

Unequal Marriage in Medieval France: The Case of the Vermandois Heiresses

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Unequal marriage among the upper nobility became increasingly common in France towards the end of the twelfth century as many northern French noble families faced a failure in the male line, frequently leaving daughters to inherit. This led to an increase in the number of eligible heiresses. The marriages of heiresses were problematic for those noble families lacking a male heir, as they faced a difficult decision; if a woman married a man who was too powerful, then their inheritance might become a mere province of her husband's territory; and if an heiress married a man who was significantly lower in social standing, then he may not be suitable as a ruler. It was believed that when a man of inferior birth married into a great family he would introduce inferior blood into the kin group thus degrading the lineage as a whole.¹ The concerns regarding unequal marriage were explicitly set out in England in Magna Carta (1215), which states that, 'Heirs shall be given in marriage without disparagement'.² While there is no equivalent document which expresses comparable concerns by the French nobility, the problem was equally relevant in France. In order to illustrate the issue that unequal marriage could cause, I will focus on a high profile instance of unequal marriage, that of Eleanor of Vermandois, whose unequal marriage will be compared with that of her sister, Elizabeth, for whom a more socially advantageous match was made. A comparison of the two sisters and their contrasting marriages will allow for greater understanding of the implications of unequal marriage.

Eleanor of Vermandois

The Vermandois heiresses, Elizabeth and Eleanor, were the daughters of Ralph I of Vermandois and Petronilla of Aquitaine, Eleanor of Aquitaine's younger sister. The Vermandois consisted of the Valois and the province of Vermandois, which included Amiens, Saint-Quentin, Péronne, Montdidier, Ribemont and Chauny. Eleanor was born in 1148/9 and was married four times. Her first marriage to Geoffrey count of Ostervant took place in 1162/3, when Eleanor was in her mid-teens.³ The marriage would have been a great political alliance had Geoffrey survived to inherit. Geoffrey was heir to his father Baldwin IV count of Hainault, and would have inherited the vast county of Hainault, a county easily comparable with Flanders. The match between Eleanor and Geoffrey would have been a marriage much like her sister Elizabeth's marriage to Philip, count of Flanders. As second in line to the county, with a sister who was also married, there cannot have

been any notion that Eleanor would one day become countess. This marriage would have created a formidable alliance that included the Vermandois, Flanders and Hainault, a northern power block that must have greatly concerned Louis VII.⁴ However, Geoffrey did not live long enough to inherit as he died in 1163, only one year after marrying. Eleanor was a widow in her teens and was consequently thrust back onto the marriage market.

Eleanor's second marriage, to Count William IV of Nevers took place two years later in 1164, when Eleanor was sixteen or seventeen years old.⁵ Although she had not been rushed into re-marrying, she was nonetheless married for a second time before the age of eighteen. This shows that she was an important political commodity. This marriage to the count of Nevers is another solid political match. Although not as powerful as the counts of Hainault, the count of Nevers was nevertheless a good alliance. However, William died on Crusade in Acre in 1168 and Eleanor was widowed again after only four years of marriage, leaving her a widow for the second time while only in her early twenties.⁶

In 1170/1, nearly three years after the death of William of Nevers, Eleanor was married a third time to Philip of Flanders' brother Matthew of Alsace, count of Boulogne.⁷ What is evident from this match is that Philip of Flanders was eager for a further alliance with the Vermandois. The marriage fits within a matrimonial policy that also saw Eleanor's older sister Elizabeth married to Philip, count of Flanders, and her brother Ralph II, count of Vermandois, married in 1163 to Philip of Flanders' sister Margaret.⁸ This marriage was especially important, as after twelve years of marriage, her sister Elizabeth had failed to produce an heir to succeed to the counties of Flanders and Vermandois, making Eleanor heir presumptive. It is probable that this was an attempt made by Philip of Flanders to ensure his family's continued hold over the county of Vermandois while furthering their attempt to build a northern power block. However, any plans that Philip may have had were thwarted, as Matthew died in 1173, wounded by a crossbow at the battle of Drincourt.⁹

