



# Constructing European Historical Narratives in the Early Modern World

*Edited by Hilary J. Bernstein, Fabien Montcher, and Megan Armstrong*

CONSTRUCTING EUROPEAN HISTORICAL  
NARRATIVES IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD



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Réflexions sur la première modernité  
Volume 2

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HILARY J. BERNSTEIN, FABIEN MONTCHER,  
*and* MEGAN ARMSTRONG



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# Before the Bouillon Affair: The Counts of Auvergne and Genealogical Debate in Early Modern France

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*When in 1695 the cardinal of Bouillon invited Étienne Baluze, Dom Jean Mabillon, and Dom Thierry Ruinart to examine and authenticate newly discovered charters from the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude that purported to demonstrate the descent of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne from the tenth-century counts of Auvergne and dukes of Aquitaine, his request touched off an intense debate connecting erudition and political factionalism at the court of Louis XIV. While this "Bouillon affair" is relatively well known, its prehistory is not: the questions at stake had been studied and debated previously, particularly by a group of erudite genealogists of the early seventeenth century. This chapter demonstrates how scholars such as André Duchesne, Jean Besly, Jean Savaron, and Christofle Justel interacted in letters and in print, thereby helping to formulate the complicated history of medieval Auvergne. At every stage, their conclusions were guided not only by the noble interests they served but also by their assumptions about how political power and familial descent operated in France during past eras and in their own times.*

*Lorsqu'en 1695, le cardinal de Bouillon invita Étienne Baluze, Dom Jean Mabillon et Dom Thierry Ruinart à examiner et à authentifier les chartes récemment découvertes à l'abbaye de Saint-Julien de Brioude, lesquelles prétendaient démontrer que la maison de La Tour d'Auvergne descendait des comtes d'Auvergne et ducs d'Aquitaine du x<sup>e</sup> siècle, sa demande déclencha un vif débat alliant érudition et factionnalisme politique à la cour de Louis XIV. Si cette « affaire Bouillon » est relativement bien connue, sa préhistoire ne l'est pas. Ces questions avaient en effet été étudiées et débattues auparavant, notamment par un groupe de généalogistes érudits du début du xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ce chapitre montre comment des érudits tels qu'André Duchesne, Jean Besly, Jean Savaron et Christofle Justel ont dialogué par lettres et par ouvrages imprimés, contribuant ainsi à formuler l'histoire compliquée de l'Auvergne médiévale. À chaque étape, leurs conclusions ont été guidées non seulement par les nobles intérêts qu'ils servaient, mais aussi par leurs hypothèses sur la façon dont le pouvoir politique et la filiation fonctionnaient en France aux époques passées et en leur propre temps.*

Entasser les ducs d'Aquitaine  
Sur ceux de Milan et de Guienne.  
Usurper la race et le nom  
D'Acfred, d'Astorg, de Bouillon,  
Et remonter de règne en règne  
Jusqu'au temps de Charles Martel,  
N'est-ce pas de la Tour d'Auvergne

En faire la Tour de Babel!

—*Nouveau siècle de Louis XIV* (1793)<sup>1</sup>

In 1710, as a late consequence of the “Bouillon affair,”<sup>2</sup> respected erudite historian Étienne Baluze was forced to leave Paris.<sup>3</sup> Author of a *Histoire généalogique de la maison d’Auvergne* (1708), he continued to posit a centuries-long genealogy linking the current members of the House of La Tour d’Auvergne with the tenth-century counts of Auvergne and dukes of Aquitaine, and to assert the authenticity of five documents supposedly from a lost cartulary of the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude in Auvergne demonstrating these connections.<sup>4</sup> According to Baluze, Guillaume II and Acfred, successive dukes of Aquitaine and counts of Auvergne from 918 to 927, had a brother named Bernard, the supposed originator of the La Tour line.<sup>5</sup> Not only did this Bernard give rise to the House of La Tour through his eldest son, Bernard II, but he was also the scion of the second line of the counts of Auvergne through his second son, Eustorge.<sup>6</sup>

Although Baluze was not the first to identify this Bernard as the ancestor of the current dukes of Bouillon, these claims set off an intense controversy in the late reign of Louis XIV when they became actively entwined with the political ambitions of members of the House of Bouillon. The members of the La Tour family (later, La Tour d’Auvergne) had claimed the status of *princes étrangers* (foreign princes) within France for the better part of a century, and these assertions had contributed to recent disputes: first, the disobedience of the young prince of Turenne, who left France to fight the Ottomans without permission in 1685 and who mocked the king in his correspondence; and

1. “To pile the dukes of Aquitaine / On those of Milan and Guyenne. / To usurp the line and the name / Of Acfred, of Astorg, and of Bouillon, / And to go back from reign to reign / Up until the time of Charles Martel, / Isn’t this making of the Tour d’Auvergne / A Tower of Babel!” *Nouveau siècle de Louis XIV, ou Poésies anecd. du règne et de la cour de ce prince*, 4:196, quoted in Lorient, “Le cardinal de Bouillon,” 280n1. All translations are my own.

2. This “Bouillon affair” should not be confused with a previous one of 1602–6, involving the same family, during which Henri de la Tour, duke of Bouillon, prince of Sedan, entered into conflict with Henri IV. See Hodson, “Politics of the Frontier.”

3. Gillet, *Étienne Baluze*, 9.

4. As Jean Berger explains, there was, in fact, no lost cartulary; rather, the examination of evidence associated with the Bouillon affair introduced this idea (Berger, “Droit, société et parenté,” 1:91–92). My thanks to Jean Berger for email discussions regarding the grand cartulary of Brioude as well as for sharing some of his work pre-publication.

5. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 18–19.

6. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 25–26.

second, the disobedience of the young prince's uncle, Emmanuel-Théodose de La Tour d'Auvergne, cardinal of Bouillon, who failed to return to France from Rome when required in 1700 and then abandoned his position in France and fled the kingdom in 1710.<sup>7</sup> The historical question of the Bouillons' forebears thus took on a particular intensity. According to the duke of Saint-Simon, an implacable critic of the La Tour family to be sure, the affair was of considerable consequence to the king because if it could be convincingly demonstrated that the House of Bouillon descended in a direct line from the dukes of Aquitaine (subsequently the dukes of Guyenne), then the current duke of Bouillon could also lay claim to lordship over the whole of the existing duchy of Guyenne.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, considerably before Saint-Simon, an anonymous commentator indirectly charged the members of the House of Bouillon with these same ambitions, snidely asking Baluze "whether Messieurs of La Tour de Bouillon then wished, in light of their chimerical origins, to make claims on Languedoc, Auvergne, Aquitaine, or Guyenne, and perhaps to re-establish the Kingdom of the Visigoths that our first Christian King destroyed within France."<sup>9</sup> Whether these charges were real or not, they surfaced repeatedly during the conflict.<sup>10</sup>

In seventeenth-century France, genealogical arguments were profoundly linked with questions of political authority. As Jonathan Spangler explains elsewhere in this volume, individual families turned to genealogical histories to demonstrate their social significance over time and to argue for specific political benefits in the present. Further, as Héloïse Hermant demonstrates for the Aragonese context, interactions between official historians, local contacts

7. Swann, *Exile, Imprisonment, or Death*, 129–33; Hodson, "Politics of the Frontier"; Spangler, *Society of Princes*, 25, 30–31. I thank Jonathan Spangler for bringing the tensions over the status of *princes étrangers* to my attention.

8. Saint-Simon, "Mémoire," 269–70. According to Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, if the House of La Tour could show a descent from the ancient dukes of Guyenne, not only would this establish their sovereign status, but it would also "leur donne un droit sur la Guyenne bon à faire valoir en son temps aux dépends de nos Rois et de leur Couronne." Saint-Simon, "Mémoire," 269.

9. "Si Messieurs de la Tour de Bouillon vouloient dans la suite, en vertu de leur Chimerique origine, former des prétentions Sur le Languedoc, Sur L'auvergne, Sur L'acquittaine, où La guyenne, et peut-estre rétablir le Royaume des Visigots que nôtre 1.<sup>er</sup> Roy Chrestien a détruit dans la france." "Lettre à Monsieur Baluze," 17 October 1698, Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BnF] Baluze 198, fol. 296r.

