

DEREK R. BENSON

The ‘Traitor’ of Béziers

Petrus Vairatus, the Murder of Raymond Trencavel,
and the Urban Revolt of 1167

Problems of Perspective: A Motive, a Victim, and a Traitor, p. 158. – The Traitor and the Historian, p. 163. – Reevaluation of the Diplomatic Evidence, p. 166. – The Vairati: Tenant-Lords?, p. 172. – The Villa de Vairaco, p. 175. – A Rebellion of the Townspeople, p. 179. – Conclusion, p. 184.

ABSTRACT: The townspeople of Béziers conspired and killed their lord, Raymond Trencavel, viscount of the city, at the altar of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine on 15 October 1167 initiating an urban revolt. Sparse evidence from disparate sources makes the motive difficult to discern. The count of Toulouse is largely suspected of orchestrating the event, so much so that the *cives* themselves have been left absent from the narrative at worst or manipulated pawns at best. Only two individuals mentioned within the ‘Cartulary of Béziers’ (the ‘Livre Noir’) are inculpated in the rebellion: a certain Richer and one Petrus Vairatus called the ‘Traitor’. Briefly discussed by others in the past, this article reexamines the records which bear their names and those of their associates illuminating a group of elites existing in two spaces – both tenant and lord. The influence of these men, their families, and others of their position throughout the twelfth century forms the social context of the revolt itself, an aspect which has hitherto been undervalued.

During the celebration of mass on Sunday, 15 October 1167, Raymond Trencavel, viscount of Béziers, Carcassonne, the Razès, and Albi, was murdered at the altar of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in Béziers with a few of his sworn men. An unnamed townsman had wielded the dagger, though he was part of a much larger conspiracy, supported, in droves, by his equally armed fellows. Bernard, the bishop of the city, witnessed the events and was violently struck in the viscount’s defense, gathered as they were for an audience with the offended perpetrators. The motive: the assassin’s wounded honor, shamed as he had been at the hands of the viscount’s knights on account of a warhorse he had stolen and laden with baggage while marching in defense of their lord’s nephew – likely Bernard Aton VI, the viscount of Nîmes and Agde. At least, that is what a portion of the sources reveal.

Modern historians have largely supported the theory, taken from one near-contemporary account, that the count of Toulouse, Raymond V, had organized the plot which inadvertently led to the viscount’s death¹. Even to those who have not fully

¹ See HÉLÈNE DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne, XI^e–XII^e siècles. Serments, hommages et fiefs dans le Languedoc des Trencavel*, Toulouse 2003, pp. 89–91, for a leading French interpretation. In FREDRIC L.

Derek R. Benson, E-Mail address: derek.benson@uni-tuebingen.de

ascribed to this perspective, Toulousain machinations are never far from their analyses². Meager as the narrative sources may be, nearly all place blame upon the townspeople of Béziers. If the death of Raymond Trencavel, and the urban revolt which ensued more broadly, is mentioned by chroniclers in the context of a civil plot, why have other actors been more prominent in the events which transpired than the burghers who were held responsible? It is the contention of this article that our attention ought to be refocused on the townspeople of Béziers by analyzing the social networks within the Biterrois both preceding and following 1167. By targeting one individual in particular, a certain Petrus Vairatus the *proditor* and his social milieu more broadly, a society in which status was mutable becomes apparent³. A group of wealthy burghers involved in the broader urban context of Béziers and its environs of the mid- to late-twelfth century will be revealed. The involvement in the revolt by this liminal group was not as uniform as the chroniclers stated for the broad class of *cives*, but the punishment of those who were may have had other purposes than mere retribution.

Underlying developments, of course, contextualize the revolt in its historical setting. Themes of collective representation and consular activity, important sociological currents of the time, are crucial for conceptualizing the conditions in which the uprising fomented. Developing from the Early Middle Ages, representative collectives of *boni homines* (and later *probi homines*) appeared throughout Western Europe in the centuries prior, with specific lingering importance in lands once subject to Visigothic Law. These groups were comprised almost exclusively by men, so-called due to their qualities of wisdom and experience. The term itself was culturally significant in the Midi, where inquisitorial records inform us that from the mid-twelfth century heretical preachers – known today as the Cathars – were thus described in reference to their moral integrity in opposition to Catholic priests⁴. Beyond its use to describe heretics,

CHEYETTE, Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours, Ithaca (NY) 2001, p. 266 (esp. note 33), a seminal English account, the townspeople are entirely absent.

² See, for example, RAMON D'ABADAL I VINYALS, À propos de la 'domination' de la maison comtale barcelonaise sur le Midi français, in: Annales du Midi 76, 1964, pp. 315–345, esp. p. 336; CLAUDIE DUHAMEL-AMADO, Genèse des lignages méridionaux. L'aristocratie languedocienne du X^e au XII^e siècle, vol. 1, Toulouse 2001, p. 208, note 148; and VINCENT CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls à Béziers avant 1247? Réflexions sur l'histoire du consulat biterrois à la veille de la Croisade, in: MONIQUE BOURIN (ed.), En Languedoc au XIII^e siècle. Le temps du sac de Béziers, Perpignan 2010, pp. 203–226.

³ Modern equivalents of the personal names appearing in this text (either English or French) were favored, aside from Petrus Vairatus himself and a few other surnames which are difficult to translate well. For the *proditor*, the Latin spelling was preferred to further emphasize its archival appearance.

⁴ See JEAN-LOUIS BIGET, Les 'bons hommes', les 'bonnes femmes' et leurs communautés avant 1209, in: ID. – SYLVIE CAUCANAS – MICHELLE FOURNIÉ – DANIEL LE BLÉVEC (eds.), Le 'catharisme' en questions (Cahiers de Fanjeaux 55), Toulouse 2020, pp. 245–284 for the use of *boni homines* and *bonae feminae* to describe the 'Cathar' preachers, called *perfecti* and *perfectae* by the inquisitors. Regarding the revolt itself, no direct evidence remains to link any religious dissent among the population of Béziers to the events of 1167. Numerous studies have been dedicated to the exaggerated state of heresy in the Biterrois generally, however (see, for example, HENRI VIDAL, Episcopatus et pouvoir épiscopal à Béziers à la veille de la Croisade Albigeoise, 1152–1209, Montpellier 1951, pp. 75–90; MONIQUE BOURIN-DERRUAU,

elite groups of "good" and "honest men" often appear in moments of conflict within the charters of this region, where resolution was sought from those deemed capable of rendering a verdict⁵. For example, the town customary of Béziers, recognized initially by Roger II before the king of Aragon in 1185 and the *populus universus* of the city (written and reconfirmed by Bernard de Saissac, tutor and regent of the young viscount Raymond Roger in 1194), mentions *probi homines* in a judicial capacity, but only once: aside from the testimony of neighbors, their presence was needed when making arrests for adultery⁶. By the end of the twelfth century, these groups came to represent whole communities not simply a mediating force between litigants⁷. The inclusion of elite peasants within the ranks of the *boni* and *probi homines* differentiated these urban and rural assemblages from their predecessors, as well as expanded their representative function⁸.

These collectives are but one example of emerging procedural awareness among townspeople, however, not to mention popular assemblies of a town's inhabitants which appear ever more frequently. In Béziers, for example, such collective action is attested increasingly in the last quarter of the twelfth century. The *populus universus* was said to have witnessed the recognition of the town customary in 1185, as mentioned

Villages médiévaux en Bas-Languedoc. Genèse d'une sociabilité [X^e–XIV^e siècle], vol. 2: La démocratie au village [XIII^e–XIV^e siècle], Paris 1988, pp. 117–119; as well as JEAN-LOUIS BIGET, Béziers, citadelle de l'hérésie?, in: BOURIN, En Languedoc au XIII^e siècle [as note 2], pp. 49–62, esp. pp. 56–58, where Biget argued that at the moment of the crusade more Waldensian heretics than believers of the 'good men' lived in the city). That said, a famous list of heretics residing in Béziers at the time of the crusade, supposedly given by the bishop Raynaut de Montpeyroux to the crusaders in 1209, records the name of a *B. Bofotus* as living within the district of Saint-Aphrodise among the over 200 denounced inhabitants throughout the city (see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Collection Doat, vol. 60, fol. 5r [hereafter 'Doat' followed by volume and folio] for the seventeenth-century copy of the now lost original). Considering the known orthographic mistakes in the Doat collection, the similarity of the name to that of Bernard Bofat, one of the known associates of *Petrus Vairatus*, bears consideration (see esp. notes 102–104 below for the connection of the Bofat family to the Vairati). This same conclusion was made in JULIEN ROCHE, Le catharisme à Béziers et dans le biterrois au début du XIII^e siècle. Aux frontières de l'hérésie?, in: CARLOS HEUSCH – GÉRARD GOUIRAN (eds.), Biterrois. Béziers et son rayonnement culturel au moyen âge – Actes des XII^{es} "Rencontres de Béziers", 8 décembre 2001, Perpignan 2003, pp. 61–104, esp. pp. 77–78, who saw this *B. Bofotus* as Bernard Bofat himself, the father of the royal judge Aimeri Bofat (see note 92 below).

⁵ MONIQUE BOURIN, Les *boni homines* de l'an mil, in: Histoire de la justice 15, 2002, pp. 53–65, esp. p. 54. For a larger context, see PATRICK WORMALD – ROGER COLLINS – CHRIS WICKHAM, Conclusion, in: WENDY DAVIES – PAUL FOURACRE (eds.), The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe, Cambridge 1986, pp. 231–232.

⁶ See Gallia Christiana 6, 1739, Art. Instrumenta Ecclesiae Biterrensis, charter 19, col. 142–143 for the town customary; as well as HENRI VIDAL, La coutume de Béziers (1185–1194), in: Recueil de mémoires et travaux. Société d'Histoire du Droit 11, 1980, pp. 23–40 for a modern edition and discussion of the text.