Eleanor's final marriage was to Matthew, count of Beaumont-sur-Oise, a marriage for which there is a wealth of surviving documentation. Eleanor and Matthew married in 1175, a marriage that lasted more than thirty years, until his death in 1208/9.¹⁰ Matthew of Beaumont-sur-Oise was unlike Eleanor's previous husbands. Although a count in his own right, Matthew's lands are minor in comparison to the Hainault lands that Eleanor's first husband Geoffrey stood to inherit. The counts of Beaumont-sur-Oise were castellan lords who ruled over a small territory in the Île-de-France. However, as well as being count of Beaumont-sur-Oise, Matthew was also Grand Chamberlain of

France.¹¹ Matthew was in a useful political position with access to the king, but conversely it meant that he was the king's man.¹² This then is an interesting marriage, one that leads to questions regarding who arranged it. It is unlikely that Philip of Flanders would have arranged such a marriage, especially in light of the fact that Eleanor was heiress to the Vermandois. It is therefore probable that it was a match preferred by the king. Significantly, the date of the marriage coincides with the alleged adultery of her sister Elizabeth, leading one to question whether Eleanor seized the opportunity to escape her brother-in-law's political matchmaking.

Vermandois Inheritance

When Elizabeth died in 1183, Eleanor was the heiress to the county of Vermandois, making her an extremely powerful and wealthy woman in her own right. Her brother-in-law, Philip of Flanders was unwilling to surrender the county and fought to maintain control. Eleanor did not receive the entirety of her inheritance and the Vermandois was divided into three between Eleanor, Philip of Flanders and King Philip Augustus. Philip of Flanders was permitted to retain much of the Vermandois, as well as the title 'count of Vermandois' for the remainder of his life. Eleanor came out of the agreement with the smallest share, receiving Valois.¹³

In 1191 Philip of Flanders died on the Third Crusade and Eleanor now inherited Saint Quentin. In order to secure her inheritance and the support of the king, Eleanor had to enter into negotiations and make concessions to Philip Augustus. In exchange for conceding Péronne, as well as Montdidier and Roye to the king, Eleanor was granted 13,000 *livres*. Furthermore, in return for her consent that Philip Augustus should retain the remainder of the Vermandois, she was granted 3,500 *livres* per annum from the royal treasury. A later agreement made in 1192 also stipulated that should either Eleanor or Philip Augustus die without an heir then they would inherit the other's Vermandois lands.¹⁴ This agreement naturally favoured the king who already had an heir. Considering Eleanor's age and the death of her children in infancy, it must have seemed certain that the Vermandois would eventually fall under the control of the Crown. Nevertheless, Eleanor maintained jurisdiction over the lands that she inherited during her lifetime and appears in charters and on her seals distinctly titled, 'Eleanor, countess of Saint Quentin and lady of Valois'. Although Eleanor did not acquire the complete inheritance, she was nevertheless a very wealthy and powerful woman.

Matthew of Beaumont-sur-Oise does not appear to have made any formal attempt to intervene in the matter of the Vermandois inheritance, neither apparently did he oppose Philip Augustus in his attempts to seize portions of his Eleanor's inheritance. Philip of Flanders had fought to retain the Vermandois after Elizabeth's death, it is impossible to imagine that he would have allowed such intervention when settling Elizabeth's claim to the county. It is evident that whilst Matthew's position as Grand Chamberlain gave him access to the king it similarly meant that he was not in a position to oppose him. However, without Matthew's political proximity to the king, Eleanor could have been entirely disinherited. Due to Matthew's role at court, Eleanor was in a position to negotiate with the king, and thus place herself under the king's protection. In fact, Eleanor's unequal marriage with Matthew may have worked to her advantage. When viewed from this perspective, it is evident that Matthew possessed a real political power, not based on traditional baronial prestige and landed wealth, but instead on royal patronage. It is therefore likely that Matthew's lack of intervention in preventing the king from taking concessions from Eleanor, is not proof of his inability to oppose the king, but instead, his ability to utilise his position at court to his wife's advantage. When viewed from this perspective, the inequality between husband and wife is significantly diminished and leads one to question whether it can truly be categorised as unequal marriage.