10. According to Simon Hodson, the members of the La Tour family engaged genealogists in order to affirm "a long standing house claim to descend from the formerly sovereign counts of Auvergne and dukes of Aquitaine," in an attempt to support their family status as foreign princes. Hodson, "Princes Étrangers," 28. This certainly seems a more likely goal than any claim to lordship, let alone sovereignty, over Guyenne.



seeking entry into the Republic of Letters, and “composite nobilities” led to the insertion of the interests of local communities into the official chronicle of the kingdom. In France, these historical and familial concerns often placed in contact representatives of noble houses and informal clusters of erudite scholars operating within the context of the developing Republic of Letters who were best able to unearth and to interpret the documents underpinning these claims.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while many important families engaged specific scholars and secretaries, these chosen researchers also brought their own connections and habits of information sharing to the process of constructing genealogical histories. As a result, genealogical research and the creation of narratives of familial descent emerged from collective endeavours, in which the interests of families and the various concerns of erudite scholars interacted in ways that were often, but not always, reinforcing. Moreover, while genealogical histories reflected immediate concerns of authority and influence, their claims could nevertheless take generations to establish. This was the case for the House of La Tour d’Auvergne: although the Bouillon affair is the best-known episode in its quest for prestigious origins, many of the issues at stake were identified and elaborated decades earlier. This chapter is dedicated to unearthing and demonstrating the importance of that prehistory.

### Baluze and his predecessors

Baluze first become involved in the controversy in 1695, when the cardinal of Bouillon requested that he, along with the respected Benedictine scholars Dom Jean Mabillon and Dom Thierry Ruinart, examine a series of documents, including five newly discovered charters from the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude that had been presented to the cardinal by Jean-Pierre de Bar. The three men proved a natural choice for this kind of examination: Baluze garnered prestige as a noted scholar and former librarian of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, and Mabillon and Ruinart enjoyed special reputations for erudition within the Benedictine Congregation of Saint-Maur centred in the Parisian abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.<sup>12</sup> These were thus three men with recognized erudite skills, which included interpreting original documents and material evidence testifying to the secular and sacred past, and who enjoyed

11. On the developing Republic of Letters, see Bots and Waquet, *La République des lettres*; Fumaroli, *La République des lettres*.

12. On the Parisian Maurists and the late seventeenth-century erudite community in Paris, see Barret-Kriegel, *Les historiens*; Neveu, *Érudition et religion*; Hurel, “Les Bénédictins.”

reputations for probity within the Parisian community of scholars and statesmen of the late seventeenth century.

De Bar had worked with respected genealogical historian Jean du Bouchet from about 1680 up until the latter's death in 1684, as Du Bouchet was preparing a work demonstrating the descent of the House of La Tour at the request of the family. Afterward, De Bar claimed to be Du Bouchet's literary heir.<sup>13</sup> As experts in the developing discipline of diplomatics, Baluze, Mabillon, and Ruinart duly examined the documents as well as several fragments of cartulary tables and the existing grand cartulary from Brioude, and in a *procès-verbal* dating to 23 July 1695, they declared authentic the newly unearthed documents that De Bar claimed to have found among the remaining papers of Du Bouchet.<sup>14</sup> These charters, if genuine, were consequential because they linked Bernard, brother of Guillaume II and Acfred, with a Gérard de la Tour, now identified as Bernard's grandson, and then with a Guillaume de la Tour, *prévôt* of the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude in the early thirteenth century. Here was thus solid proof of the connection between the House of Bouillon and the ancient dukes of Aquitaine, counts of Auvergne. The only problem was that the certification of authenticity provided by Baluze and his colleagues at Saint-Germain-des-Prés failed to convince many and touched off an intense round of mostly anonymous pamphleteering between 1696 and 1698 for and against their conclusions.<sup>15</sup> Some of the debate was genuinely grounded in historical questions, such as whether surnames, such as La Tour (de Turre), actually existed in the early tenth century; whether royal letters patent purportedly issued by Louis IX in 1226 were authentic even though they mentioned his wife and children at a time when the new king was only eleven years old; and how reliable documents copied into monastic cartularies in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries could be regarding events occurring several centuries earlier.<sup>16</sup> But a great deal of the uproar also stemmed

13. Boislisle, "Le cardinal de Bouillon," 537–39; Depoin, "Une expertise de Mabillon," 128.

14. *Procez-verbal*, in BnF Clairambault 915, fols. 98r–110v.

15. Boislisle, "Le cardinal de Bouillon," 540–43. Manuscript copies of most of the critiques of the judgment for authenticity can be found in BnF Baluze 198, fols. 197r–198r, 264r–306r. Copies of documents in support of the judgment can be found in BnF Clairambault 915, fols. 98r–140v.

16. "Remarques sur le jugement rendu par M. Baluze & les R. P. Mabillon & Ruinart Sur les titres qui prouvent incontestablement l'origine de Geraud de la Tour Ier du nom," 8 January 1696, BnF Baluze 198, fols. 198r–v; "Observations sur les titres monstrez à l'abbaye St. Germain touchant la Maison de la Tour d'Auuergne," 16 September 1695, BnF Baluze 198, fols. 271v, 272v–273r, 275v–276r; letter dated 29 May 1698, BnF Baluze 198, fol. 287v; "Lettre à Baluze," 25 June 1698, BnF Baluze 198, fols. 293r–294r; "Lettre à Monsieur Baluze," 17 October 1698, BnF Baluze 198, fols. 297v–298v; Baluze, *Lettre de Monsieur Baluze*, 7–8, 19–20; Reyssié, *Le cardinal de Bouillon*, 174–80.

from the presumption of the House of Bouillon to claim Carolingian origins that predated the royal house of France, let alone the Bourbon family, and proceeded through accusations of self-interest and toadyism on both sides. Where supporters of the documents' authenticity accepted De Bar's story and accused the departed Du Bouchet of purposely hiding the texts out of animus for the family, their detractors wondered whether desires to support the cardinal's interests had led three highly respected scholars to conclude in their favour, when obvious clues to their falsity and their own previous maxims contradicted this conclusion.<sup>17</sup>

By 1700, the evidence pointing to De Bar's activities as a falsifier of proofs of nobility had mounted, and Louis XIV directed that he should be brought up on charges for forgery, for which this servitor of the Bouillon household was ultimately convicted in 1704.<sup>18</sup> He committed suicide in prison the following year.<sup>19</sup> Although, as Ruinart was careful to point out, the investigation did not include an examination of the five documents related to the descent of the Bouillon family, the sentence provided that the cartularies of Brioude and Sauxillanges, another monastery providing evidence in the affair, be returned to their respective abbeys with the false passages obliterated.<sup>20</sup> In spite of these decisions, Baluze, Mabillon, and Ruinart clearly continued to uphold their judgment of the authenticity of these documents, a conclusion that certainly suited the cardinal of Bouillon, who now insisted on an intense supervision of Baluze's work for his forthcoming *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne*.<sup>21</sup>

The Bouillon affair was thus notorious during the late reign of Louis XIV, but it also had a long history going back at least 150 years. Baluze was only the latest of a number of erudite scholars who had attempted to sort out the confused history of the counts of Auvergne and their possible offshoots in

17. *Reponse aux remarques*, 3–4, in BnF Clairambault 915, fols. 132r–v; “Lettre à Monsieur Baluze Sur celle qu’il a publiée depuis quelques jours,” 4 April 1698, BnF Baluze 198, fol. 266r. The author asked Baluze to reflect on his own actions, “Car souuent on est passionné & intéressé sans qu’on s’en apperçoie.” Berger helpfully clarifies the extent to which Du Bouchet contributed to the ultimate controversy, first by offering and then hoarding the evidence from the grand cartulary of Brioude, and second, by subtracting numerous charters and the tables from the cartulary and having it rebound (Berger, “Droit, société et parenté,” 1:93–95).