⁷ MONIQUE BOURIN-DERRUAU, Villages médiévaux en Bas-Languedoc. Genèse d'une sociabilité (X^e–XIV^e siècle), vol. 1: Du château au village (X^e–XII^e siècle), Paris 1988, pp. 321–325.

⁸ BOURIN-DERRUAU, Villages médiévaux, vol. 1 (as note 7), pp. 315 and 323.

above; to which might also be added the twenty-five names of the residents of the bourg of Saint-Aphrodise, recorded with the consent and will of *omnium aliorum in eodem burgo commorantium*, who settled an agreement with the abbots of Valmagne and Saint-Aphrodise itself concerning the construction and defense of the district wall in 1188⁹. Similar initiatives are also detectable in the administrative and legislative functions of consulates that were then developing almost everywhere throughout the Midi in tandem with the Roman legal revival and codification of town customaries¹⁰. Towns neighboring the Biterrois such as Carcassonne, Montpellier, Narbonne (etc.), all witnessed these developments by the turn of the thirteenth century. Communal strife occasionally presaged such events, as well. In Montpellier, for example, rebellion in 1141–1143 led to the incorporation of local burghers into administrative positions, even if the name *consul* was anathema until the lordship of the city passed into the hands of kings of Aragon at the turn of the thirteenth century¹¹.

Béziers was long held to boast one of the earliest consulates in France¹². Prior to the renunciation of all the rights to the viscounty of Béziers by Raymond Trencavel II in 1247 made before the consuls of the city – a date confirmed in addition to the names of the seven consuls in ‘Lo Libre de memorias’ by Jacme Mascaro¹³ – only two documents attest to the existence of this municipal body: the dispute settlement made by Count Alphonse-Jourdain of Toulouse between the bishop and viscounts of the city in 1131 which described the consuls as having the ability to absolve oaths, and a papal letter written by Innocent III to the bishop of Agde in 1205 in which the

⁹ See note 6 above for reference to the town customary; and see LOUIS NOGUIER, *Enceinte murale de Béziers à l’époque gallo-romaine et au moyen-âge*, in: *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire de Béziers*, 2^e série 7, 1873, pp.253–288, esp. pp.281–284 for the transcription of the original charter housed in Béziers, Archives municipales, série GG (unnumbered) which records the agreement initiating the construction of the district wall in 1188.

¹⁰ ANDRÉ GOURON, *Diffusion des consuls méridionaux et expansion du droit romain aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, in: *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 121, 1963, pp.26–76.

¹¹ For more on the influence of burghers in town administration (especially that of the officer known as the *baiulus*), see ARCHIBALD R. LEWIS, *Seignorial Administration in Twelfth Century Montpellier*, in: *Speculum* 22, 1947, pp. 562–577, esp. 569–570; as well as ALEXANDRE VERGOS, *Les Guilhem de Montpellier et leur entourage urbain (1090–1204). Les apports de l’approche prosopographique*, in: *Les Cahiers de FRAMESPA* 37, 2021, online, par. 30–41 (last accessed 09/01/2025), <https://doi.org/10.4000/framespa.10845>, for the general proximity of burghers to the lords of the city following the revolt. For the delayed formulation of a consulate in Montpellier until the early thirteenth century, see ANDRÉ GOURON, ‘*Libertas hominum Montispessulani*’. Rédaction et diffusion des coutumes de Montpellier, in: *Annales du Midi. Revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 90, 1978, pp.289–318, esp.293–294.

¹² See, for example, ANTONIN SOUCAILLE, *Le consulat de Béziers*, in: *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire de Béziers*, 3^e série 24, 1896, pp.217–504; as well as GOURON, *Diffusion des consuls méridionaux* (as note 10), p.33.

¹³ For the official renunciation of the viscounty by Raymond Trencavel II in 1247 (and reference to the consulate), see *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. JOSEPH DE LABORDE, vol.3, Paris 1875, n. 3588, pp.4–6; as well as the confirmation of the consulate (and the names of the seven consuls) in *Lo Libro de memorias de Jacme Mascaro* (du XIV^e siècle), ed. CHARLES BARBIER, Montpellier 1895, p.10.

papal legates Peter of Castelnau and Raoul of Fontfroide reported that the bishop of Béziers had failed to ensure that the consuls would abjure heresy and defend the faith upon their request¹⁴. Vincent Challet argued in 2010 that both documents constitute less-than-certain evidence of the consulate's existence before 1247: the former, surviving only in the cartulary of the cathedral chapter, could have been an interpolation at the moment of its redaction to lend a legacy of authority to a nascent body¹⁵; and in the latter, the papal chancellery easily could have mislabeled an elite group of townspeople (the text and seal of a document recording the submission of the city to the king in 1226 mentions only *cives*, for example¹⁶). The total absence of a consulate during pivotal moments in late-twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century Biterrois history further casts doubt. The murder of Raymond Trencavel and the revolt of 1167, the recognition of the town customary in 1185, the sack of the city in July 1209, the submission of the city to Louis VIII in April 1226 (etc.), all left no trace.

Following the work of Robert Jacob, Challet believed the events of 1167 fit with patterns of ritualistic seigneurial murder which indicate signs of revolt: existence of a conspiracy, public spectacle of the murder, the choice of a sacred place for the act itself, multiple blows which shed blood (etc.), all pointing toward sacrificial characteristics¹⁷. Together with the striking similarities with the revolt of Montpellier in 1141–1143, Challet hypothesized that it was the rebellion in Béziers following the murder of Raymond Trencavel that initiated consular activity in the city, activity which was suppressed following the seigneurial reprisal in 1169, perhaps evidenced by the use of the title *proconsul* by both the murdered viscount and his son Roger II before and after this period¹⁸. To what extent there was a prior history of procedural initiatives

¹⁴ For the dispute settlement of 1131, see *Cartulaire de Béziers (Livre Noir)*, ed. JEAN-BAPTISTE ROUQUETTE, Paris – Montpellier, 1918–1922, n. 140, pp. 191–193 (hereafter 'Cart. Béziers' followed by act and page number); also available in CLAUDE DEVIC – JOSEPH VAISSETE, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, édition Privat, Toulouse 1879, vol. 5, n. 515, pp. 975–977 (hereafter 'Hist. Languedoc' followed by volume, act or chapter number, and column or page number). For the letter of Innocent III to the bishop of Agde in 1205, see *Bullaire du Bienheureux Pierre de Castelnau, martyr de la foi* (16 février 1208), ed. AUGUSTIN VILLEMAGNE, Montpellier 1917, n. 48, pp. 189–191.

¹⁵ See note 14 for the settlement of 1131. In CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), p. 207, esp. note 19, credit for this particular doubt about the authenticity of the charter was given to Hélène Débax, who found the title given to the viscounts (*Rotgerium et Raimundum Trencavellum vice comites*) to be suspicious.

¹⁶ See *Hist. Languedoc* (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 257, cols. 843–848, as well as *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. ALEXANDRE TEULET, vol. 2 (1223–1246), Paris 1866, n. 1767, pp. 78–79 for the text of the submission. The original charter, with its seal (housed in Paris, Archives Nationales, J 337, n. 2), was not consulted, though a description of the document can be found in CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), p. 204.

¹⁷ See CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), p. 210 for the discussion; and ROBERT JACOB, *Le meurtre du seigneur dans la société féodale. La mémoire, le rite, la fonction*, in: *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 45, 1990, pp. 247–263 for the original argument.

¹⁸ See CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 213–215; as well as HÉLÈNE DÉBAX, *Proconsuls et consuls. La place de Béziers et du biterrois dans les domaines des Trencavel*, in: *BOURIN, En Languedoc au XIII^e siècle* (as note 2), pp. 107–123, esp. pp. 121–122.

unfolding in the city is unfortunately elusive. Communal unrest is largely detectable regarding the growing *episcopatus* at the expense of the Trencavel lords; though, in the words of Hélène Débax, such friction can be assumed, as seen “in all the other great cities of the Midi.”¹⁹

Trends of increasing civil representation, not to mention the growing impact of townspeople on municipal government and the resulting social tensions which often ensued, thus connect the events in Béziers to those of the period and region more broadly. What remains to be investigated is the social background of the revolt, however, especially regarding the erstwhile perpetrators – the *cives* – whose involvement is often undervalued. In the following pages it will be first necessary to discuss the sources which document the Revolt of Béziers, paying particular attention to the historiographic treatment of the townspeople, in that lens, and especially that of Petrus Vairatus the ‘Traitor’. Inconsistencies within published sources as well as secondary literature, everything from his name to his association with seigneurial murder itself, highlight one aspect of the broader misconceptions associated with the revolt and thus necessitate the reevaluation of the charters which document it best. After further supporting the view of Petrus’ involvement in the revolt, if not the murder of Raymond Trencavel specifically, a targeted investigation of the social connections of the Vairati to various other urban and rural elites will include a potential genealogical connection which further strengthens their ties to the class of Biterrois tenants who commanded considerable seigneurial authority both prior to and following 1167 itself. With these families straddling the social divide of tenant and lord emphasized, a reconsideration of the communal strife present in both the narrative and diplomatic sources is sustained, adding further clarity to the context of the revolt and murder of Raymond Trencavel.

