The Briennes

The Briennes were a highly important aristocratic family who hailed from the Champagne region of north-eastern France, but whose reach and impact extended across Europe and into the Crusader States in the Middle East. It is a highly dramatic and wide-ranging story of medieval mobility, not only up and down the social ladder, but also in geographical terms as well. Although the Briennes were one of the great dynasties of the central Middle Ages, this book represents the first comprehensive history of the family to appear in English. Taking the form of parallel biographies and arranged broadly chronologically, it explores not only their rise, glory and fall, but also how they helped to shape the very nature of the emerging European state system. This book will appeal to students and scholars of medieval France, the Mediterranean world, the Crusades and the central Middle Ages.

Guy Perry has held a wide range of positions as a lecturer and a tutor, from Royal Holloway, University of London, to the Universities of Leeds and Oxford. His previous publications include John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175–1237 (Cambridge, 2013) and The Fifth Crusade in Context: The Crusading Movement in the Early Thirteenth Century (Routledge, 2017).
The Briennes

*The Rise and Fall of a Champenois Dynasty in the Age of the Crusades, c. 950–1356*

Guy Perry
For another great and growing dynasty:
Anne, Theo and the whole of the Perry family, in all of its branches
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Acknowledgements

In private, at least, I always referred to this book as ‘the whole damn dynasty’. Having written a short work on the subject of John of Brienne, the sometime king of Jerusalem and Latin emperor of Constantinople, it seemed a shame that so much of the additional research that I had done on the rest of his family would now go to waste. So I decided to follow it up with a companion volume before finally bidding the Briennes a fond – but also a rather relieved – farewell. The end result is the book that you have in your hands.

Since this is thus, in so many ways, a follow-up to John of Brienne (which, in turn, grew out of my doctoral thesis), I need to express my gratitude, once again, to so many of the distinguished scholars who helped me out the first time around. Most importantly, of course, I would like to thank my DPhil supervisor, Christopher Tyerman, who did a huge amount to make that initial dissertation so much better than it otherwise would have been. Likewise, I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation for Graham Loud, Alan Murray, Jonathan Phillips, Peter Edbury, Theodore Evergates and Nicholas Vincent: above all, for everything that they have done to assist both me and my work. They really have gone beyond any call of duty, and I am extremely grateful to them.

Most of this book was written during my first stint at the University of Leeds. The School of History and the Institute of Medieval Studies are an exhilarating place to be a medievalist, above all because of the sheer scale of the talent that is concentrated there. As a result, I need to thank so many of my other colleagues – Emilia Jamroziak, Julia Barrow, Iona McCleery, Jonathan Jarrett, and Thomas Smith as well – for everything that they have done to help and support me in my day-to-day work, ranging from acting as my mentor to spotting the device of the house of Beaumont on Bishop Louis’s dalmatic. I should also express my appreciation to the School of History for an Early Career Grant, which facilitated a research trip to the old Brienne haunts in southern Italy, and to Paris and Troyes, in the summer of 2014.
So much of my training, as a medievalist, was done at Oxford, and therefore I have a large number of people to thank there too. My undergraduate tutors, Catherine Holmes and Matthew Kempshall, have, of course, remained fulsomely supportive of everything I do, as have my old associates at Lincoln College. So, too, have the more recent colleagues and friends whom I have made at St Peter’s and Merton, chiefly Stephen Baxter, Steve Tuffnell and Robin Whelan. In a rather similar way, I owe my gratitude to many more scholars, both there and elsewhere, and I am sorry that I can do little more than mention some of them briefly by name: Nir Arielli, Arnaud Baudin, James Doherty, Liz Mylod, Karol Polejowski, Dan Power, Josef Riedmann, Ida Toth, Jan Vandeburie and Chris Wickham.

Once again, I must thank all of my closest friends, who have put up with me rabbiting on about the Briennes for far longer than anyone would care to remember. One, in particular, deserves a special mention here: Andrew ‘Beau’ Beaumont, who I somehow managed to omit, the first time around, in my earlier work on John of Brienne. All I can say is that I hope that this particular acknowledgement puts it right.

Somewhat notoriously, I finished the introduction to this book in the labour ward whilst waiting for Theo to arrive (with his mother’s permission, I might add). He is now two, which shows how time flies when you’re preparing a final text for publication! I dedicate this book to both of them – and to the rest of the Perry dynasty – with more love than I can say.
Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>BnF</td>
<td>Bibliothèque nationale de France</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH, SS</td>
<td><em>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</em> (Hanover and elsewhere, 1826–), <em>Scriptores</em>.</td>
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<td>RCA</td>
<td><em>I registri della cancelleria angioina</em> (Naples, 1950–).</td>
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List of Abbreviations

**RHC**  

**RHGF**  
Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France (Paris, 1738–1876).

**RISS2**  
Rerum Italicum Scriptores, 2nd series (Città di Castello and Bologna, 1900–).

**Roserot, Dictionnaire**  
A. Roserot, Dictionnaire historique de la Champagne méridionale (Aube) des origins à 1790, intro. and 3 vols. (Langres, 1942–8).
## Genealogies

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NB: for clarity, the senior line of the house of Brienne is shown to the right of the junior branches.

Louis VIII
King of France
d. 1223

Berengaria of Castile

Charles I of Anjou
King of Sicily
d. 1285

(1) Beatrice of Provence
(2) Margaret of Burgundy

Mary
Latin empress of Constantinople
d. late 1270s

Baldwin II
Latin emperor of Constantinople
d. 1273

Philip IV ‘the Fair’
King of France
d. 1314

Philip VI
King of France
d. 1350

Robert ‘the Wise’
King of Naples
d. 1343

Philip
Prince of Taranto

(1) Thamar of Epirus

Beatrice=
Walter VI, count of Brienne

Louis of Taranto
King of Naples
d. 1362

The kings of France Louis X, John I, Philip V and Charles IV, all d. by mid-1328

Charles
Duke of Calabria

Joanna I
Queen of Naples
d. 1382

Charles II
King of Naples
d. 1369

Beatrice=
Philip of Courtenay
Claimant to the Latin empire

More Information
6 The rival houses of Brienne and Antioch-Lusignan in the 1260s