18. Boislisle, “Le cardinal de Bouillon,” 538–40, 543–44; Reyssié, *Le cardinal de Bouillon*, 172–76.

19. Loriquet, “Le cardinal de Bouillon,” 271.

20. Letter of Thierry Ruinart, 14 October 1701, quoted in Loriquet, “Le cardinal de Bouillon,” 294–96; Depoin, “Une expertise de Mabillon,” 134.

21. Boislisle, “Le cardinal de Bouillon,” 554–55.



the high Middle Ages and who had possibly allowed his growing association with a particular patron to influence his conclusions. As a number of scholars have pointed out, Baluze's assertion that the House of La Tour went back to Bernard, brother of the counts of Auvergne in the early tenth century, was first aired in print by Christoffe Justel, author of a *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne* (1645) and secretary to Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour, duke of Bouillon.<sup>22</sup> Justel was clearly conscious of the implications of his scholarship, since in a 1646 letter to Christian Huygens, he commented: "It is a work that I undertook to show the origins of Monseigneur the duke of Bouillon and of his house [...]. I would wish that he were more successful in obtaining the advantages that his birth affords him."<sup>23</sup> The project, however, was one that Justel had begun twenty-six years earlier, amidst a general discussion among several erudite scholars, including Jean Savaron, Jean Besly, André Duchesne, Scévole II and Louis III de Sainte-Marthe, and Théodore Godefroy, regarding the descent of the counts of Auvergne and other noble houses of the region. Concerned to illuminate the history and institutions of the French monarchy and the provinces that composed the kingdom, the group significantly advanced the practices of genealogical history as they were developing in France. Questions of descent had certainly been at the heart of French historical writing since the Middle Ages. Yet, in the first half of the seventeenth century, this group of scholars and servitors of the French monarchy combined their developing skills in interpreting historical documents with the practices of mutual aid associated with the budding Republic of Letters to craft a new form of genealogical history—one that could elucidate not only the descent of specific families but also the changing patterns of political power within and beyond the French kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

Most of these interlocutors, too, came to the debate with particular points of view influenced by their connections and concerns. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, historical investigations of this sort did not proceed out of pure historical interest but were embedded in the rivalries and

22. Boislisle, "Le cardinal de Bouillon," 533; Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, fols. aii<sup>r</sup>–aiii<sup>r</sup> (dedication to Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour, duc de Bouillon).

23. "C'est un travail que j'ay fait pour monstrier l'origine de Monseigneur le duc de Buillon et de sa maison [...]. Je desirerois qu'il eut esté plus heureux a recueillir les avantages que sa naissance luy donne." Letter from Christoffe Justel to Constantijn Huygens, 6 May 1646, from Paris, quoted from *Circulation of Knowledge and Learned Practices in the 17th-Century Dutch Republic*, <https://ckcc.huygens.knaw.nl/epistolarium/letter.html>, accessed 3 October 2024.

24. Spiegel, "Genealogy"; Poncet, "Cercles savants"; Montcher, "Autour de la raison d'État"; Bernstein, *Historical Communities*, 234–75.

aspirations of influential families. Not only did familial traditions tie living members with great mythological figures of the distant past in an effort to demonstrate their importance (the House of Boulogne, for example, had a late medieval tradition identifying King Arthur as the originator of their line), but even reputable scholars, such as Pierre d'Hozier, could become involved in creatively assembling genealogical connections unfounded in evidence.<sup>25</sup> As the investigations into nobility inaugurated by Louis XIV and Colbert in 1665 began to root noble identifications and genealogical proofs more solidly in documentary evidence, the new expertise did not prevent, but in fact sometimes opened up, opportunities for fraud.<sup>26</sup>

In Auvergne, attempts to arrive at a convincing picture of the descent of the counts of Auvergne and the medieval exercise of authority in the region were particularly influenced by the sixteenth-century claims of Queen Catherine de' Medici to be the rightful countess of Auvergne and of Clermont (now the city of Clermont-Ferrand) as the direct descendant of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne. In her suit, the queen charged that her ancestor, Guy II, count of Auvergne, had transferred his rights over the town of Clermont in 1202 to his brother Robert, bishop of Clermont, with the stipulation that the count regain his lordship once he had been reconciled with King Philip II Augustus. However, the subsequent bishops of Clermont had wrongly continued to exercise the jurisdiction accorded to Robert only temporarily. In 1557, the Parlement of Paris decided the queen's suit against Guillaume du Prat, bishop of Clermont, in her favour, thus upholding her rights as countess of Auvergne and of Clermont.<sup>27</sup> Although the questions at issue in the suit postdated the focus on the counts of Auvergne of concern during the Bouillon affair by a century and a half, the earlier attention to these questions of descent and the documentation produced for the case nevertheless influenced subsequent analysis of the evidence. In particular, this earlier attention had a direct impact on the first attempts of Jean Savaron, *lieutenant général* of the

25. "La Genealogie des contes de Boulogne," BnF Manuscrit français [hereafter Ms. fr.] 4653, fol. 19r; Beaune and Lequain, "Histoire et mythe familiaux"; Bizzocchi, *Généalogies fabuleuses*; Maurel, "Construction généalogique"; Butaud and Piétri, *Les enjeux*, 225–69.

26. Butaud and Piétri, *Les enjeux*, 268–69; Le Fauconnier and Haddad, "Une contre-généalogie imaginaire." On the ways that genealogical practice conformed to pre-established structures and assumptions, see especially Descimon, "Élites parisiennes." On the ways that the investigations into the nobility of the 1660s influenced definitions of nobility and use of evidence, see Haddad, "Question of the Imprescriptibility"; Piétri, "Bonne renommée"; "Vraie et fausse noblesse."

27. Du Luc, *Placitorum summae*, 196–210; Pierre Audigier, "Histoire de Clermont," in BnF Ms. fr. 11485, fols. 69r–72r.

*sénéchaussée* of Clermont, to draft a full list of the counts of Auvergne and Clermont over the centuries.

The problem of the counts of Auvergne in the early tenth century was particularly intractable because the realities on the ground went against many of the assumptions of historical genealogists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Where erudite scholars assumed that once titles became hereditary under Charles III the Simple, who ruled in France from 898 to 922, countships descended in a regular manner from father to son, there was in fact a power vacuum in Auvergne after the death of Acfred in 927, allowing a viscomital house in Clermont to dominate the scene.<sup>28</sup> Where scholars assumed that French kings had the power to appoint counts and dukes at will, in fact such grants were only authoritative if accepted by the local nobility. In Auvergne, both the counts of Toulouse and the counts of Poitou had acquired rival claims to rule in the first half of the tenth century, until the viscounts of Clermont managed to legitimize their control by 980.<sup>29</sup> Further, the most powerful lords in the high Middle Ages could well be ecclesiastical rather than secular, and in Clermont, several medieval bishops were closely related to the viscounts of Clermont and counts of Auvergne, enjoyed significant rights of lordship, and accumulated control over numerous properties.<sup>30</sup> Working out all of these problems took a communal effort among multiple scholars to unearth the appropriate documents from local monasteries and churches and to interpret them in a convincing way. Unfortunately, it was precisely this situation, in which new documents were often found, communicated from scholar to scholar, copied, and applied, that provided the opening in the late 1630s for the creative introduction of one Bernard, originator of the illustrious House of La Tour d'Auvergne. In examining the debates over the counts of Auvergne and the origins of the La Tour line, this chapter reveals the ways that local concerns and noble patronage influenced the evolving and interactive process of establishing genealogies and constructing historical narratives in France in the first half of the seventeenth century.