PROBLEMS OF PERSPECTIVE: A MOTIVE, A VICTIM, AND A TRAITOR

Dom Devic and Dom Vaissete had been suspicious, reasonably so, when discussing the assassination of Raymond Trencavel by the hands of a dishonored commoner in their ‘Histoire générale de Languedoc’ for so great a crime committed for so slight an offence²⁰. Louis Noguier referred to the instigating incident as one “without impor-

¹⁹ For an example of the struggle between the ecclesiastical and lay lords of the city, see the 1131 dispute charter referenced in note 14 above: the co-lords of the city grappled over financial rights from high justice (theft, murder, adultery) as well as various other fees in their respective districts. For an example of tensions in the decades following, see the discussion of the background to the codification of the town customary in 1185 in VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), pp. 23–40. Lastly, for the quote, see DÉBAX, *Proconsuls et consuls* (as note 18), p. 122 (English translations, as with all other quotations from French secondary sources cited here, are my own).

²⁰ Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 6, ch. 24, p. 29, note 1.

tance," but one "which had the most fatal of consequences."²¹ Equally suspicious, the only near-contemporary account of the full event which survives is found in a chronicle written in a far-off country, whose author was only as certain of what had transpired as those who had told him²². The details of this account, that of William of Newburgh's 'Historia rerum anglicarum', nevertheless, were largely not used by later chroniclers, such as Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay who briefly recounted the tale in describing the perfidy of the city and townspeople of Béziers in his 'Hystoria Albigensis'²³. Integral to Newburgh's account, however, was the personal quarrel between the rapacious townsman and the knights who punished him for his thievery. It was Viscount Raymond's (incorrectly identified as both *Guillelmus* and *Willelmus Trenchevail*) support of these men, after all, that won the ire of the *cives* and ended with his murder alongside his *amicis et proceribus suis*. News of the event and following uprising, Newburgh went on to say, inspired a papal interdiction and a host loyal to the slain lord, even including the king of Aragon, to besiege the rebelling city; but the townspeople had fortified themselves well, and a pact was needed to settle the matter sometime near the end of 1169 and install the viscount's son, Roger, to whom they swore service²⁴.

The particulars of the Revolt of Béziers in 1167 as well as the assassination of Viscount Raymond itself are clearest in Newburgh's account; a general dearth of evidence, however, taken with certain conflicting details from other sources make these events difficult to discern. Devic and Vaissete followed the 'Historia rerum anglicarum' and a few other sources including the chronicles of Geoffrey of Breuil and Robert of Torigni, as well as the necrologies of the churches of Carcassonne and Cassan, which together supplied a few other absent specifics and corrections: the proper name and location of the church, the date of the assassination, etc.²⁵ From Breuil's 'Chronica',

²¹ LOUIS NOGUIER, Les vicomtes de Béziers. Extinction de l'albigéisme, précis historique et archéologique, in: Bulletin de la Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire de Béziers, 2^e série 13, 1884, pp. 237–505, esp. p. 304 for the quotations.

²² William of Newburgh, Historia rerum anglicarum, in: Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I, ed. RICHARD HOWLETT (Rolls Series 82), 4 vols., London 1964, vol. 1, bk. 2, ch. 11, pp. 126–130.

²³ For the account of the murder within the narrative, see Petri Vallium Sarnaii Monachi Hystoria Albigensis (hereafter 'Hystoria Albigensis'), eds. PASCAL GUÉBIN – ERNEST LYON, Paris 1926, pt. 3, ch. 86, pp. 87–88.

²⁴ Newburgh, Historia rerum anglicarum (as note 22), bk. 2, ch. 11, pp. 128–129. For more on the timeline of the revolt, see notes 147–151 below.

²⁵ The presence and location of the plot was recorded by Breuil in his 'Chronica' (La chronique de Geoffroi de Breuil, eds. PIERRE BOTINEAU – JEAN-LOUP LEMAITRE – BERNADETTE BARRIÈRE [transl.] [Société de l'Histoire de France], Paris 2021, bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69; French translation on p. 204 [hereafter 'Breuil, Chronica']) – not the *basilicam cathedralem* that William of Newburgh claimed – though a date of *quadam Dominica Quadragesimae* is supplied. The accepted date, that of 15 October 1167 (*id. oct.*), comes from the necrology of Cassan; the necrology of Carcassonne supplied October 14. See Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 5, n. 8, col. 35–37 for these passages. Details from Torigni (The Chronography of Robert of Torigni, ed. and transl. THOMAS N. BISSEON [Oxford Medieval Texts], 2 vols., Oxford 2020, vol. 1, [1169], pp. 278–279 [hereafter 'Torigni, Chronica']) were largely not fol-

they and more modern historians – perhaps persuaded by both the closer temporal and geographic proximity to the events in Béziers²⁶ – have not missed the connection to the political turmoil of Raymond Trencavel's reign, the enmity with the count of Toulouse. Breuil claimed that the townspeople of Béziers had sworn to capture their lord in service of Count Raymond V of Toulouse for the great oppression he had placed against them; a conspiracy had been formed, with that count as its leader, which had unintentionally led to the viscount's death²⁷. It is true that the conflict between Barcelona and Toulouse of the twelfth century, the 'grande guerre méridionale', often pitted the Trencavel viscounts against either lord, for which Viscount Raymond Trencavel himself had been arrested in Toulouse due to his support of the Barcelonese twelve years prior²⁸. The count of Toulouse had also allied himself with the bishop of Béziers in 1152, specifically against Viscount Raymond, just before his arrest²⁹.

The brief account of the assassination and revolt in Breuil's 'Chronica' focuses more on the aftermath of the events: the year after the assassination of Raymond (dated to *quadam dominica Quadragesimae*) and siege of Béziers, Roger brought his own army into the city under false pretense, ordering his men to slay the hosts that sheltered them at a given signal³⁰. The later interpretation by Vaux-de-Cernay's 'Hystoria Albigensis', contended as being based on a "strong local tradition concerning the murder" that the author would have had access to during his travels in Occitania between 1212 and 1218, aligns closer to Newburgh without focusing on class distinctions and instead on the perfidy of the citizens³¹. Despite ample emphasis on the depravity of the count of Toulouse, Vaux-de-Cernay never alleged that the predecessor of his villain, the *callidissimus* Raymond VI who refused to join the crusade following his peni-

lowed by Devic and Vaisete in their own account (cf. Hist. Languedoc [as note 14], vol. 6, ch. 24, p. 30). Certain inconsistencies, such as the supposed murder of Raymond's unnamed infant son, are to blame.

²⁶ See Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), p. xxx, where Pierre Botineau and Jean-Loup Lemaitre postulated the prior of Vigéois had finished his work by 1184. As described by Thomas Bisson, Robert of Torigni also completed his historical writings before Newburgh set his pen to parchment while abbot of Le Mont Saint-Michel from 1154 and into the 1180s (see Torigni, *Chronica* [as note 25], p. xxxi). Be that as it may, Newburgh's work is perhaps justified when he wrote of the tale: *Res enim recentis memoriae est, crebro certeque mihi comperta relatu* (Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum* [as note 22], p. 126). For more on the possible sources Newburgh may have used, see notes 142 and 143 below.

²⁷ Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69.

²⁸ DÉBAX, La féodalité languedocienne (as note 1), pp. 89–91.

²⁹ DÉBAX, La féodalité languedocienne (as note 1), pp. 89 and 277. Débax cited Cart. Béziers, n. 176, pp. 238–239, specifically for the alliance between Count Raymond V and Bishop Guillaume of Béziers.

³⁰ Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69.

³¹ Vaux-de-Cernay, *Hystoria Albigensis* (as note 23), pt. 3, ch. 86, pp. 87–88. See ELAINE GRAHAM-LEIGH, Justifying Deaths. The Chronicler Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay and the Massacre of Béziers, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 63, 2001, pp. 282–303, esp. 297 for the quote; as well as EAD., The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade, Woodbridge (UK) 2005, pp. 147–148 for a discussion of the accounts of the revolt and assassination in the chronicles of William of Newburgh, Geoffrey of Breuil, and Peter of Vaux-des-Cernay.

tence, was involved in the assassination nor the plot in general³². Instead, the inclusion of the tale only served to justify the massacre of Béziers itself, and specifically 7,000 people within the same church where Raymond Trencavel had been slain over 40 years before³³. What is more, elements of this well-known conflict can also be found in the 'Historia rerum anglicarum'. Newburgh wrote that Viscount Roger himself spread a rumor while in Béziers that the count of Saint-Gilles (i.e. Toulouse) had moved against them; fearful, the townspeople entreated their lord to beseech the aid of the Aragonese, the artifice of his revenge³⁴. The common element of the main accounts of Roger's intentions – quartered soldiers within the city attacking the townspeople at a given signal and resettlement of the depopulated city³⁵ – lends credulity to this deception, but only in Newburgh are the Aragonese involved, itself another oft-repeated aspect in the historiography³⁶.

All three to a greater or lesser extent, as well as Torigni's 'Chronica', portray the communal effort of the townspeople during the initial revolt in a negative light. Breuil's reference to the count of Toulouse, however, has ultimately proven the more accepted catalyst in the modern interpretation of the assassination; Raymond Trencavel's death was due to this rivalry and because of his heavy seigneurial exactions to support his wars. Despite the fact that all of the narrative accounts inculcate the townspeople in the assassination and for instigating the rebellion, it is interesting that an overstressed relevance in Breuil's 'Chronica' for its reference to the Occitan political context of the period (something that Newburgh also discusses, as we have seen) has diminished the relevance of the social tensions within Béziers itself. Some evidence even has been used to suggest that the burghers had not acted alone, supported – perhaps even led – by members of the urban aristocracy (i.e. landed nobility), raising interesting questions which are difficult to expound³⁷. The motive noted by Newburgh thus is lost. The seemingly disproportionate reaction on account of the townsman's debasement

³² Generally, see GRAHAM-LEIGH, The Southern French Nobility (as note 31), pp. 19–20 for the treatment of Raymond VI throughout the 'Hystoria Albigensis'. Specifically, for the label *callidissimus* and an example of Raymond's supposed chicanery, see Vaux-de-Cernay, Hystoria Albigensis (as note 23), pt. 3, ch. 80, pp. 79–80.

