

Prosopographical Research on the Crusader States.

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Prosopographical research on the Crusader States, or to use a more accurate term, Outremer, has a long tradition. The first substantial modern work on the Frankish nobility, the *Familles d'Outre-Mer* by Du Cange and Rey, drew primarily on the *Lignages d'Outremer*, a medieval compilation of histories of Frankish families from the mainland states and Cyprus.¹ Since the mid-nineteenth century numerous studies have appeared, most of them concentrating on single families or holders of particular lordships. However, few works have looked at the nobilities of the Frankish states as entire groups, although it might be assumed that information about the geographical origins and social composition of the Frankish ruling classes would lead to important conclusions about such issues as their relationships with their rulers and with western Christendom. My own research has focussed upon the origins of the nobility of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. For a long time the scholarly consensus was that this group essentially originated in the crusading army of Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin I, the first two rulers of the kingdom, and that most had been vassals of the Bouillon-Boulogne dynasty in Europe, primarily in Lotharingia. This assumed character of the early ruling class of Jerusalem was often believed to be a contributory factor in the relative strength of the early Jerusalem monarchy, in contrast to that of the later twelfth century and to the second Latin kingdom of the period after 1187.

My research has so far concentrated on identifying the European origins of the nobles of the kingdom and their relationships with the ruling dynasty. On detailed examination, the so-called 'Lotharingian character' of the nobility proves to be something of an oversimplification. In the first two decades of the kingdom Lotharingians made up only one significant element in the nobility along with men from Flanders, Picardy, Normandy and the Ile-de-France, as well as smaller numbers of Germans, Italians and Provençals. While some had connections with the Bouillon-Boulogne family ante-dating the crusade, most had only entered the service of Godfrey and Baldwin during the expedition to Palestine. Kinship ties between the nobility and the ruling house were insignificant. This situation began to change following the death of Baldwin I in 1118 when, after a short dispute over the succession, the throne passed to Baldwin II, who despite his name was a fairly distant kinsman of his predecessor. Baldwin II was a son of a count of Rethel, whose family had extensive connections with the nobles of the Ile-de-France and the surrounding areas. From 1118 we find an increase in the number and influence of new men with certain shared characteristics: a late arrival in Outremer; geographical origins in Francia; ties of kinship and vassalage with each other and the ruling house; and, traditions of independence and resistance to royal authority. The growing factionalism of the nobility and its deteriorating relationship with the monarchy actually threatened the crown on two occasions: in 1124, when a faction attempted to depose Baldwin II in favour of Count Charles the Good of Flanders; and ten years later, when Baldwin's son-in-law and successor Fulk of Anjou was opposed by a revolt led by Hugh of Le Puiset, lord of Jaffa, a member of a family well-known in France for its tradition of opposition to the Capetian dynasty. It would seem that far from contributing to the strength of the monarchy, the factionalism of the nobility constituted a threat to the crown and to the stability of the kingdom.

A great deal of work remains to be done, particularly on the nobility of the principality of Antioch, and on the thirteenth-century states as a whole. In particular, greater weight needs to be given to documentary sources rather than to the often inaccurate medieval genealogies. The prosopography of Outremer will undoubtedly be transformed by the results of two major projects currently in progress: Hans Eberhard Mayer's edition of the royal diplomas of the kingdom of Jerusalem, and Jonathan Riley-Smith's prosopographical database of crusaders and settlers.² However, the Latin East continues to attract interest from all over the globe. In countries as diverse as Belgium and Israel (to take merely two examples), scholars are pursuing prosopographical research along traditional lines -- for instance, by studying crusading and settlement from particular European regions to Outremer -- or are extending it away from the nobility and Latin clergy to the burgher class and even non-Frankish groups. In the course of the next year I hope to write a *Forschungsbericht* surveying recent research on the prosopography of Outremer which will include discussion of work in progress, and I would be grateful if colleagues could send me offprints of their work and/or details of projects in progress so that I can include as wide a range of information as possible.

NOTES

¹ *Les Familles d'Outre-Mer de Du Cange*, ed. E. G. Rey (Paris, 1869; repr. New York, 1971); 'Lignages d'Outremer', in *Recueil des Historiens de Croisades. Lois*, II (Paris, 1843), 435-74.

² Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Crusaders and Settlers: A Prosopographical Database', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, 9 (1989), 26-27.

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