### **The problem of the counts of Auvergne**

Establishing the descent of the counts of Auvergne and dukes of Aquitaine was a problem that concerned several erudite scholars in the early decades of the seventeenth century. It was firmly established that Guillaume I the

28. Lauranson-Rosaz, *L'Auvergne et ses marges*, 78–79, 87, 111–12.

29. Lauranson-Rosaz, *L'Auvergne et ses marges*, 79–86, 91, 94.

30. Sève, “La seigneurie épiscopale.”



Pious, founder of the abbey of Cluny and final descendant of an important Carolingian line, had been duke of Aquitaine and count of Auvergne, but what had happened after his death in 918? Jean Savaron, a judicial official hailing from an established family in Clermont, attempted to establish the entire comital line, including the answer to this question, in his *Origines de Clairmont* published in 1607. A respected local historian, Savaron had access to numerous documents from the area, and his *Origines de Clairmont* laid out a full list of the local counts in print for the first time. Unfortunately, Savaron's insistence that there had always been a "county of Clermont" in addition to a county of Auvergne, a claim resulting from the legal arguments of Catherine de' Medici in the previous century, significantly skewed his findings. He mixed up several noble lines and notably failed to distinguish between the counts of Auvergne and the dauphins of Auvergne, who had both at various times styled themselves as the counts of Clermont.<sup>31</sup> The dauphins of Auvergne descended from Count Guillaume V the Younger, after his uncle, Count Guillaume VI the Older, had confiscated his lands while the nephew was off on crusade around 1150. The dauphins then retained the name of counts of Clermont in memory of their previous patrimony.<sup>32</sup>

Even though Savaron's scholarship on the counts of Auvergne was not completely sound, his reputation for learnedness assured that he could enter into prolonged discussions with other erudite scholars on the question of the descent of the early counts of Auvergne. In 1612, several years after the publication of his *Origines de Clairmont*, Savaron welcomed the future royal historiographer Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe to Clermont, and their interactions sparked a lively epistolary discussion with several erudite scholars associated with the well-known Dupuy circle in Paris.<sup>33</sup> Subsequent to Sainte-Marthe's visit, Savaron sought to ascertain whether a Robert mentioned in the foundation charter of the abbey of Le Bouschet belonged to the House of La Tour, and he ventured information on a Guy de la Tour (actually Guy II, count

31. Savaron, *Les origines de Clairmont*, 87–102; Balouzat-Loubet, "Les chartes."

32. Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 37–38; Balouzat-Loubet, "Les chartes," 18. In identifying Guillaume the Younger as Guillaume V and Guillaume the Older as Guillaume VI, I am following Justel's numbering system, which excluded any of the counts of Poitou as counts of Auvergne. It is true that Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe was named count of Auvergne and acknowledged as such by some of the Auvergnat nobility during his lifetime, but since his claim was never fully realized, as explained by Christian Lauranson-Rosaz (*L'Auvergne et ses marges*), I am not including him as Guillaume III, count of Auvergne, as Baluze would later do. It should also be noted that Guy I had a younger brother named Guillaume, whom some include as a count of Auvergne. For simplicity's sake, however, I exclude him in order to match Justel's identifications.

33. Vernière, *Le président Jean Savaron*, 23.

of Auvergne) who married Pernelle de Chambon, as a means to clear up an individual's identity that Théodore Godefroy was trying to ascertain.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, in May 1612, Jean Besly, *avocat du roi* in the *sénéchaussée* of Fontenay-le-Comte in Poitou, had received and copied out documents from the archives of the cathedral of Clermont from Jérôme Bignon, including a charter of 1034 whereby Guillaume III, count of Auvergne, returned jurisdiction of half of the town of Clermont to the bishop, and another document in which Guy II confirmed certain rights to the inhabitants of Clermont in 1199.<sup>35</sup> Bignon was simultaneously in touch with both the Sainte-Marthe brothers and Savaron, and Savaron later praised Besly's knowledge and candour to the Sainte-Marthes and asked them to send on to the *avocat du roi* in Poitou two documents that he had previously shown them.<sup>36</sup> By 1616, André Duchesne, later a royal geographer, had become a Parisian conduit for the correspondence between Savaron and Besly, having sent to the Poitevin scholar the historical memoranda and a copy of a document from the abbey of Saint-Allyre that the Auvergnat historian had addressed to him.<sup>37</sup> Around this time, Duchesne also began to work out the genealogy of the counts of Auvergne.<sup>38</sup>

Savaron and Besly then entered into a detailed discussion of the sequence and descent of the early counts of Auvergne, a question that concerned each scholar for different reasons. Besly was interested in the counts of Auvergne and dukes of Aquitaine because the title of duke of Guyenne had been preserved in the house of the counts of Poitou, and he was already at work on his lifelong project to elucidate the history of the House of Poitiers, material that would be published posthumously in his *Histoire des comtes de Poitou* (1647). Given that several counts of Poitou were identified as counts of Auvergne during the tenth century, a significant question facing both historians was at what point the members of the House of Poitiers had lost their claim to the county of Auvergne after the death of Guillaume I the Pious. Savaron remained actively engaged in these questions since he was working on a revision to the original list of the counts of Auvergne and Clermont that he had published in

34. Letters from Jean Savaron to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe, 26 January 1613 and 26 March 1613, in Vernière, *Le président Jean Savaron*, 45, 48.

35. BnF Dupuy 804, fols. 162/4v–162/5r.

36. Letter from Jean Savaron to Sainte-Marthe, *avocat* in the Parlement of Paris, 2 October 1613, BnF Nouvelles acquisitions françaises [hereafter NAF] 6209, fol. 3r.

37. Letter from Jean Besly to André Duchesne, 28 May 1616, from Fontenay and Besly to André Duchesne, 26 June 1616, in Besly, *Lettres*, 19, 24; letter from Jean Savaron to André Duchesne, 26 June 1616, BnF Duchesne 30, fol. 266r.

38. BnF Duchesne 68, fol. 219r.

1607. In a contest of mutual politeness, Savaron offered to defer his planned second edition of his *Origines de Clairmont* until Besly could publish his own work, while Besly responded that “to the contrary, it would be best to hold off the publication of my own labour until after the second edition of your laborious and excellent work, in order to learn from it, as I have much from the one that is published.”<sup>39</sup>

In his *Origines de Clairmont*, Savaron had listed several members of the House of Poitiers as counts of Clermont in the first half of the tenth century. In his telling, after the death of Guillaume I the Pious, Ebles had been installed as Guillaume I’s heir, who had then been succeeded by his son, Guillaume-Hugues, and then by Guillaume II, surnamed Tête-d’Étoupe, count of Poitiers and duke of Guyenne. Following Guillaume II, the next count of Clermont was Raymond, whose descent Savaron did not identify but whom he described as having played an important role in rebuilding the monastery of Saint-Allyre just outside of Clermont.<sup>40</sup> Mentioning an “old charter” as his source, Savaron certainly based his identification of Raymond as count of Auvergne on a manuscript text from Saint-Allyre-lès-Clermont, a copy of which he then sent to Besly in April 1616.<sup>41</sup>

For Besly, the greatest concern was to establish which counts of Poitou had also been counts of Auvergne. To help resolve the question, Savaron sent him copies of nine local charters, including the one from the abbey of Saint-Allyre mentioning Raymond, count of Auvergne, and solicited Besly’s feedback on his published list of the counts of Clermont.<sup>42</sup> In May 1616, Besly responded with detailed comments, including a revised comital list, in which he omitted some of Savaron’s counts, such as Guillaume-Hugues, but added an additional count of Poitiers, Guillaume III, son of Guillaume II Tête-d’Étoupe, followed by the Raymond of the Saint-Allyre charter. Besly, however, expressed uncertainty about this Raymond, who had seemingly been count of Auvergne before the death of Guillaume II Tête-d’Étoupe in 963,

39. “Au contraire il seroit conseille [?] de superseder La publication de mon Labeur jusques après la seconde edition de vostre Laborieux et excellent ouvrage, afin d’y apprendre, comme j’ay fait beaucoup en ce qui est publié.” Minute of a letter from Jean Besly to Jean Savaron, 28 May 1616, BnF Dupuy 822, fol. 87r.