³³ Vaux-de-Cernay, Hystoria Albigensis (as note 23), pt. 3, ch. 91, pp. 91–93.

³⁴ Newburgh, Historia rerum anglicarum (as note 22), bk. 2, ch. 11, pp. 129–130: *Et praecurrens ad civitatem Bederensem fama prius arte dispersa, quod idem comes [Egidiensis] irruptionem moliretur, civibus supplicavit, ut, quoniam regis Arragonum amicitia et ope gaudebat, mox affuturis Arragonibus hospitium in transitu exhibentes, justae commutationis modum, victualia ministrando, servarent.*

³⁵ See Torigni, Chronica (as note 25), [1169], pp. 278–279, for his own brief statement: [...] *omnes tam viros quam mulieres vel suspendio vel alio tormento morti tradidit, et novis habitatoribus illam inhabitandam tradidit.*

³⁶ See Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 6, ch. 25, pp. 30–32; ch. 27, p. 32; ch. 29, p. 34; and esp. ch. 34, pp. 38–39 for the importance of the Aragonese/Barcelonese relationship to Viscount Roger II of Béziers in the first years following the revolt and murder of his father, as compiled by Devic and Vaissete.

³⁷ PIERRE-ANDRÉ SIGAL, Bernard le Pénitent et la révolte de Béziers de 1167, in: Annales du Midi. Revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale 101, 1989, pp. 275–277. Sigal's contentions about the timeline between the revolts in Montpellier and Béziers (1141–1143 and 1167–1169,

at the hands of the viscount's knights is perhaps to blame, or even the geographic and temporal distance between Newburgh and the events themselves. Hints at urban conflict in the charters prior to 1167 (to be discussed below), not uncommon to the twelfth century, however, bring new germaneness to the tale within the 'Historia rerum anglicarum'. To what extent should these details be trusted over others?

Connected to this issue of the underestimated *cives* regarding the death of Raymond Trencavel is the identity of a certain obscure individual recorded in the 'Cartulary of Saint-Nazaire of Béziers' (the 'Livre Noir'). The cartulary evidence for the murder of the viscount specifically is sparse, recounted only in passing, from some 40 years after the event³⁸. The Revolt of Béziers is only slightly better documented. There is mention in a handful of acts from 1173 and 1174 of the *proditionem Biterris*³⁹. An individual who seemingly took part in the revolt himself is identified as *proditor* twice, once in a charter from 1172 and another in 1180 – a man named Petrus Vairatus, also referred to by the moniker *grossus*⁴⁰. The most relevant of these charters is the latter, which details the banishment of the 'traitor' from Béziers, along with his family, by the murdered viscount's son, Roger.

It was the bishop who had brought the matter to the viscount, nevertheless, and it was the cathedral chapter of Saint-Nazaire in Béziers that would benefit from any confiscated properties of this Petrus Vairatus, the 'Traitor'. Members of the Maureilhan family, the sworn men of the chapter's *camerarius*, the wealthy Bernard of Narbonne, had in fact already benefited from unrecorded similar actions, hinting at what was surely a much larger degree of urban property transferal following the revolt itself. If the antagonists of this tale were in fact the townspeople, evidently, they had lost resoundingly: their properties, controlled by others as Breuil noted⁴¹, were in the hands of lay and clerical lords, with some perhaps granted to the Aragonese as Newburgh claimed, Roger's allies and his covert means of revenge, who slaughtered those responsible after the city was retaken⁴².

respectively), that the former was too removed from the recluse Bernard's death in 1182 to have been the source of his misdeed in life, is perhaps specious.

³⁸ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 348, pp. 523–526.

³⁹ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 243, pp. 337–339; n. 244, pp. 339–341; and n. 246, pp. 342–343.

⁴⁰ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 238, pp. 330–331: *concedo in retornum totam meam partem totius mansi, qui fuit Petri Nairati proditoris [...] qui se tenet cum furno domini Bernardi, Biterrensis episcopi*; and n. 277, p. 393: *ego Rotgerius, vicecomes Biterinsis, promitto [...] quod nunquam permittam reverti vel faciam apud Biterim [...] aliquem vel aliquam de projenie vel de parentela Petri Nairati grossi [...] Nunc et in perpetuum de fiducia mea et potestate ejicio, et si quos honores tu, domine Bernarde [...] predicti proditoris habetis, illos semper volo habeatis in pace, et illos vobis perpetuo defendam.*

⁴¹ Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69: *seminantur bortuli proditorum alieno semine dum civium uxores et familiae externis peremptoribus traduntur.*

⁴² Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum* (as note 22), bk. 2, ch. 11, p. 130: *Cumque per totam [Aragones] essent in hospitii civitatem, repente ad signum ab arce datum, raptis armis impetum in proximos quosque cives fecerunt, totumque urbis populum furore insatiabili fere in momento peremerunt [...] Porro ministri ultionis pro mercede sui operis, habitationem, ut dicitur, acceperunt perfidorum caedibus civium expiatae civitatis.*

And yet, who was this traitorous Petrus Vairatus the 'Fat'? If he had been involved in the murder of Raymond Trencavel, as others have suggested, why was it the bishop who seemed more interested in his banishment from the city than Viscount Roger? Other historians have addressed these questions briefly in the past with a few footnotes or short descriptions of the evidence⁴³. They have often believed Petrus was of high status, connected to various aristocratic families throughout the Biterrois – some have even offered their own suggestions of his personal genealogy. What remains to be seen, however, is just how connected he was to the wealthy *burgenses* of Béziers and to those themes of social status and identity inherent in the conflict between knight and townsman with which William of Newburgh claimed this story began.

THE TRAITOR AND THE HISTORIAN

Neither great lords nor clergymen, the Vairati family rests largely in obscurity, with Petrus Vairatus being the most renowned – or rather infamous. Pompeati, the eighteenth-century archivist of Hageneau who transcribed the 'Livre Noir', recorded his surname as "Nairatus", which in turn provided the misreading printed in the Jean-Baptiste Rouquette's edition in 1922⁴⁴. An earlier transcription of the banishment charter, one made by a copyist working for the Bibliothèque de Colbert in the mid-seventeenth century, rendered the traitor's name "Vairatus"⁴⁵. Devic and Vaissete had followed this source in printing the act within their 'Histoire générale de Languedoc'⁴⁶. Louis Noguier, citing both the 'Histoire' and Pompeati's 'Livre Noir', settled on the published variant, spelling the traitor's name as "Pierre Vayrat" in his 1884 publication 'Les vicomtes de Béziers', where Petrus was first erroneously labelled "a lord" of the city⁴⁷. In the 1950s, Paul Rey used the "Vayrat" form regarding another of Petrus' family in his study of the lost original cartulary of Saint-Nazaire⁴⁸. As Pompeati's transcription was the only source cited, however, not Rouquette's edition, the inclusion of this alternative appears to have been a misreading as the Hageneau archivist was consistent

⁴³ The most principal sources in the recent historiography are the following: VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), pp. 23–40; CLAUDIE DUHAMEL-AMADO, *De la cité wisigothique à la ville médiévale*, in: JEAN SAGNES (ed.), *Histoire de Béziers*, Toulouse 1986, pp. 79–93; EAD., *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 1 (as note 2), pp. 311–312; EAD., *Genèse des lignages méridionaux. Portraits de famille*, vol. 2, Toulouse 2007, pp. 23–24, notes 12–14; GRAHAM-LEIGH, *Justifying Deaths* (as note 31), p. 299; EAD., *The Southern French Nobility* (as note 31), pp. 148–149, note 160; DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne* (as note 1), pp. 90–91 and note 467; and CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 203–226.

⁴⁴ For the acts which label Petrus as a *proditor* within Pompeati's transcription, see Montpellier, Archives départementales de l'Hérault, G 54, fols. 26r–26v, and fols. 27r–28r.

⁴⁵ See Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, fols. 290r–291r.

⁴⁶ See *Hist. Languedoc* (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 42, col. 358–359.

⁴⁷ NOGUIER, *Les vicomtes de Béziers* (as note 21), p. 319.

⁴⁸ PAUL REY, *Sur le 'Livre Noir' du Chapitre de Saint-Nazaire de Béziers*, in: *Bulletin de la société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire de Béziers*, 4^e série 22, 1956, pp. 15–34, esp. p. 21.

in his error – only in the acts copied from the Collection Doat which were compiled into Rouquette's 'Livre Noir' contain this variation ⁴⁹.

The issue has been constant in the modern historiography. In an article written in 1980 concerning the customary of Béziers, Henri Vidal noted the copyist errors regarding the "Pierre Vayrat" who witnessed the original confirmation of the urban customary in 1185 and the "Pierre Nairat" called the *proditor* – though he specifically refrained from postulating upon the potential crime which resulted in "his family being exiled but not himself." ⁵⁰ Without citing Vidal's article (though reiterating his caution), Vincent Challet also remarked upon the discrepancy between the customary copied in the 'Gallia Christiana', approximating the "Petrus Vairatus" recorded there to be the traitor of Rouquette's edition; though, he chose to use the latter's spelling ⁵¹. Yet, within the same anthology, Henri Barthès did not share this opinion and continued to cite the Doat variant ⁵². Barthès himself had shown a reluctance to cite Petrus' surname as "Nairat" twenty years before, calling him equally "Pierre Nairat (*Nairati*) (Veyrat);" though, by 2005, he had firmly settled on the latter when he, in defiance of settled opinion, had claimed the "Vayrati" family had been one of the early consular supporters of the Cistercian monks of the Valmagne Abbey ⁵³. The inconsistent historiographic treatment of Petrus' name and family has been a repeated problem due, largely in part, to the lack of the original 'Livre Noir'. With only copies of copies remaining, naturally, orthographic mistakes can be easily promulgated. In the absence of the Saint-Nazaire original, nevertheless, we are fortunate to have the records of another regional ecclesiastic institution with which to compare. The 'Cartulary of Saint-Mary of Valmagne', preserved in two volumes, are a critical source for the twelfth-century urban history of Béziers, documenting the Cistercian activities in acquiring significant properties within portions of the city and surrounding country. This was the source that ultimately provided Barthès with the surety needed in eschewing the "Nairati" error, for at least three members of the family were recorded within its folios in the city and nearby grange of Ortes bearing the Vairati name ⁵⁴. And yet, other aspects more vital than simple spelling have been equally supported and propagated throughout the modern historiography regarding the family and Petrus himself.