Marriage as a Union

Eleanor and Matthew's marriage was an unequal marriage when judged against baronial concepts of lineage, however, their relationship appears to be one of equals, where both were able to wield independent political power. Eleanor could afford to act independently of Matthew and frequently appears alone in charters. Borrelli de Serres explores the idea that they may have divorced in the early 1190s, explaining Matthew's lack of intervention in ruling Eleanor's inheritance. Borrelli de Serres highlights evidence suggesting that Matthew remarried to Eleanor of Soissons.¹⁵ However, charters show that Eleanor of Vermandois continued to make gifts to religious houses situated in Beaumont-sur-Oise after the date of their supposed divorce.¹⁶ Furthermore, there does not appear to be documentary evidence or reports in chronicles to support the notion that they separated. Of course we cannot be certain, but there is no suggestion that there was any animosity between Eleanor and Matthew. Naturally we would expect Eleanor to support Matthew, but the donations to religious foundations in Beaumont-sur-Oise are made independently from him, suggesting that they were her own initiative. Furthermore, Eleanor seems to have spent time in Paris at the royal court with Matthew. Royal charters indicate that Matthew spent much of his time at the

court as he witnessed the majority of royal charters as Grand Chamberlain. Evidence for Eleanor's presence at court can be seen when Eleanor presided over an agreement involving the abbey of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris in 1197.¹⁷

Further evidence of Eleanor's continued presence at the royal court can be deduced from her relationship with the queens of France. Eleanor and Matthew founded a chapel for the commemoration of Adela of Champagne, Louis VII's queen and Philip Augustus' mother. After her death in 1206, they made provisions for a chaplaincy to say prayers for her soul in the church of Saint-Denis-de-la-Châtre.¹⁸ Eleanor's relationship with Adela can also be detected in the third memorandum with Philip Augustus, as Adela acted as a witness. Eleanor equally appears to have had contact with Ingeborg of Denmark, Philip Augustus' second wife; she is commemorated in the calendar of the Ingeborg Psalter. This incredibly lavish manuscript was commissioned around 1200, and it is believed that Eleanor played a role in commissioning it; her vast wealth certainly gave her the means to finance such an opulent manuscript.¹⁹

Eleanor's presence at court alongside her husband indicates that they had a normal conjugal life. As ruler of her Vermandois lands, Eleanor might have been expected to remain in her own lands while Matthew was at court, and yet documents suggests otherwise.

Documentary Evidence

Eleanor did not relinquish jurisdiction of her inheritance to Matthew, instead she maintained firm control over her ancestral lands. Eleanor's presence in charters and the way in which she is styled reveal much about her changing status and hints at power play within her marriage. Matthew is styled as 'Mathei, Comitibus Bellimontis', similarly Eleanor's earlier seal styles her as 'Heleniore comitisse Bomonte'. This seal is believed to date from 1177 and so at this stage Eleanor is using her husband's comital title. This is to be expected as her sister Elizabeth was still alive and so Eleanor had yet to inherit. Eleanor's changing status and accumulation of titles can be followed in her charters and on her seal. Eleanor's status as heir to the county is set out in a charter confirming donations made by Elizabeth of Vermandois and Philip of Flanders. The charter, dated 1184 styles Eleanor as 'heres Valesiae filia Radulphi Comitibus Perone', firmly asserting her place in the lineage as heir to the county.²⁰ In a charter dating from 1185, Eleanor is styled as, 'Eleanor Comitissa et domina Crispeii', reflecting her increase in standing but also demonstrating that she had yet to inherit her lands from her brother-in-law, Philip. On a later seal Eleanor is styled as 'Elienor

Comitissa Sci Qvintini et Valesie', the title that she would finally inherit after Philip of Flanders' death in 1191.²¹ What is evident is that Eleanor is eager to assert her position. Even in joint charters, Eleanor's status is often distinct from her husband, while Matthew rarely assumes his wife's titles. As Matthew had not taken control of Eleanor's lands, he did not have a claim to her titles.²² However, one exception to this is in a charter relating to the abbey of Saint Léonore, Beaumont-sur-Oise in which Matthew is named as count of Beaumont and 'Dominus Valesiae'.²³ It is not clear why this should be different, although he does appear alongside Eleanor. It is possible that the title was attributed to Matthew by the priory scribes for reasons of prestige.