40. Savaron, *Les origines de Clairmont*, 90–91.

41. Letter from Jean Savaron to André Duchesne, 26 June 1616, BnF Duchesne 30, fol. 266r; BnF Dupuy 822, fol. 84r.

42. Letter from Jean Besly to André Duchesne, 28 May 1616, in Besly, *Lettres*, 19; letter from Jean Savaron to André Duchesne, 26 June 1616, BnF Duchesne 30, fol. 266r; letter from Jean Besly to Jean Savaron, 28 May 1616, BnF Dupuy 822, fols. 87r–88v.

remarking that the document from Saint-Allyre combined so many events together that it was difficult to rest a solid judgment on it. Having rehearsed some of the chronological signposts, he concluded:

So, I don't see in what year to place your Raymond, and I believe that if ever a count received the county of Auvergne in dowry from marrying into the House of Guyenne, it must have been he [...]. It is commonly held [...] that the counts of Auvergne issued from the dukes of Guyenne.<sup>43</sup>

In separate notes in which Besly sought to work out the relationship between the counts of Auvergne and the counts of Poitiers, he also thought it possible that Raymond was actually the son-in-law of Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe, and that Raymond was then followed by one Viscount Robert, also mentioned in the document from Saint-Allyre, who must have been his son or son-in-law and who thus united the county of Auvergne with the viscounty of Clermont. Of course, these speculations contradicted the idea that Guillaume III, duke of Guyenne and count of Poitiers, had inherited the county of Auvergne from his father, Guillaume II, as Besly had maintained in his letter to Savaron. Nevertheless, these confusions did not lead Besly to question the idea that Guillaume II of Poitiers had also held the county of Auvergne, for him an established fact “to which many books well attest.”<sup>44</sup>

In response to Besly's extensive comments, Savaron seems to have persevered in much of his original opinion. Regarding the problem of Guillaume II, Guillaume III, and Raymond, Savaron pronounced in a letter of June 1616 that it was certain that Raymond was the son of Guillaume II, but he also doubted that he was ever count of Auvergne—an odd conclusion, since Savaron had listed him that way in his *Origines de Clairmont*.<sup>45</sup> When revising his published list of the counts of Clermont, these were not individuals whose status he altered.<sup>46</sup> As mentioned previously, the problem for both Besly and Savaron was that both Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe, duke of Guyenne, and Raymond-Pons, count of Toulouse (the Raymond of the Saint-Allyre charter), had been named count of Auvergne by successive kings of France, Charles III the Simple and Louis IV d'Outremer, and recognized as such by different

43. “Ainsi je ne vois pas a quelle annee rapporter [...] vostre Raymon; et croy que si jamais quelque Comte epuysant une fille de Guyenne a heu l'auvergne en dot, ce a este luy [...] Aussi lon tient vulgairement [...] que les Comtes dauvergne soient issues des Ducs de Guye[n]ne.” BnF Dupuy 822, fol. 87r.

44. “de quoy il y ha bon témoignage par les livres.” BnF Dupuy 822, fols. 48r–v.

45. Vernière, *Le président Jean Savaron*, 51–53; Savaron, *Les origines de Clairmont*, 91.

46. Savaron and Durand, *Les origines de la ville*, 140–41.

groups of Auvergnat nobles at different times, with the real power being exercised at the time by a viscomital family in Clermont and the city's bishops. Ultimately, Besly seems to have decided that the whole question was too vexed to bother with, since in his later *Histoire des comtes de Poitou* he persisted in identifying Ebles, Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe, and even Guillaume III as dukes of Guyenne and counts of Poitiers and Auvergne, without mentioning the problem of Raymond at all.<sup>47</sup> In doing so, Besly also failed to take cognizance of the intervening discovery that immediately after the death of Guillaume I the Pious, the county of Auvergne did not fall to the House of Poitiers at all but was rather held in succession by two of Guillaume's nephews.<sup>48</sup>

### The origins of the La Tour line

As erudite scholars struggled with the descent of the counts of Auvergne, they also worked to ascertain the earliest origins of the La Tour line, ultimately identified as the House of La Tour d'Auvergne. In these endeavours, both the sixteenth-century arguments of Catherine de' Medici to be simultaneously countess of Clermont and Auvergne and the seventeenth-century aspirations of the dukes of Bouillon had a strong influence over the discussion. For the queen's suit, it was imperative to demonstrate both that the House of La Tour d'Auvergne stood as the inheritor of the rights of the ancient counts of Auvergne and that these counts had also held sway over a separate county of Clermont. To demonstrate the former point in the sixteenth century, it was not thought necessary to trace the succession of the counts of Auvergne all the way back to the tenth century but merely to identify the queen's ancestors, via her mother, Magdaleine de la Tour, back to Robert, count of Auvergne, father of Count Guy II and Robert, bishop of Clermont, with specific attention to the daughter of Guillaume VIII, Guy II's son, who married Robert I of Boulogne, thus uniting the counties of Auvergne and Boulogne within a single line.<sup>49</sup> This genealogy was in fact more speculative than represented, because in 1582, Catherine de' Medici, now the queen mother, was still unsuccessfully seeking proof of the marriage contract uniting the houses of Auvergne and Boulogne.<sup>50</sup>

47. Besly, *Histoire des comtes de Poitou*, 42, 46, 51.

48. See below for the discovery of Guillaume II and Acfred, nephews of Guillaume I the Pious, as dukes of Aquitaine and counts of Auvergne.

49. Servin, *Actions notables*, 96, col. 2.

50. BnF Ms. fr. 4652, fols. 1r–10v.



Nevertheless, the main point in contention between the queen and the bishop was whether a document representing a gift in guard of his properties in Clermont from Guy II, count of Auvergne, to his brother, Robert, bishop of Clermont, was authentic and thus demonstrated her patrimonial right not only to the lands of the county of Auvergne (in fact only a small portion of the ancient county of Auvergne, which Philip II later restored to Guy II) but also to those of a reputedly separate county of Clermont (preserved via the gift in guard). The recourse to a questionable document dating from the early thirteenth century was not as far-fetched as it might sound, since this same question had also been in dispute between the kings of France and Charles de Bourbon, bishop of Clermont, in the late fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> While few people seem to have been inclined to question the authenticity of the document in the sixteenth century, in spite of its demonstrating a confidence between two brothers who were constantly at odds in the period in question, opinions were more divided in the seventeenth century, after both counties had been reunited with the French crown.<sup>52</sup> Justel, in particular, solidly disputed that the gift in guard of 1202 ever took place. In his view, not only would Guy II never have given Robert his principal town, given that the count's conflicts with his brother were the cause of the threats of Philip II Augustus to seize his lands in the first place, but also there were not two separate counties of Auvergne and Clermont to suffer different consequences from royal attack and confiscation.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, most modern historians of medieval Auvergne view the gift in guard as genuine, arguing that although the bishops of Clermont held considerable jurisdiction in the town, this did not mean that the counts of Auvergne did not also have rights over parts of it.<sup>54</sup>

These concerns without doubt influenced Savaron as he wrote his *Origines de Clairmont*, particularly the section on the counts of Auvergne. Not only was Catherine de' Medici's patronage of Clermont and her efforts to enhance its privileges of great significance to the town's residents in general, but Savaron also took on an official connection with the elements

51. Audigier, "Histoire de Clermont," in BnF Ms. fr. 11485, fols. 68v–69r.

52. Whereas Pierre Audigier took the gift in guard of 1202 to be authentic and explained that during the suit between Catherine de' Medici and Guillaume du Prat the bishop had admitted in secret that a reliable copy was preserved in the episcopal archives, Jean du Fraisse called the document the "pretendu dépost" and provided evidence that the bishops had exercised sole authority in Clermont before 1202. See Audigier, "Histoire de Clermont," in BnF Ms. fr. 11485, fol. 7r; Ms. fr. 11486, fol. 205v; [Du Fraisse], *L'origine des églises*, 484, 491–92, 495–96 (quotation, 495).

53. Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 45–47.