⁴⁹ See note 102 below for a list of those charters in Rouquette's edition which contain the "Vairatus" variant.

⁵⁰ VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), pp. 27–29.

⁵¹ See CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), p. 219 for his contention about the identity of Petrus Nairatus/Vairatus; as well, see *Gallia Christiana* (as note 6), vol. 6, n. 19, col. 142–143 for the act.

⁵² See HENRI BARTHEZ, *Autour de Béziers, les moines et la Croisade Albigeoise*, in: BOURIN, *En Languedoc au XIII^e siècle* (as note 2), pp. 77–92, for use of the "Vayrat" surname.

⁵³ See HENRI BARTHÈS, *Inventaire sommaire de la collection Doat* (Bibliothèque nationale). Première partie, volumes de la 'série géographique,' Béziers, in: *Études sur l'Hérault* 6, 1990, pp. 51–74 (esp. p. 63, c. 2), for his initial reluctance; and ID., *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye Sainte Marie de Valmagne*, in: *Bulletin de l'Académie des sciences et lettres de Montpellier* 36, 2005, pp. 297–316, esp. p. 303, for his connection of the Vairati to the Bofat family and early consular families of the Biterrois.

⁵⁴ See note 102 below for the precise list of acts which record the name or presence of a Vairati.

It was with Noguier, for example, that an association between his "betrayal" and the murder of Raymond Trencavel was first made ⁵⁵.

In 1986, Claudie Duhamel-Amado briefly mentioned the "Nairatus" family in the context of the murder of Raymond Trencavel claiming that they were "rich landowners in the bourg of Maurélian" and enemies of the bishop, who had used them in this "period of tension" to further his aims against the viscount ⁵⁶. At the moment of this publication, the Vairati appeared less as implicated assassins and more as fodder for the growing rivalry in the city between the two major lords: the bishop and viscount ⁵⁷. Elaine Graham-Leigh claimed Petrus himself was "[t]he head of the most powerful Béziers family" when he was banished by Roger in December 1180 ⁵⁸, that the "Nairati" in general had "held most of the Bourg of Maureilhan from the bishop" ⁵⁹, and even correctly pointed out that there is no direct link between his label of *proditor* and the murder of the viscount himself. Many have continued in making that claim, however, including Vincent Challet who, more recently (although with reservations), supported this view while discussing the role of the assassination in the early consular history of the city ⁶⁰. Hélène Débax similarly made this association in which she understood both Petrus "Nairatus" and the tabellion of Béziers to have been implicated in the crimes of 1167 ⁶¹. Duhamel-Amado herself, expounding upon her ideas further, later concurred. In a series of footnotes concerning the "Nairati" family, she noted the likely connection between the murder and Petrus' banishment while indicating that, unlike for the other implicated family in the cartulary records – that of a woman named Garsinde, whose father Richer had lost certain privileges because of his involvement – there is no specific tie between confiscated properties (or the threat thereof concerning Roger's oath to uphold the banishment) and the murder of the viscount ⁶². An alternative was offered considering the use of the old Peace of God oath declared by the bishop around 1170, which implored the viscount and his knights to cease their violence against the unarmed of the city, likely a result of Roger's revenge ⁶³. A closer look at the evidence is necessary to see what more can be said.

⁵⁵ NOGUIER, *Les vicomtes de Béziers* (as note 21), p. 319.

⁵⁶ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *De la cité wisigothique* (as note 43), pp. 90–91.

⁵⁷ For this rivalry, see VIDAL, *Episcopatus et pouvoir episcopal* (as note 4), esp. pp. 48–54.

⁵⁸ GRAHAM-LEIGH, *Justifying Deaths* (as note 31), p. 299. The record of the banishment was cited from Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, fols. 290r–291r, without using the variant "Vairat" discussed above, which is otherwise entirely identical to Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 277, p. 393.

⁵⁹ GRAHAM-LEIGH, *The Southern French Nobility* (as note 31), pp. 148–149, note 160.

⁶⁰ CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 205–207 and 213–217.

⁶¹ DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne* (as note 1), p. 91, note 467.

⁶² DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 2 (as note 43), pp. 23–24, notes 12–14. For more on Garsinde and her father Richer, see the section 'A Rebellion of the Townspeople' and esp. notes 137–139 below.

⁶³ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 2 (as note 43), p. 23, esp. note 11.

REEVALUATION OF THE DIPLOMATIC EVIDENCE

The only certain cartulary evidence about the murder of Raymond Trencavel comes from a charter in the 'Livre Noir' dated August 1205, some 40 years after the events. A woman named Garsinde, the widow of Arnaud of Prades, had been in conflict with the then reigning bishop, Ermengaud, over certain rights in the Bourg of Maureilhan which had been held by the brothers Arnaud and Bérenger of Maureilhan, financial privileges amounting to seigneurial rents and fees⁶⁴. These rights were hers, as she saw it, because her father Richer had held them from Arnaud of Maureilhan in mortgage (*titulo pignoris*) for 1.160 solidi of Melgueil, for which she sought restitution⁶⁵. The bishop, for his part, countered that not only had she and her husband entered into a *compositio amicabile* (a settlement) with numerous clergymen in the city concerning these rights, but Viscount Roger had confiscated them from her father Richer *ob necem patris sui Trencavelli* – the charter which detailed this decision, we are told, forbade Richer or any of his heirs from "agitating" these claims in the bourg. Garsinde nonetheless produced a *cartam restitutionis* (a charter of restitution) signed by the viscount himself. She or another of her family had, evidently, found Roger's good graces, receiving what amounted to a pardon for Richer's crimes. In the end, Garsinde received 575 sol. for the formal cession of her claims to these rights, along with any lingering claims carried by her sons and heirs. While this charter has been used to suggest that "[Richer] was probably linked to the plot" which killed Raymond Trencavel, it sheds no light on the issue of Petrus Vairatus himself⁶⁶.

From early March 1172, we learn that Arnaud of Maureilhan, with the consent of his wife Argessende and his nephew Raymond, had sold to the canons of Saint-Nazaire a certain plot (*faxia*) from his allod outside of town near the meat-market beyond the bridge of Béziers for the price of 110 sol.⁶⁷ In an effort to ensure its value, Arnaud promised the canons part of a manse that he held in town as collateral (*in retorum*). This manse was on the 'French Road', one of the thoroughfares of the Bourg of Maureilhan and was appurtenant with the bishop's oven – both of which had belonged to Petrus Vairatus the 'Traitor'. This is the first utterance of the term *proditor* connected to Petrus' name – although not the first time Petrus appeared in the

⁶⁴ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 348, pp. 523–526. The rights specifically sought by Garsinde were financial in nature: *usaticis* (annual rents), *forscapiis* (alienation fees), *justitiis* (pecuniary justice fees) and *firmaniis* (pledges given before a trial).

⁶⁵ The currency of account, the *solidus*, was comprised of 12 *denarii* (hereafter abbreviated "sol." and "d."). The *denarius* was minted in several cities throughout the region during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including in Béziers itself. Increasingly from the early twelfth century onwards, however, the coinage most referenced in the Biterrois came from Manguio (*Melgenil*). All currencies referenced here are in this denomination. For further reading, see MIREILLE CASTAING-SICARD, *Monnaies féodales et circulation monétaire en Languedoc (X^e–XIII^e siècles)* (Cahiers de l'association Marc Bloch – Études d'histoire méridionale 4), Toulouse 1961, pp. 29–36, and 39–42.

⁶⁶ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 2 (as note 43), p. 24.

⁶⁷ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 238, pp. 330–331.

cartulary⁶⁸. It was repeated again in the charter of his (or anyone from his *progenie vel de parentela*) formal banishment from the city eight years later⁶⁹. Without the latter, one might not assume the manse and oven on the 'French Road' were confiscated properties – no claim as such was made. Only from the charter of 1180 are potential properties alluded to, the generic *honores*, which were, at the time of the writing of the charter, already in the bishop's possession or that of the cathedral chapter⁷⁰. While called a 'traitor', the word itself lacks context. The only aspect certain about these documents is that Petrus appears connected to the bishop: he had held a manse and oven of the bishop's in the Bourg of Maureilhan; the chapter's vassals, the Maureilhan lords, perhaps benefited from the confiscation of those properties; and other *honores* belonging to Petrus or his family were, after 1180, formally recognized as belonging to Saint-Nazaire. Fortunately, the related term *proditio*, used only rarely in the 'Livre Noir', and its connection to an event of some kind which had transpired in Béziers can shed some light on these obscurities.