Eleanor's patronage of religious foundations further reveals the extent of her power and independence. Renowned as being one of the greatest religious patrons of her day, Eleanor gave vast amounts to a wide variety of religious houses, including Benedictine monasteries, Cistercian and Premonstratensian houses, Fontevraudine priories, regular canons, chapters of secular canons, Hospitallers, Templars and nine nunneries, including two affiliated with the Paraclete, in addition to the gifts that she made to numerous hospitals and leper houses. Eleanor continued to support foundations that had traditionally been favoured by her natal family, but was also innovative in her religious patronage, founding the Fontevraudine priory of Longpré as well as the Cistercian nunnery of Parc-aux-Dames. This patronage set her apart, not only as a benevolent patron but also a pioneer; her Cistercian foundation at such an early date marks the beginning of a wider trend for female Cistercian patronage.²⁴

The extent of Eleanor's religious patronage demonstrates that she had almost total freedom within her marriage to dispose of her properties. However, Eleanor was not afforded complete autonomy. Philip Augustus, fearful of Eleanor diminishing his inheritance through vast religious donations, restricted her gifts of income-producing property in a treaty made in 1191/1192 and three successive memoranda that set out her donations up to 1194.²⁵ As well as confirming previous donations that she had made, Philip Augustus also dictated what she could give in the future. As a result of this agreement, there appears to be fewer landed donations after this date.

Despite the king's best attempts to control Eleanor, she still apparently found ways to bypass his restrictions, thus ensuring her continued independence when making religious donations. Constance Hoffman Berman argues that, instead of donating land that was restricted under the terms of the agreement with Philip Augustus, Eleanor was making cash donations.²⁶ It seems likely that Eleanor would have made cash donations to religious institutions, especially in consideration of

her vast new wealth, and her extensive generosity towards religious establishments prior to the agreements with Philip Augustus.

Eleanor appears to have had an acute awareness of her responsibilities as a countess. Her eventual burial place, the abbey of Longpont, is the ultimate testament to her enduring loyalty to her ancestral lands and natal family. The resting place of her brother Ralph, Longpont was an abbey traditionally favoured by the counts of Vermandois. Eleanor's burial at the abbey reflects a wish to be buried alongside her brother and to eternally signal her position as a ruler in her own right, rather than a consort. The autonomy that Eleanor had in her marriage is exemplified in her religious patronage and her choice of burial place and stands in stark contrast with the marriage between her sister Elizabeth and Philip of Flanders.

Elizabeth of Vermandois and Philip of Flanders

Eleanor's sister Elizabeth was born in 1143 and was married in 1159 at the age of sixteen to Philip of Alsace, later count of Flanders.²⁷ Philip, count of Flanders was arguably the most powerful man in northern France, second only to the king, although some could even argue more powerful than him too. He had vast wealth and ruled the county of Flanders as an autonomous ruler. Philip was an astute ruler who was ambitious in both his economic and political aspirations. This ambition is exemplified by his attempt to control the young Philip Augustus when he came to throne in 1180, by influencing his policies in trying to expel the Champagne faction from court.²⁸ Philip of Flanders endeavoured to cement this alliance by arranging the marriage between the young king and his niece Isabella of Hainault, which took place in 1180.

When Elizabeth of Vermandois married Philip of Flanders in 1159 it marked a great alliance between two politically important noble houses. Their geographic proximity and the size of the Vermandois lands made it a desirable coalition for Philip. When they married it was not obvious that Elizabeth was going to inherit the county of Vermandois, and it is therefore likely that Elizabeth was perceived to be a means of securing an alliance with an important noble house.²⁹ At a time when the nobility of France were attempting to retain their independent status, it was natural that Philip of Flanders would seek a northern alliance that acted as a counterbalance to the king.

After Elizabeth's brother Ralph died,³⁰ there was no male heir to inherit the vast territories belonging to the counts of Vermandois. After Elizabeth inherited the county of Vermandois,

according to marriage custom, Philip of Flanders was able to greatly strengthen his political hold over north-eastern France and became a tangible threat to the king, Louis VII, especially when considering their proximity to royal lands.³¹

The difference between the two sisters and their marriages is particularly evident when viewing their presence in legal documents. What is marked in extant charters is that unlike Eleanor, Elizabeth rarely, if ever, appears independently of her husband. Philip clearly takes on Elizabeth's inheritance and is titled Count of Flanders and Vermandois, whilst she is referred to only as his wife in charters and as countess of Flanders on her seal.³² This may be attributed to the fact that Elizabeth relinquished her claim to her inheritance to Philip of Flanders and assumed her status as his consort rather than a countess in her own right.³³

Elizabeth most frequently appears in charters relating to religious patronage in her ancestral Vermandois lands. Despite the fact that they relate to her own lands, she does not appear independently of Philip. Instead her husband takes the lead in maintaining a sense of continuity with their predecessors and their religious patronage. Nevertheless, it must not be ruled out that Elizabeth may have influenced the form of their religious patronage, that she does not merely witness the charters, but acts in partnership with Philip.