54. Sève, "La seigneurie épiscopale," 125; Balouzat-Loubet, "Les chartes," 19.

of the suit.<sup>55</sup> After Catherine's death in 1589, Charles de Valois, the illegitimate son of Charles IX, laid claim to the counties of Clermont and Auvergne, as well as the barony of La Tour. In 1604, however, Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici, contested his claim, and the case was argued before the Parlement of Paris in 1606. In this same year, Savaron was appointed counsellor and master of requests of the household of Marguerite de Valois, and he then played an integral role in collecting documents for Marguerite's suit to succeed her mother as countess of Clermont and Auvergne.<sup>56</sup> This context no doubt influenced Savaron's predilection to identify numerous counts and bishops of Clermont as belonging to the La Tour family. For example, he labelled Guy II, count of Auvergne from 1195 to 1224, as "Guy de la Tour" in his *Origines de Clairmont*, and in his manuscript revisions he added both a Guillaume and a Robert de la Tour, supposedly counts of Clermont, shortly before Guy.<sup>57</sup> The notion that there had been a separate county of Clermont also no doubt influenced Savaron to include any individual on his list of counts who had ever been identified as a count of Clermont. Unfortunately, not only did the counts of Auvergne occasionally take on this title in the thirteenth century, but so did the separate line of the dauphins of Auvergne.<sup>58</sup>

The origins of the House of La Tour were of even greater concern to Justel, secretary of Henri de la Tour, duke of Bouillon and prince of Sedan, and then *surintendant* of his son, Frédéric-Maurice, who asked him to draw up a genealogical table of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne.<sup>59</sup> Although Justel's *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne* was not published until 1645, he was working on the family's origins by April 1618, when he contacted Scévole II and Louis III de Sainte-Marthe to ask for any documentation connecting the Guy de la Tour who married Mathé de Beaufort with the descendants of Aubert de la Tour, baron of La Tour. By May of that year, Justel's genealogical investigations had advanced so expeditiously that he had "found marvels" (*trouvé des merueilles*) and had decided to enlarge his original plan to write up a simple genealogy of the La Tour line to engage in a much greater project to delineate the full descent of the counts of Auvergne. He asked for

55. Bernstein, *Historical Communities*, 185–95.

56. Servin, *Actions notables*, 94–135; Vernière, *Le président Jean Savaron*, 7–9, 77–78.

57. Savaron, *Les origines de Clairmont*, 92; Savaron and Durand, *Origines de la ville*, 140–41.

58. Balouzat-Loubet, "Les chartes," 20–21.

59. Reyssié, *Le cardinal de Bouillon*, 170.

any help the Sainte-Marthes could provide and promised to show them a clean copy of his work upon his arrival in Paris within a few months' time.<sup>60</sup>

By 1619, Duchesne was able to copy this genealogy of the counts of Clermont, Auvergne, and Bologne originating from Justel and to summarize it to his friend, Besly. In a letter dated 9 June 1619, Duchesne reported to Besly that Justel was working on a genealogy of the La Tour family, beginning with a Guillaume de la Tour, count of Clermont in 1010, who married a woman named Philippie. Among their children was Robert de la Tour, who married an unknown daughter of Guillaume VII, count of Poitiers and Auvergne. Duchesne, however, doubted these origins, given that the House of Auvergne would not have borne the last name of La Tour at this time, and opined that Justel would make great mistakes in following Savaron, who did name a Guy de la Tour, but much later (actually Guy II).<sup>61</sup> Duchesne was certainly correct, since the Guillaume in question was without doubt Guillaume III, count of Auvergne, who married Philippie de Gévaudan. For his part, Duchesne, who was also working out the genealogy of the counts of Auvergne and their various offshoots around this time, began the La Tour line with Aubert de la Tour, brother of Guy II, count of Auvergne, and Robert, bishop of Clermont in the early thirteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Justel may have considerably changed his mind on the family's origins, however, since Duchesne at some point also had access to a genealogy of the barons of La Tour completed by Justel that began with one Robert de la Tour, son of Robert II, count of Auvergne and Boulogne, whose son, Aubert de la Tour, was alive in 1220.<sup>63</sup> Doing his own research on the question, Duchesne later focused on documents from the abbey of Sauxillanges, mentioning both a Bernard de la Tour and his son, Gerald (or Géraud) de la Tour, who did homage for their lands in the early thirteenth century.<sup>64</sup> By this point, then, Duchesne's documentation had replaced Aubert de la Tour with Bernard and Gerald and had converted these members of the La Tour family from relations of the counts of Auvergne to important lords in the area.

60. Letter from Christofle Justel to Sainte-Marthe, 24 April 1618, from Sedan, BnF NAF 6208, fol. 197r; letter from Christofle Justel to [Scévole II and Louis III] de Sainte-Marthe, 29 May 1618, from Sedan, BnF NAF 6208, fol. 198r.

61. BnF Dupuy 820, fol. 168r. Duchesne also copied out this genealogy in his own notes: see BnF Duchesne 68, fols. 220r–v.

62. BnF Duchesne 68, fols. 219r–v.

63. BnF Duchesne 68, fols. 221r–v. Although both Duchesne and Justel mentioned an Aubert de la Tour alive around 1220, they provided different versions of his familial ascent.

64. BnF Duchesne 56, fols. 230r–232r.

### Enter Guillaume II, Acfred, and Bernard

During the first third of the seventeenth century, therefore, almost nothing was definitively established about the history of the early counts of Auvergne or the origins of the La Tour line. By the 1630s, however, one piece of the puzzle regarding the succession of the counts of Auvergne in the tenth century was well on its way to being solved. By this time, a charter of 927 that Acfred, duke of Aquitaine and count of Auvergne, had issued to the abbey of Sauxillanges had been copied and was circulating among erudite scholars concerned with the question of who had succeeded Guillaume I the Pious in these capacities.<sup>65</sup> Savaron had a copy of this charter in his collection of manuscripts, and since he died in 1622, the document must have been unearthed before that time.<sup>66</sup> It does not seem to have influenced Savaron's theories on the succession of the counts of Clermont, however, and Besly, who also saw the charter by 1637 and who may have received his copy from Savaron much earlier, also seems to have ignored it in attempting to ascertain when the dukes of Guyenne lost the county of Auvergne.<sup>67</sup> The charter was highly significant, since it clearly identified Acfred, duke of Aquitaine and count of Auvergne, as the son of another Acfred and Adeline, and as the nephew of the brothers Guillaume and Guarimus, obviously referring to Guillaume I the Pious, duke of Aquitaine.<sup>68</sup> Further, in October 1637, Duchesne wrote to Besly to inform him of a second charter, this one dated to 917, in which Guillaume I the Pious founded

65. Although the complete authenticity of this charter has been questioned, Philippe Buc explains the circumstances in which it was granted and concludes for its veracity (Buc, "Les débuts de Sauxillanges").

66. Vernière, *Le président Jean Savaron*, 66. This entry in the inventory of Savaron's manuscripts almost certainly refers to the charter of 927, even though Savaron dated it to 923, since it is described as the foundation charter of Sauxillanges granted by Acfred, duke of Aquitaine.

67. In his letter of 18 October 1637, Duchesne mentioned that Besly already had a copy of what had previously been thought was the foundation charter for the abbey of Sauxillanges by Acfred: see BnF Dupuy 841, fol. 98r.

68. The relevant passage reads: "In nomine sancte et individue Trinitatus, Acfredus, divina tribuente misericordia Aquitanorum dux [...]. tam pro me ipso quam pro genitore meo Acfredi et genitrice mea Adalinda, et avunculis meis Guillelmo et Guarino et fratribus meis Bernardo et Guillelmo" (In the name of the holy and indivisible Trinity, I, Acfred, by the gift of divine mercy duke of the Aquitains, [...] as much for me as for my father, Acfred, and my mother, Adeline, and my uncles Guillaume and Guarimus, and my brothers, Bernard and Guillaume). See Doniol, *Cartulaire de Sauxillanges*, 47. Duchesne's notes on the charter show that somewhere along the line, the exact relationships mentioned in the charter had been garbled, since his version identified Guillaume and Guarimus as Acfred's sons: see BnF Duchesne 68, fol. 219v.

the abbey of Sauxillanges, thus confirming the document of 927. Duchesne informed Besly that Justel was in Paris, busy working on his genealogical history of the counts of Auvergne, and that he had also been given a copy of the foundation charter.<sup>69</sup> Given that Justel later thanked one Charrier, lawyer in the Parlement of Paris, for providing him with charters from Sauxillanges, it may be that this same Charrier also shared these documents with the royal geographer.<sup>70</sup> In the same letter, Duchesne urged Besly to publish his work on the counts of Poitou, lest all of his best information be snapped up by others. Together, the charters demonstrated that Guillaume I the Pious had been succeeded as duke of Aquitaine and count of Auvergne by his nephews, Guillaume II and Acfred, and not by any members of the House of Poitiers. However, the charter of 927 also mentioned a third brother, Bernard.