The first time the "betrayal of Béziers" is mentioned dates to 23 August 1173 in a mortgage charter agreed between Arnaud of Maureilhan and Bernard of Narbonne. All the properties Arnaud and his nephew Raymond held in their district were loaned for 700 sol., but seigneurial rents and fees associated with the manses which stood there were retained as they had *nobis sunt reversi* [...] *propter prodicionem Biterris*⁷¹. From only a little over a month later, in October 1173, Raymond mortgaged his share of rights and properties held by himself and his uncle to the same man, the *camerarius* of Saint-Nazaire, Bernard de Narbonne, for an additional 350 sol. under the exact conditions and with the same restrictions concerning the withheld revenues which had returned to them *propter prodicionem Biterris*⁷². Following an official agreement of shared rights over their inherited district near the end of that winter – in which Arnaud was specified to have held the greater part, two-thirds of the rights to his nephew Raymond's one-third⁷³ – the pair would further mortgage their rights in the district, yet again to Bernard of Narbonne, for a combined additional total of 1.250 sol. (1.000 to Arnaud and 250 to Raymond)⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ The earliest attestations of the name "Petrus Nairatus" come from Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 200, pp. 271–275 (ca. 1159–1161); and n. 216, pp. 294–296 (6 July 1166).

⁶⁹ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 277, p. 393; see note 40 above for the Latin. Also, see Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, fols. 290r–291r, as well as Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 42, col. 358–359.

⁷⁰ For the generic usage of the term *honor*, by which is generally meant the collection of a person's properties in an all-encompassing sense, see DÉBAX, La féodalité languedocienne (as note 1), pp. 179–180.

⁷¹ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 243, pp. 337–339. The *logerium*/*loguerium* (rental fee) and *acaptum* (entrance fee) of the manses, specifically, were excluded from the mortgage. Later in the charter (p. 338), it is specified that from those retained fees, Bernard of Narbonne was to collect the *usatica* (annual rent) and *foriscapia* (transfer fee) as part of the mortgage.

⁷² Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 244, pp. 339–341.

⁷³ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 245, pp. 341–342.

⁷⁴ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 246 and n. 247, pp. 342–344.

Considering all of their confiscated properties from the “betrayal”, held by *jure feodi* from the *camerarius* himself, uncle and nephew leveraged their district well enough to collect a staggering line of credit. Mortgages as pledges (*in pignora*), such as these, were not only a means of assuring access to readily available coin, however; they also served as a method to strengthen ties between individuals, something seen throughout the Midi in this period⁷⁵. This arrangement would have been mutually beneficial for the Maureilhan lords as well as for Bernard of Narbonne, and the cathedral chapter as a whole, for the profits collected from the tenants of the district during the life of the loan. In this light, the call for the Peace by the bishop’s letter, as Duhamel-Amado had suggested as an alternative meaning of the *proditio*, reads less as a measure to protect the defenseless and more as a means of safeguarding further loss to Saint-Nazaire’s income⁷⁶. All of this aside, the most certain evidence linking the *proditio* to the tumult of 1167 comes not from the ‘Livre Noir’.

From Breuil’s ‘Chronica’, we see that the Jews of Béziers were uninjured from Roger’s revenge as they were not inculpated *ab hac prodicione*; but at the same time, the *hortuli proditorum* were in the aftermath planted by the seeds of others⁷⁷. Evidently, the property of the *proditores* had been confiscated in the repression of the guilty, but we are no closer to understanding what exactly the *proditio* had been: seigneurial murder or rebellion? Interestingly, the term *proditores* was used in a very similar context in two papal letters describing the revolt of the townspeople of Montpellier in 1141–1143 concerning the rebellious *viguers*, the Aimon family⁷⁸. While Guilhem VI was chased from the city, finding refuge in the port of Lattes, he was not killed in the revolt like Raymond Trencavel. The term *proditores*, used in this manner, is connected simply to the act of rebellion. Furthermore, within the customary of Montpellier, recorded initially in 1204 following an incursion of the Aragonese into the city – as had coincidentally transpired in Béziers 20 years before⁷⁹ – we know that verbal insults such as *aliquem malservum, vel proditorem, vel traditorem, vel furem probatum, vel perjurum* were not tolerated during court proceedings, as cases were tried by the quality and dignity of the person in question⁸⁰. Be that as it may, the term *proditor* was thus not only equated to

⁷⁵ CHEYETTE, Ermengard of Narbonne (as note 1), pp. 135–137.

⁷⁶ While the act itself (Cart. Béziers [as note 14], n. 232, pp. 319–320) was undated, Rouquette assigned it a date of “vers 1170.” Not only considering the room for ambiguity, even if the letter itself was written prior to the mortgages of the Maureilhan lords, the confiscated properties due to the “betrayal” were within an episcopal district and were certainly in the bishop’s interest to maintain.

⁷⁷ Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69.

⁷⁸ See Bullaire de l’Église de Maguelone, eds. JULIEN ROUQUETTE – AUGUSTINE VILLEMAGNE, vol. 1 (1030–1216), Montpellier 1911, n. 38, pp. 57–58, and n. 43, p. 63; as well as Liber instrumentorum memorialium. Cartulaire des Guilhems de Montpellier, ed. ALEXANDRE GERMAIN, Montpellier 1884–1886, n. 5, pp. 35–36, and n. 11, pp. 41–42 respectively for the same letters (hereafter abbreviated ‘Cart. Montpellier’).

⁷⁹ See VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), p. 31, for his discussion on this peculiar similitude.

⁸⁰ Layettes du Trésor des Chartes, ed. ALEXANDRE TEULET, vol. 1, Paris 1863, n. 721, act 22, p. 257.

the more general traitor and thief, but also specifically to those guilty of breaking servile oaths (*malservus*). Taken with the other evidence of *proditio* from the papal letters concerning the rebellion of Montpellier, we begin to see a connection. What is more, in April 1180 Viscount Roger had an instrument written in which he formally returned the tabellion to the notary Bernard Cota – he and the bishop together had apparently confiscated the office *quando recuperavimus villam Biterris post prodicionem & mortem patris mei*⁸¹. The two events were thus distinct.

With the evidence reconsidered, a link between the *prodicionem Biterris* and the *proditor* himself rests on surer footing than Elaine Graham-Leigh thought, calling it speculative when pondering Petrus' treachery⁸². The crime of seigneurial murder, nevertheless, cannot be substantiated. It is certain regarding the events in Béziers that written records, now lost, once recorded the properties and rights confiscated in the aftermath of the revolt, as indicated by the settlement of Garsinde and Bishop Ermengaud's dispute in 1205. What is more, Viscount Roger himself had restored some of these properties, at least to Richer's heirs and the once-punished Bernard Cota, as we have seen. While the term *proditor* by itself may speak of a multitude of potential crimes, through the association of the related *proditio*, itself appearing repeatedly in the 'Livre Noir' in connection to the same individuals (the Maureilhan lords Arnaud and Raymond), one discovers that the confiscated properties were associated to rents and inheritance fees – the kinds of payments and services those with full ownership would not make⁸³. If one reads the Latin of these documents to indicate the collection of these fees were precisely the privileges confiscated because of the betrayal, thereby suggesting a lord had held them, it is important to note that Richer, a burgher himself (as will be shown below), was said to have held very similar rights in the district through Arnaud of Maureilhan's mortgage.

By accepting Petrus Vairatus' offence as connected to the Revolt of 1167 rather than the murder of Raymond Trencavel, the time lapse of thirteen years between the

⁸¹ Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 42, col. 348–350; or Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, fol. 274r. See HÉLÈNE DÉBAX, Les premiers notaires de Béziers (dernier tiers du XII^e siècle), in: Revue historique 683, 2017, pp. 491–513, esp. pp. 496–499 for a discussion on the culpability of the notariate (Bernard Cota) in the revolt, and an analysis of this charter itself.

⁸² GRAHAM-LEIGH, Justifying Deaths (as note 31), p. 299.

⁸³ See DÉBAX, La féodalité languedocienne (as note 1), pp. 174–176, for a brief overview of the *fief à acapte* and its related terms such as *foriscapia*; ELISABETH MAGNOU-NORTIER, La société laïque et l'Église dans la province ecclésiastique de Narbonne (zone cypyrénienne) de la fin du X^e à la fin du XI^e siècle, Toulouse 1974, pp. 136–140, for a general discussion on peasant obligations during the tenth through twelfth centuries; HUBERT RICHARDOT, Le fief roturier à Toulouse aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles, in: Revue historique de droit français et étranger 14, 1935, pp. 307–359 for its examination of the common fief and property holding in the Toulousain, as well as the more recent study by MAURICE BERTHE, Le droit d'entrée dans le bail à fief et le bail à acapte du Midi de la France (XII^e–XV^e siècle), in: PIERRE BONNASSIE – HÉLÈNE DÉBAX – BENOÎT CURSENTE (eds.), Fiefs et féodalité dans l'Europe méridionale, Toulouse 2002, pp. 237–278.

from Saint-Nazaire's records in 1167⁸⁸. A year before the revolt, Gregory dictated an act to his brother Bremond which bore certain socially sensitive material: a Petrus "Nairatus *de Tripol*" – perhaps the 'traitor', or another of his family differentiated by the toponym – and other commoners witnessed a mortgage of a fief alongside William of Béziers the *miles*⁸⁹. The plural form also appeared in what Duhamel-Amado characterized as the lifting of *acaptum* restrictions: the mortgaged property could be alienated *tam sanctis quam clericis sive militibus* as opposed to specifically prohibiting knights and clerics. Though all of the principal actors in this mortgage came from aristocratic (i. e. noble) circles, invalidating its supposed impact on *acaptum* leases, what is interesting here is that of all such contracts written or dictated by Gregory – including one from a year following – the restrictive phrase includes rather the word *caballerius*. A difference of implied status is intimated here by the word choice, as well as a degree of experimentation in the Latin formulae used in property alienation when ultimate ownership was held by a third party. Gregory thus signified the elevated position of those laymen involved by using *miles* instead of his standard *caballerius*, likewise extending it to those whom the fief could be alienated⁹⁰. These details suggest that status and social position were stressed in the episcopal court on the eve of the Revolt in 1167. The promise made by Viscount Roger to Bishop Bernard in April 1180 never to make another decision concerning the tabellion of Béziers, nor to draw up public instruments without his approval also has relevance here. Perhaps, finally, to the bishop's delight, he secured a check against the viscount's reconciliatory ways which threatened his work in the Bourg of Maureilhan, even making the notary Bernard Cota "a tenant of his charge"⁹¹. Together, these revelations hint at tensions behind-the-scenes regarding the privileges these erstwhile traitors might have held.