Despite predominantly issuing charters with Philip, Elizabeth acted independently in founding a chaplaincy at the cathedral of Notre-Dame-d'Arras in 1182, a donation located on Philip's territory. While we may expect her to have made donations on her own lands, it is possible that she was preparing for burial in the cathedral. Elizabeth gave 20 *livres* annually from Péronne, as well as 100 *sous* to be distributed each year on her anniversary to the canons of the church. It is important to note that her donations were made with money from Saint Quentin, revenues from her own county.³⁴ Despite Saint Quentin money being used in joint patronage to religious institutions on Elizabeth's ancestral territories, this foundation on her husband's lands suggests that it was a personal gift from Elizabeth; if Philip had been involved, it is likely that the money would have been drawn from Flanders. The chaplaincy was supported by a further gift of 40 *sous* from Philip of Flanders, to be taken from his revenues at Bapaume.³⁵ This is therefore an independent donation made by Elizabeth. Yet it would seem that even when drawing from her inheritance Elizabeth had to seek her husband's approval.³⁶

Elizabeth's choice of burial in Arras is unexpected, as one might have expected her to be buried in the Vermandois. On the one hand her place of death probably influenced the site of her grave, much like the case of Geoffrey of Brittany who was buried in Paris.³⁷ However, Elizabeth's burial in Arras also indicates that she had ultimately lost her familial connection; rather than burial in an ancestral religious house, such as Longpont or Saint Arnoult, or in one of the great churches in the centres of power, Crépy or Saint Quentin, Elizabeth final resting place was in Flanders.³⁸ Elizabeth's establishing the chapel would seem to indicate that this was her own choice. It is likely that as Elizabeth was a ruling countess at the time of her death rather than a widow, her burial in Arras Cathedral reflects her desire to be commemorated as countess of Flanders.

Elizabeth's marriage does not appear to have been a happy one. Conflict between Elizabeth and Philip is related by Ralph of Diceto (d. 1199/1200). In his *Ymagines Historiarum* Ralph reports that Elizabeth of Vermandois was forced to abandon her lands to her husband Philip of Flanders after it was discovered that she had committed adultery in 1175 at Saint Omer with Walter de Fontaines, a young knight in the service of her husband.³⁹ Whilst Philip could not afford to dispose of his wife for fear of losing control of the Vermandois, according to Diceto, the knight was not so lucky and met a particularly grisly end as he was beaten and then hung upside down in a latrine until dead.⁴⁰ The extent to which Diceto has embroidered on the story cannot of course be established and the fact that it is not reported on by any chroniclers from the Low-countries leads to questions regarding its credibility.⁴¹ However, this report of adultery probably reflects gossip at the Angevin court, and indicates that this was not believed to be a happy marriage.⁴² Moreover, marital discord is attested by an earlier letter sent to Philip of Flanders in August 1166 by Pope Alexander III, in which Philip is reminded of his marital duty.⁴³ These marital troubles were not helped by the lack of children.⁴⁴ On paper this was the ideal marriage between two members of the upper nobility; yet, what is apparent is that Elizabeth was just a means through which Philip was able to gain control over the county of Vermandois.⁴⁵

The marriage between Elizabeth of Vermandois and Philip of Flanders represents a far more typical example of noble matrimonial policy in the twelfth century, one which was centred on ideals surrounding lineage and social standing and which was based on landed wealth. However, what is evident in this example is that such marriages led to the commodification and disempowerment of the noble heiress. Unlike her sister Eleanor, Elizabeth had very little freedom in her actions and was unable to rule her inheritance as a countess in her own right. Although seemingly a marriage of

equals, the marriage between Elizabeth and Philip resulted in far greater imbalance than the unequal marriage between Eleanor and Matthew.