It was this Bernard, brother of Guillaume II and Acfred, who was transformed into the originator of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne and even the ancestor of the later counts of Auvergne. In his *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne*, Justel held that after the death of Guillaume I the Pious, he was succeeded first by his brother-in-law, Acfred I, followed by Acfred's sons, Acfred II and Guillaume II, who also had another brother, Bernard, the scion of the La Tour line. Justel theorized that Acfred I had been granted the county of Auvergne by Charles III the Simple, although he could not provide documentary proof of this transfer and rather cited as his evidence a manuscript genealogy from Duchesne, listing the Acfred who married Adeline, sister of Guillaume I the Pious, as count of Auvergne and duke of Aquitaine.<sup>71</sup> This could not have been Duchesne's final judgment on the question, though, since in his 1637 letter to Besly he pointed out that the early charters of Sauxillanges demonstrated that Acfred, father of Guillaume II and Acfred, had only called himself duke of Aquitaine as the husband of the sister of Guillaume I.<sup>72</sup> In his *Histoire généalogique*, Justel also assumed that the younger Acfred had held his titles before his brother, Guillaume II, and he strongly argued that Raymond (actually Raymond-Pons, count of Toulouse) had been the son of Guillaume II, and Robert (actually viscount of Clermont) the son of Raymond.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Justel

69. BnF Dupuy 841, fol. 98r.

70. Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 135.

71. Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 17–21, 523.

72. BnF Dupuy 841, fols. 98r–v.

73. Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 17–26. Justel held that this identification of the descent of Robert as count of Auvergne was confirmed in a Latin genealogy that Savaron had once given him (Justel, *Histoire généalogique*, 26).

had the House of La Tour originating in the early tenth century and related to the long-standing dukes of Aquitaine in the maternal line.<sup>74</sup>

Although the succession of Guillaume II, count of Auvergne from 918 to 926, and Acfred, count of Auvergne from 926 to 927, was now firmly established, many erudite scholars purportedly failed to be persuaded by all of Justel's arguments, especially those concerning Bernard, alleged scion of the House of La Tour.<sup>75</sup> In particular, Du Bouchet, who was approached by the Bouillon family after Justel's death in 1653 to continue his research, contradicted Justel's claims. In a genealogical table published in 1665, he identified the origins of the House of La Tour with one Bernard, seigneur de la Tour, who died during the reign of Hugh Capet (d. 996). Seemingly in response to Justel, under the 1388 marriage of Marie d'Auvergne to Bertrand IV, sire de la Tour, he noted that he "wished here to report the predecessors [of Bertrand IV] in order to make known the greatness of his birth and the antiquity of the illustrious House of La Tour, unknown up until now."<sup>76</sup> By contrast, Bernard, brother of Guillaume II and Acfred, appeared as deceased before the year 910 and completely unconnected to the La Tour line.<sup>77</sup> Du Bouchet's was still an ancient genealogy for the House of Bouillon, but it was noticeably unconnected to the ancient dukes of Aquitaine. According to subsequent commentators, Du Bouchet did later seek to link the origins of the La Tour line with the viscounts of Clermont and thus the hereditary counts of Auvergne, but these revisions never made it into public view.<sup>78</sup>

When Baluze began to work on the genealogy of the House of Bouillon himself as a result of the controversy over the alleged charters from the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude, he inherited many of the findings, problems, and concerns that had preoccupied his predecessors. Like Justel before him, Baluze identified Bernard, brother of Guillaume II and Acfred, counts of

74. The maternal line, since Bernard was the nephew of Guillaume I the Pious via his mother, Adeline.

75. "Defenses des Remarques & observations Sur les Titres a L'abbaye de St. Germain touchant la maison de la Tour d'Auvergne Contre L'auteur anonyme de la Reponse," 28 February 1696, BnF Baluze 198, fol. 274v.

76. "dont j'ai voulu rapporter ici les Prédecesseurs, afin de faire connoître la grandeur de sa Naissance & l'antiquité de la Maison illustre de la Tour, inconnue jusques à present." Du Bouchet, *Table des comtes beneficiaires*.

77. Du Bouchet further implicitly criticized Justel by including the counts of Poitiers, Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe and his son, as counts of Auvergne.

78. *Reponse aux remarques*, 3–4, in BnF Clairambault 915, fols. 132r–v; "Suite de la Defense des Remarques & Observations Sur les titres monstrez à l'abbaye de St. Germain touchant la Maison de la Tour d'Auvergne contre l'auteur anonyme de la Reponse aux Remarques," in BnF Baluze 198, fols. 283v–284r.



Auvergne, as the originator of the La Tour line. Yet Baluze acknowledged a problem that Justel had ignored: if Bernard were a nephew of Guillaume I the Pious like his brothers, why did he not become count of Auvergne and duke of Aquitaine in his turn? Here, the complicated situation in Auvergne came to Baluze's aid. Where previous historians and genealogists had attempted to find direct descendants for Guillaume I the Pious, and then Guillaume II and Acfred, by amalgamating the lines of the counts of Poitou (Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe and Guillaume III), counts of Toulouse (Raymond-Pons), and the viscounts of Clermont (Robert), Baluze posited that after the death of Acfred, his brother, Bernard I, had succeeded as the rightful count of Auvergne, only to see his title revoked and given to Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe by Louis IV d'Outremer.<sup>79</sup> However, in Baluze's telling, the local aristocracy refused to recognize this transfer of power, continuing to support the rights of Bernard up until his death, presumably around 952.<sup>80</sup> In reality, the Bernard mentioned in the 927 charter for Sauxillanges (as well as a charter of the same year for the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude) was almost certainly deceased by the time that his brothers succeeded each other as counts of Auvergne, as Du Bouchet had concluded. Not only is Bernard always mentioned among Acfred's departed relatives in his charters, but also in Guillaume I's 910 foundation charter for the abbey of Cluny no attestation by Bernard precedes those of his brothers, Guillaume II and Acfred.<sup>81</sup> Further, in a document recording Acfred's testamentary bequests, which Duchesne likely copied from a sample of documents from the cartulary of Brioude sent to him by Du Bouchet in 1638, and which he mistakenly dated to 928, the count of Auvergne listed numerous allies and beneficiaries, of whom the first was Viscount Robert, but he did not mention a single descendant of his own house.<sup>82</sup> Yet, in spite of this

79. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 23. For the correct identifications of Raymond-Pons and Robert, see Lauranson-Rosaz, *L'Auvergne et ses marges*, 78–80, 111.

80. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 24. In 952, many Auvergnat lords swore an oath of loyalty to Guillaume II Tête-d'Étoupe. See Sève, "La seigneurie épiscopale," 104.

81. Archives nationales de France [hereafter AN] R2 67, "Extrait de l'opinion de Mr Du Bouchet qui pretend q[ue] le temps repugne a ce que Bernard Dauuergne sui Daqfray [Acfred] premier comte Dauuergne, Soit le père de Geraud premier seigneur de la Tour ainsy que la auancé Mr. Justel dans son histoire genealogique de la maison D'auuergne," [fol. 1v]; AN R2 68, draft genealogical chart of the counts of Auvergne by Du Bouchet, beginning with Bernard, count of Auvergne: "Bernard [son of Acfred] né enuiron l'an 877 & qui estoit mort auant lan 910 que son oncle fonda Cluny ou Guillaume et Acfred ses freres son nommez presens."