⁸⁸ See Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 185, p. 250, for reference to Gregory's status as a *scriba publici*. For his final act, see n. 220, pp. 301–302. This act was dictated to his brother Bremond nearly seven months before the assassination of Raymond Trencavel.

⁸⁹ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 216, pp. 296–298. As for the toponym "de Tripol", the meaning unfortunately escapes definition. In FRANK R. HAMLIN, *Toponymie de l'Hérault. Dictionnaire topographique et étymologique* (Études Héraultaises), Montpellier 2000, esp. p. 404, col. 1 (*Trébouls*), and p. 407, col. 1–2 (*le Triol*), these placenames may have etymological connections to the Occitan *trebol* ("disorder") or *trolhier/trolbaire* ("someone who presses") – perhaps implying, in the latter case, a connection to a mill or press. Another "Petrus *de Tripol*" appears as a witness in an *acaptum* lease of a field in Pinet, east of the Hérault, in 1207, perhaps suggesting a connection to the Agathois (see *Le cartulaire du chapitre cathédral Saint-Étienne d'Agde*, ed. RAYMONDE FOREVILLE, Paris 1994, n. 284, pp. 328–329). Further, according to ANTOINE SABARTHÈS, *Dictionnaire topographique du département de l'Aude*, Paris 1912, pp. 450–451, the Tréboul stream, which flows into the Fresquel before ultimately joining the Aude near Carcassonne, may point toward an origin outside of the Biterrois.

⁹⁰ See DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 1 (as note 2), pp. 145–147, esp. note 173, and pp. 318–319, for her reference to this mortgage, as well as her discussion on the association of the word *miles*, by 1170, with the nobility. See Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 219, pp. 299–300 for the *acaptum* restrictions in the act of 6 Feb. 1167 (*anno Nativitatis*): *exceptis caballeriis, et clericis* [...].

⁹¹ Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 39, col. 347; Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, fol. 270r. See DÉBAX, *Les premiers notaires de Béziers* (as note 81), p. 499 for the quote. Interestingly, in this view, the reconcilia-

Assuming that a seigneurial reconciliation can explain the time lapse between the revolt and his renewed exile in 1180, in light of these hints at social friction what can be said of Petrus Vairatus' status? His association with the landed nobility has remained a near constant in the historiography. Henri Vidal, Vincent Challet, and Henri Barthès have gone furthest in suggesting an alternative by associating Petrus and the Vairati family with other urban elites, like Bernard Bofat and Raymond *Ledderius*⁹². These associations, and their implications, are not clear, however. The Bofat family especially held elevated rights, managing privileged properties and collecting rents from tenants⁹³. Henri Barthès even indicated that Raymond *Ledderius* and his first wife Jordana had collected the *tasca* (annual proportional rent) and the *usatica* (annual fixed rent) from their *seniorium* (lordship) in Ortes along the Libron River near Boujan north of Béziers itself, rights and income which were ceded to Valmagne Abbey⁹⁴. While these families were all clearly associated, collecting rents such as these was a privilege that the Vairati themselves were never recorded as having.

THE VAIRATI: TENANT-LORDS?

Determining status of any individual during the twelfth century in the Midi is not always easy, often relying upon the services or fees that they owed or performed for the properties that they held – if it is not stated outright⁹⁵. While it is true that the Vairati were never recorded as having collected tenant rents, either in kind or coin, as their Bofat associates or Raymond *Ledderius* had, it is equally true that they are never recorded as having paid them either. Lacking these tell-tale signs and yet being certain of the wealth and connections of the family, many historians have felt assured of their elevated background. Hélène Débax and Claudie Duhamel-Amado have each made their own genealogical claims regarding the Vairati family. Curiously, their opinions do not align.

tion Débax saw between Roger II and Bernard in this act within the larger context of renewed hostilities with Toulouse appears rather as a great victory on the part of the episcopate (cf. *ibid.*, p. 498; and EAD., *La féodalité languedocienne* [as note 1], p. 93, note 487).

⁹² VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), pp. 27–29; CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 217–219; and BARTHEZ, *Autour de Béziers* (as note 52), p. 90. Also, see ALAN FRIEDLANDER, *Le premier sceau de juridiction gracieuse dans le Midi. Le 'Sigillum curie Biterris' (1233)*, in: *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 141, 1983, pp. 23–35, for more on the career of Bernard's son, the royal judge Aimeri Bofat.

⁹³ See, for example, Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 314, pp. 453–454; and n. 338, pp. 498–499 for properties held in or near the *Comba Grassa*, an area of grain cultivation near Béziers.

⁹⁴ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 301, fol. 93v. For Barthès' analysis of this act, see BARTHEZ, *Autour de Béziers* (as note 52), p. 91.

⁹⁵ For the wide use of the term *fevum/feudum* in Occitan sources, applicable to both aristocratic lands as well as small servile plots, see DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne* (as note 1), p. 147; RICHARDOT, *Le fief roturier* (as note 83), p. 317; and PAUL OURLIAC, *L'hommage servile dans la région toulousaine*, in: ID., *Études d'histoire du droit medieval*, Paris 1979, pp. 125–132 – originally published in: *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen*, Paris 1951, pp. 551–556.

Taken directly from the banishment charter, Débax believed Petrus was "linked to the family of Peter Raymond d'Hautpoul", as that long-time associate and vassal of the Trencavel lords had specifically sworn to uphold the exile ⁹⁶. His oath, nevertheless, was explicitly tied to Petrus' *proles*, not the traitor himself ⁹⁷. Equally as probable would be that Peter Raymond was operating as an agent of Bishop Bernard to ensure the decision was supported. Though his family was tied to the viscounts of Carcassonne for their lands in the Minervois, Peter Raymond himself had been a favorite in Viscountess Ermengard of Narbonne's court for his knowledge of the revived Roman law ⁹⁸. His presence for the banishment of the traitor from Béziers reads rather as a means of establishing the legal veracity of the expulsion of Petrus Vairatus' family and the confiscation of their properties.

For Duhamel-Amado, an association through a certain "Guillaume Nairat de Murviel" who signed a charter in the mid-1140s, and his supposed ancestor *Raimundus Abbo de Neirano*, proved plausible ⁹⁹. The sons of this Biterrois lord, and Raymond himself, had drawn the ire of the chapter of Saint-Nazaire in the late-eleventh century for their refusal to abandon the tithe of Saint-Félix de Tourreille, for which, Duhamel-Amado believed, the later redactors of the 'Livre Noir' had understood to be "bad men" for their connection to the 'traitor Nairat' ¹⁰⁰. Not only does a *Giraldus Nairatus* appear in the same witness list as that of the "Guillaume Nairat de Murviel," however, the latter's name is actually written *Willelmi Nerreti de Muro vetulo* in the 'Livre Noir' ¹⁰¹. While variant spellings of the same name made by the same scribe are frequent, perhaps the more relevant association here is that not only were *Giraldus* and *Willelmus* separated in the witness list but the name recorded just before *Giraldus*' was that of a *Bernardus Bonifatus*. Here, already in the 1140s, we see a connection between the Bofat and Vairati – a connection which would last at least into the 1180s.

In all, of the twenty-six occasions in which a member of the Vairati family appears in the written records (not including the two charters which label Petrus a *proditor*), twelve also indicate the presence of a member of the Bofat when the instrument was written ¹⁰². When one is not present, other urban elites are, like Raymond *Ledderius*

⁹⁶ DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne* (as note 1), p. 91, note 467.

⁹⁷ See note 40 above for the citation.

⁹⁸ See JEAN-PIERRE POLY, *Coheredes legum romanorum. La renaissance du droit romain dans le Midi de la France*, in: MANUEL J. PALÁEZ (ed.), *Historia del derecho privado*, Barcelona 1989, pp. 2909–2946, esp. pp. 2937–2938. Also, for an example of Peter Raymond of Hautpoul with Viscountess Ermengard of Narbonne, see Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 297, pp. 423–425.

⁹⁹ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 2 (as note 43), pp. 23–24, note 12–14, esp. note 13. For the charter, see Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 159, pp. 219–220.

¹⁰⁰ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 1 (as note 2), p. 311.

¹⁰¹ See note 99 above.

¹⁰² All underlined acts are those which feature a member of the Bofat and of the Vairati together. See Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 159, pp. 219–220; n. 189, pp. 254–255; n. 200, pp. 271–275; n. 216, pp. 294–296; n. 245, pp. 341–342; n. 255, pp. 356–358; n. 256, pp. 358–360; n. 275, pp. 390–391; n. 286, pp. 405–407;

already mentioned or the lesser-known *Ermengaudi*, *Escoa Lupi*, *Bedocii*, *Catalani*. etc. A powerful association such as this bears some consideration in determining the social background of these families. As stated above, the Bofat certainly had access to a privileged position, one which was persistent well into the thirteenth century¹⁰³. Yet, their status, too, is equally ambiguous: despite these heights, members of the Bofat family were linked to properties in which they did not have full ownership – properties for which tenant obligations were due (though they were not specified as having paid them)¹⁰⁴. Raymond *Ledderius* as well, despite having a *seniorium* as an allod from which he collected rents, was labelled as one of three *cives* chosen to represent the town's interests at the proclamation of Viscount Roger's shared rights with the bishop before the king of Aragon in 1185; the other two beside him were Bernard Bofat and Petrus Vairatus¹⁰⁵. To what degree were the Vairati in a similar position?

