>101</sup> Buck, *Principality of Antioch*, 70–6, 83–4.

<sup>102</sup> Murray, ‘How Norman was the Principality of Antioch?’, 358–9. See also Russo, ‘La diaspora normande’, 166–9.

<sup>103</sup> See notes 1 and 4.

on the wrong side of a conflict, this does not appear to have altered their status within Antioch until the decision to side with the Armenian faction during the Antiochene 'War of Succession' of the early thirteenth century. That this came after the Sourdeval family estates were severely diminished by the invasion of Saladin in 1188 indicates not only their adaptability, but also that at least part of their influence within the princely court relied on the fact that their possessions were primarily coastal (with revenues received from the key ports of Latakia and Jabala), while Laitor may have acted as an inland hub of trade or travel. Moreover, even this is indicative of the Sourdevals' success, for although various members of the family were valued for their military prowess, they were the only Antiochene lordly dynasty not to hold a recognisably significant military stronghold. This provides an important insight into the varied paths to influence, even on so contested a frontier as the Latin East.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, in many ways the Sourdevals are set apart from Antioch's other noble families, whose role at court, and during times of crisis, are much harder to chart and certainly less dynamic.

Underpinning the great ruling dynasties of Outremer, we can thus occasionally find minor families, emerging from similar crusading traditions but who did not rise to the same prominence as their leaders. It is these families who allow us to gain an insight, however incomplete, of the broader socio-cultural processes behind the establishment, growth and endurance of the Crusader States. Alongside their military service and political manoeuvring, the Sourdevals therefore also established links with the military orders and appear to have utilised marriage alliances to further their position. Towards the end of the twelfth century, this strategy perhaps tied them to the ruling families of Antioch and Armenia, as well as to the castle of Bourzey, while even when their status diminished in the north after 1219, unions

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<sup>104</sup> See notes 3 and 4 and, more generally Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins and European Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

with Jerusalemite nobles allowed them to remain within the Latin East's elite strata long into the thirteenth century. Whether driven by a sense of *Normannitas* or not, Robert of Sourdeval took the opportunity for advancement offered by the First Crusade and created a new dynasty in Outremer. Through his ambition and opportunism, and that of his descendants, it lasted there for nearly two centuries.

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