82. BnF Duchesne 22, fol. 13r. Acfred's charter for the abbey of Saint-Julien de Brioude dated to 927, also mentioning Bernard, was also copied by Duchesne: see BnF Duchesne 22, fol. 14r. Berger identifies copies made by Duchesne of documents from the grand cartulary of Brioude as copied directly

substantial evidence that Bernard was deceased without issue by the time that Acfred became count of Auvergne, Baluze expanded on the theories of Justel to transform him into the scion of both the House of La Tour and the second line of the counts of Auvergne. Here, the forged charters from Brioude helped elaborate on the descent of Bernard I, allowing Baluze to identify his wife as Blitsende, their eldest son as Bernard II, and his son as Géraud de la Tour, with the result that the La Tour line descended from the rightful first line of the ancient counts of Auvergne.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, the alternative claim retrospectively identified with Du Bouchet that the House of La Tour was closely related to the second line of the counts of Auvergne also held, since according to Baluze, Bernard I's younger son, Eustorge, was the father of Robert I, viscount of Clermont, and great-grandfather of Guy I, viscount of Clermont and then count of Auvergne. In Baluze's telling, the hereditary counts of Auvergne thus comprised the cadet branch to the House of La Tour.<sup>84</sup>

It is therefore understandable why Baluze should draw the king's ire after the publication of his work in which he continued to lay out such a distinguished heritage for the House of Bouillon and, furthermore, incorporated the evidence of charters that had been declared forgeries in order to support his assertions. However, there was one key detail in which Baluze refused to follow the cardinal of Bouillon's ambitions. Many of the pamphlets arguing for or against the authenticity of De Bar's charters made the point that the House of Bouillon was not only claiming to descend from the ancient dukes of Aquitaine but also that this descent was in the male line. This point was significant, since it would have identified the family of La Tour as the direct descendants of the powerful Carolingian clan of the Guilhemides. When Baluze came to discuss the situation after the death of Guillaume I the Pious, however, he mentioned Justel's opinion, following Duchesne, that his brother-in-law, Acfred, had succeeded him as duke of Aquitaine, count of Auvergne. Nevertheless, he disputed this view, merely identifying this Acfred as count of Carcassonne.<sup>85</sup> Of course, this meant Acfred's progeny, including Bernard, did not descend in the male line from the Carolingian dukes of Aquitaine but

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from it when it was in the possession of Du Bouchet around 1640 (Berger, "Droit, société et parenté," 1:97–98, documents 5a and 5b). Duchesne certainly discussed an "eschantillon de Brioude" (sample from Brioude) with Du Bouchet in 1638, but it is by no means certain that Du Bouchet, who was then on a trip to Moulins, had the cartulary in his possession at that time. See the letter from André Duchesne to Jean du Bouchet, [1638], BnF Clairambault 1022, fol. 108.

83. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 23–25.

84. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 27, 36–38.

85. Baluze, *Histoire généalogique*, 13–16.

rather from the Gothic counts of Carcassonne.<sup>86</sup> This problem was not lost on the cardinal of Bouillon, who alerted Baluze that some scholars claimed that this Acfred was actually the brother of Guillaume I the Pious. In an undated letter before the publication of his *Histoire généalogique*, Baluze pushed back against this assertion, saying that it was certain that Alisande, Acfred's wife, was in fact Guillaume I's sister. He further explained that in a conference with the Abbé Galloys and others, the group had decided that Baluze should merely write that Justel had given Acfred the quality of the duke of Aquitaine, with the implication that he would not do so himself.<sup>87</sup> This question was thus a point of contention between Baluze and the cardinal, likely leading Baluze to obtain the support of other trusted scholars to support him in his dealings on this matter with his patron.

It is therefore highly possible that Baluze's involvement with the controversy over the forged documents from Brioude led him to support the cardinal's interests more intensely than he might otherwise have done, but his historical judgments in the matter were nevertheless genuine, and there were red lines of evidence, or a lack thereof, that he would not cross. In their examination of De Bar's documents in 1695, Baluze, Mabillon, and Ruinart began by inspecting the group of texts together, assessing their material aspects and above all evaluating their consistency as a collection.<sup>88</sup> They paid much less attention, or none at all, to whether the particular claims made in the documents were reliable. As historians of the affair have pointed out, their analysis occurred long before any solid accusations against De Bar had surfaced, and indeed, the erudite scholars continued to support the secretary's innocence during the trial.<sup>89</sup> Once their reputations were engaged, it was likely easy for Baluze and his colleagues to see the outpouring of criticism against their findings more as a product of animus against the House of Bouillon than as legitimate historical doubt, just as it was convenient for their contemporaries to accuse the scholars of specious arguments in support of the genealogical pretensions of an influential but overambitious family.

86. See Lauranson-Rosaz, *L'Auvergne et ses marges*, 72.

87. Letter from Étienne Baluze to the cardinal de Bouillon, n.d., in Lorient, "Le cardinal de Bouillon," 300–303.

88. *Procez-verbal*, in BnF Clairambault 915, fols. 98r–110v. See also Boutier, "Étienne Baluze," 326–28, which helpfully points out that the practice of Mabillon and Baluze was not to establish a document's truth, per se, but to demonstrate that it was not false by following a predetermined set of rules, collectively identified as diplomatics.

89. Lorient, "Le cardinal de Bouillon," 291–92; Depoin, "Une expertise de Mabillon," 134, 143.

## Conclusions

Ultimately, these seemingly arcane debates carried on by numerous erudite scholars concerning the history and descent of the early counts of Auvergne reveal much about the process of historical research and genealogical construction in seventeenth-century France. First, there was a genuine concern to find and discuss documents that would clarify local history and firmly establish the lines of descent of important noble houses, and this process did lead to greater knowledge about issues of concern to the participants. Where Savaron and Besly had at first expressed confusion about what had happened to the county of Auvergne at the death of Guillaume I the Pious, new evidence in the form of foundation charters from local abbeys helped to clarify his immediate successors. These discoveries often resulted from the kind of group work encouraged by the practices of the Republic of Letters: scholars exchanged news and information through extensive correspondence, sought to increase their list of valuable contacts, and lent and borrowed documents in a continual effort to maintain useful associates and groom new ones.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, historians' preconceptions clearly influenced their interpretations of the evidence, since neither Besly nor Savaron seem to have understood what the charter of 927 meant for their speculations on the relationship between the counts of Poitou, dukes of Guyenne, and the counts of Auvergne.

Further, erudite historians were to a large extent captive to the worldly relationships and patronage structures in which they operated. Savaron's outlook was clearly influenced by the necessity to uphold Catherine de' Medici's rights to the counties of Clermont and Auvergne in the sixteenth century and thus the right of her daughter, Marguerite de Valois, to inherit these counties in the early seventeenth century, just as Justel and Baluze were obviously at pains to satisfy the pretensions of their patrons, the members of the House of Bouillon. This position was not difficult for erudite scholars to take, since their historical assumptions about the relationship between political authority and lines of descent largely matched those of their noble employers. As Justel's letter to Huygens makes clear, everyone understood that these genealogies were not just of historical interest but also had real-world implications for power and precedence. In the evolving story of the relationship between the La Tour line and the counts of Auvergne, everyone assumed that titles and offices descended unilaterally from father to son, and that this seamless transition was

90. Bots and Waquet, *Commercium Litterarium*; Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*; Pomian, "De la lettre au périodique."

the only legitimate form that political authority could take. It was this point of view that gradually transformed a fleeting mention of Bernard, brother of Guillaume II and Acref, into the scion of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne and even a link in the legitimate line of the hereditary counts of Auvergne. It was also a view that made it at least conceivable that if the dukes of Bouillon in the late seventeenth century could prove that they descended from the dukes of Aquitaine in the early tenth century in the direct male line, then they might actually accrue enough political prestige to place royal jurisdiction over the duchy of Guyenne in doubt. It is therefore clear why the Bouillon affair had such serious implications, but it is also significant that this particular historical narrative was generations in the making.

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