Conclusion

At a time when the failure of male lines was frequently occurring, the marriage of heiresses was a delicate business. The example of the Vermandois heiresses and their marriages illustrates the difficulties that were facing many kin groups. As Elizabeth's case shows, equal marriages could be just as detrimental as unequal marriages. Elizabeth's marriage to Philip of Flanders was seemingly in the best interests of the kin group but ultimately led to the demise of the vast Vermandois inheritance. An alliance with a powerful ruler was advantageous although it could clearly cause great difficulties in the absence of children. Eleanor's marriage to Matthew of Beaumont-sur-Oise was not a marriage that enhanced the Vermandois lineage, yet she retained the freedom to rule as a feudal overlord. Ultimately, the disparity in Eleanor's marriage was of little importance as she did not produce an heir, removing any concerns regarding the debasement of the lineage that was so explicitly set out in Magna Carta.

The concept of inequality in marriage is problematic. Certainly, from a noble perspective, Eleanor's marriage to Matthew is an unequal one. But, the marriage took place at a time when concepts of power were beginning to alter. No longer was political power purely based upon landed wealth and noble lineage, but rather on proximity to the king. The late twelfth century was a time when baronial aspirations of an autonomous kin group was being threatened by social change and an increasing reliance on royal patronage in order to secure political power. Therefore, marriages such as that between Eleanor and Matthew acted as a counterbalance against traditional baronial ideas centred on landed assets. This sort of marriage clearly works in the French context of increasingly centralised royal power in a way that it might not have in England where royal power was on the contrary diminishing.

¹ D. Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900-1300* (Harlow, Pearson/ Longman, 2005), pp. 127-128.

² Transl. J. Holt, *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2nd edn., 1992), pp. 452-453

³ Gislebert of Mons, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, ed. L. Vanderkindere, *La Chronique de Gislebert de Mons*, (Brussels, 1904), p. 67

⁴ It is possible to speculate that Philip of Flanders and his father Thierry of Flanders arranged this marriage, especially when viewed in light of the fact that Philip's sister, Margaret was later married

to Geoffrey's younger brother Baldwin, who would become Baldwin V of Hainault in 1169. It seems that Thierry and Philip were eager to create an alliance with the counts of Hainault.

⁵ Gislebert of Mons, pp. 86-87.

⁶ *Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Brepols, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis 63A, 1986), XXIII, 915

⁷ *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ed. L. Delisle, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1872-3), II, 20.

⁸ 'Flandria Generosa: Continuatio Claromariscensis', in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores (MGH SS)* ed. G. H. Pertz, IX, 326-334 (327).

⁹ *Annales Blandiniensis*, *MGH SS*, V, 20-34 (29).

¹⁰ Gislebert of Mons, pp. 86-87.

¹¹ J. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986), p. 32.

¹² Anselme, *Histoire Généalogie et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France* (Paris, 1733), 7, 396, 403.

¹³ A. Cartellieri, *Philipp II. August, König von Frankreich* (Leipzig, 1899), 1, pp. 126-129.

Gislebert of Mons, pp. 147-149.

¹⁴ *Recueil des Actes de Philippe Auguste* ed. H. F. Delaborde, 4 vols. (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1916-79), I, no. 399.

¹⁵ See Borrelli de Serres, *La Réunion des Provinces Septentrionales à la Couronne par Philippe Auguste: Amiénois, Artois, Vermandois, Valois* (Paris, 1899), pp. CXX-CXXV

¹⁶ L. Douet d'Arcq, *Recherches Historique et Critiques sur les Anciens Comtes de Beaumont-sur-Oise, du XIe au XIIIe siècle, avec une Carte du Comté* (Amiens, Duval et Herment, 1855), nos.

LXVIII, LXXV Eleanor made a donation to the priory of Boran in 1195 of 2 *muids* of wheat to be taken each year from her mill at Crépy. She also made a donation to Saint Léonore de Beaumont of a *muid* of wheat, also to be taken from her mill at Crépy.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, no. LXIX.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, nos. LIV-LVI. *Gallia Christiana in Provincias Ecclesiasticas Distributas*, ed. Denys de Sainte-Marthe 16 vols. (Paris, 1716-1865), VII, col. 83-84

¹⁹ K. S. Schowalter, 'The Ingeborg Psalter: Queenship, Legitimacy, and the Appropriation of Byzantine Art in the West', in K. Nolan (ed.), *Capetian Women* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 99-135.

²⁰ AN K185, no. 52

²¹ M. G. Vallois, *Péronne, son Origine et ses Développements* (Péronne, 1880), p. 131.

²² Borrelli de Serres, *La Réunion*, p. 50.

²³ BnF MS Lat. 9974.

²⁴ Constance Hoffman Berman, 'Two Medieval Women's Property and Religious Benefactions in France: Eleanor of Vermandois and Blanche of Castile', *Viator*, 41 (2010): 152-182 (155).

²⁵ Memorandum reproduced in Louise Duval-Arnould, 'Les Aumônes d'Aliénor, dernière Comtesse de Vermandois et Dame de Valois', *Revue Mabillon*, 60 (1984): 395-463.

²⁶ This is based on the assumption that charters relating to cash donations no longer exist or that they were not deemed necessary. Unlike donations of lands and rights that had conditions attached to them, cash donations were not legally complex and so did not require the same level of bureaucracy see Hoffman Berman, 'Two Medieval Women's Property and Religious Benefactions in France'.

²⁷ There is evidence that Elizabeth was residing in Flanders prior to this date, she acts as a witness to Thierry of Flanders' charter in 1155 and is named as Philip's wife. T. De Hemptinne, *De Oorkonden der Graven van Vlaanderen* (Bruxelles, Paleis der Academiën, 2001, no. 146. The marriage was formalised in 1159 when Elizabeth received her dower lands. *Dotalium Elisabeth Comitissae*, in *Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum Historicorum, Dogmaticorum, Moralium*

Amplissima Collectiona, eds. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris, 1774), I, col. 851-2. De Hemptinne, *De Oorkonden*, no. 182. K. S. Nicholas, 'Countesses as Rulers in Flanders', in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. T. Evergates, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 111-137 (24).

²⁸ The Champagne faction consisted of Philip Augustus' mother, Adela of Champagne and Philip Augustus' uncles, Henry, count of Champagne and Theobald V, count of Blois.

²⁹ Elizabeth's half-brother Hugh II, count of Vermandois ruled the county and although he resigned this title in favour of becoming a monk, her younger brother Ralph, later Ralph II was his heir. Although Ralph later contracted leprosy, it is unlikely that he was ill when the marriage between Elizabeth and Philip took place. It is difficult to determine exactly when he contracted the illness, the fact that he married Philip's sister Margaret a year later in 1160 suggests that he was healthy at the time. See Duval-Arnauld.

³⁰ It is uncertain whether Ralph died in 1164, or if instead he was too ill to govern the county and so surrendered it to Elizabeth and Philip. Louis Duval-Arnauld, 'Les dernières années du comte lépreux Raoul de Vermandois (v. 1147-1167) et la dévolution de ses provinces à Philippe d'Alsace', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 142 (1984): 81-92

³¹ Baldwin, *Government*, p. 17.

³² B. -M. Tock, *Les Chartes de l'Abbaye Cistercienne de Vaucelles au XIIIe Siècle* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2010), nos. 5, 63 & 95.

³³ Borrelli de Serres, *Réunion*, p. xxvi, no. 3.

³⁴ *Actes*, 1, no. 438.

³⁵ *Cartulaire des Chapellenies de la Cathédrale d'Arras*, BnF MS Lat. 17737. *Actes*, 1, no. 438. A. Wauters, *Table Chronologique des chartes et diplômes imprimé concernant l'histoire de la Belgique*, 11 vols. (Brussels, 1868), III, 16. Nicholas, 'Countesses as Rulers in Flanders', p. 125

³⁶ *Actes*, 1, no. 438.

³⁷ Baldwin, *Government*, p. 20.

³⁸ L. P. Colliette, *Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique, Civile et Militaire de la Province du Vermandois* (Cambrai, 1771-1773), p. 376

³⁹ Ralph of Diceto, 'Ymagines Historiarum', in W. Stubbs ed. *Radulphi de Diceto decani lundoniensis opera historica. The historical works of Master Ralph de Diceto, Dean of London*, 2 vols. (London, Longman, 1876), I, 402. This episode is also reported on in Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene* ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols, (London, Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869), II, 82-3.

⁴⁰ Ralph of Diceto, p. 402

⁴¹ R. E. Harvey, 'Cross-Channel Gossip in the Twelfth-Century', in J. Mitchell ed., *England and the Continent in the Middle Ages: Studies in Memory of Andrew Martindale* (Stamford, Shaun Tyas, 2000), 48-59 (57).

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 59.

⁴³ J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, (1855), 200, no. CDVIII.

⁴⁴ Nicholas, 'Countesses', p. 124.

⁴⁵ Baldwin, *Government*, p. 24