It is true, as Claudie Duhamel-Amado mentioned, that Petrus Vairatus himself, and a certain *Guiraudus Nairatus*, a presumed relative, were landowners in the Bourg of Maureilhan – the latter even owning an allod¹⁰⁶. That freehold property consisted of several manses adjoining a *solarium* which he offered as surety for the value of his vine-

n. 288, pp. 408–409; n. 295, pp. 419–420; n. 296, pp. 421–423; n. 298, pp. 425–429; n. 301, pp. 432–433; n. 318, pp. 461–463. Acts n. 256, 275, and 286 were all copied by Rouquette into his edition of the 'Livre Noir' from vol. 61 of the Collection Doat (respectively, they are: Doat [as note 4], vol. 61, n. 155, fols. 260r–264v; n. 159, fols. 272r–273v; n. 167, fols. 300r–302r). These later acts feature variant spellings of the surname, such as "Vairatus" and "Tairaci". Act n. 318, furthermore, was given a date of 3 Dec. 1193 by Rouquette, though this is not substantiated as half of the charter, copied erroneously, must predate act n. 295 (March 1184) – see note 107 below. Also considered were: Cart. Aniane (as note 87), n. 37, pp. 175–176; Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 257, col. 843–848; Gallia Christiana (as note 6), vol. 6, n. 19, col. 142–143; and Doat (as note 4), vol. 60, n. 6, fol. 17r–23v. The act of the 'Gallia Christiana' also appears in Doat (as note 4), vol. 61, n. 173, fols. 322r–325v – both bearing the same variant. Seven acts from both volumes of the 'Valmagne Cartulary' were also consulted: Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 289, fols. 90r–90v; n. 302, fols. 93v–94r; n. 303, fol. 94r; n. 306, 94v; and Montpellier, Archives départementales de l'Hérault, 9 H 38 (vol. 2), n. 730, fols. 146v–147r (hereafter 'Cart. Valmagne, vol. 2', followed by act and folio number); n. 759, fols. 158r–158v; n. 765, fols. 159v–160r.

¹⁰³ See note 93 above.

¹⁰⁴ See Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 307, pp. 442–443, in which brothers Raymond and William Peter Bofat required the permission and authority of the canons of Saint-Nazaire, the lords of the property, to donate their mill at Saint-Pierre-du-Bosc to William of Artitz and his wife Ermengard of Concors.

¹⁰⁵ See VIDAL, La coutume de Béziers (as note 6), pp. 27–29, and CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls (as note 2), pp. 217–219 in which they both made the connection between Petrus Vairatus recorded in the customary of Béziers (Gallia Christiana [as note 6], vol. 6, n. 19, col. 142–143) and Petrus "Nairatus" the *proditor*, as well as the traitor's association with Bernard Bofat and Raymond *Ledderius*. The three men also featured as trustworthy agents who were given full authority to ensure the collection of a 700 sol. debt by a certain Raymond Guirald, himself the *procurator* for the property owners. For the series of acts, see Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 289, fols. 90r–90v, and n. 290, fol. 90v.

¹⁰⁶ DUHAMEL-AMADO, Genèse des lignages méridionaux, vol. 2 (as note 43), p. 23, note 12.

yard sold in *Pelignanum* to the canon Peter of Saint-Nazaire sometime around 1184¹⁰⁷. While *solaria*, or raised homes, akin to the patrician towers of medieval Italian cities, were dwellings of the influential, they are not inherently associated with one class of elite over another. In fact, they were so ubiquitous in the urban environment of High Medieval Occitania that the term itself disappeared throughout the course of the twelfth century; they were symbols of wealth and status, to be sure, but not restricted to lords or knights, lacking any militaristic character whatsoever¹⁰⁸. More important to the discussion here regarding that sale, and another of the same property shared between brothers, is the inclusion of the Latin phrase *salvo jure seniorum* when detailing the extent of the rights conferred¹⁰⁹. While no rents or fees are mentioned as being paid or owed, neither Guiraud nor his brother (a certain Raymond) held their portions of the vineyard within their full authority¹¹⁰. That distinction was held by another: the canons of Saint-Nazaire. Owning or having access to different properties held under different circumstances (one field held as an allod, and another as a fief – or even tenancy – for example) is of course common; not having full ownership of their father's vineyard did not prevent Guiraud from holding an allod in the city. Yet it does suggest the potential, at the very least, for a lower status – definitive evidence for which is perhaps available in the Vairati genealogy.

THE VILLA DE VAIRACO

Beyond the borders of the coastal Biterrois, across the Hérault River into the neighboring Agathois, records from the small *villa de Vairaco* within the 'Valmagne Cartulary' could provide a potential origin for the family surname. Much like the Cistercian abbey itself, the grange of Veyrac was a neighboring rural settlement just north of where the ancient *via Domitia* had crossed the Marinesque stream by a small bridge – evidently still in use during this period¹¹¹. Based upon the compounding spiritual donations to the newly founded abbey from 1139 onward, first built in the neighboring *territoria de*

¹⁰⁷ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 318, pp. 461–463. This charter features a copyist error in which two separate instruments were written together; the second, that of Guiraud's sale, must predate another charter (n. 295, pp. 419–420) in which a *Raimundus Nairatus*, Guiraud's brother, sold a portion of the same vineyard to Peter of Saint-Nazaire as reference to the former is made in the later. Cf. DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 2 (as note 43), p. 23, note 12, for her own, similar conclusion; and also, cf. REY, *Sur le 'Livre Noir'* (as note 48), pp. 21–22, for his contention that the mistake was made by Pompeati.

¹⁰⁸ BOURIN-DERRUAU, *Villages médiévaux*, vol. 1 (as note 7), p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ For mention of the Latin phrase *salvo jure seniorum* and its association with issues of property use and ownership between tenants and lords, see LLUIS TO FIGUERAS, *La seigneurie dans une ville médiévale. Le développement de l'emphytéose à Gérone au XII^e siècle*, in: PHILIPPE SÉNAC (ed.), *Histoire et archéologie des terres catalanes au moyen âge*, Perpignan 1995, pp. 229–251.

¹¹⁰ See Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 295, pp. 419–420; and n. 318, pp. 461–463.

¹¹¹ IOURI BERMOND et al., *Marinesque (Loupian, Hérault). Un relais routier sur la voie Domitienne*, in: *Gallia* 73, 2016, pp. 41–69.

Tortoreria (later moved to *Creis*)¹¹², this area can best be defined as a border zone where competing interests from local notables were at work. The lords of Montpellier, the viscounts of both Béziers and Agde, as well as the bishops of those cities, were all, occasionally, involved to greater or lesser degrees in activities of the monks, bestowing upon them and other local notables extensive rights and properties. And yet, not all donations came from such powerful individuals. While certain, less-eminant donors had vested interests in Montpellier¹¹³, more than a few landowning families with properties or interests in the *villa* shared surnames with known burghers of Béziers – like the *Bedocii*¹¹⁴, the *Ermengaudi*¹¹⁵, and even the *de Prades*¹¹⁶, whose member Arnaud, the husband of Garsinde, daughter of the disenfranchised Richer, has already been mentioned. Another local family with significant properties in the area even took the town's name as their own, the *de Vairaco*.

Beginning in the Spring of 1182 with a certain Ermengard of Veyrac, a series of donations and sales lasting throughout that year heavily invested the abbey with lucrative properties throughout the future grange, not least of which was the town mill¹¹⁷. Shared between four individuals (only for two of whom is it clear that they were siblings)¹¹⁸, the family had undoubtedly been one of the most ardent local supporters of the abbot and his monks – two of those mill donors, Peter and *Genesisius*, had both become *conversi* in the process of their donations¹¹⁹. The fourth part had been owned by a certain Agnes, wife of Peter *Blanchus* (occasionally translated as *Albus*), who sold her portion of the mill for 150 sol. at the end of that year, though she would make a considerable windfall from the monks when she sold all of her rights to the *honor de Vairaco* two years later in a period of her great need following her husband's likely death and to support her daughter Beliardis' wedding¹²⁰. Most crucial, however, were

¹¹² See DIDIER PANFILI, *Domus, grangia, honor et les autres. Désigner les poles cisterciens en Languedoc et Gascogne orientale (1130–1220)*, in: *Le Moyen Âge* 123, 2017, pp. 311–338, esp. p. 326 for the contention that the abbey had been relocated to the nearby grange around 1169, integrating the previous site into the abbatial territory itself.

¹¹³ See, for example, Cart. Valmagne, vol. 2 (as note 102), n. 772, fols. 166v–167r, the sale by the daughters (Maria and Guillelma) of Guirald Atbrand, the *bainulus* of Montpellier, of their father's *honor* in the parish of Saint-Félix of Veyrac in *Tortoreria*.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 398, fols. 128v–129r.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 405, fols. 131r–131v.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 408, fols. 132v–133r.

¹¹⁷ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 361, fols. 116v–117r.

¹¹⁸ See Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 356, fols. 114v–115r, Genesisius of Veyrac's donation of 1182, in which he named Agnes as his sister. The portion held by Girald *Malfabrier* is identified in another act as the husband of Ermengard of Veyrac, the earliest quantifiable donation of the mill (see note 117 above).

¹¹⁹ See Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 354, fols. 113r–114r, and n. 356, fols. 114v–115r, respectively for their donations.

¹²⁰ See Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 358, fols. 115v–116r for the sale of her portion of the mill; and n. 360, fol. 116v for her sale of her honor for 800 sol. *propter magnam meam et evidentem necessitate* of which 500 were used for her daughter's wedding. In the second act, and a third which confirmed the

the terms under which the *honor* was sold: Agnes would receive yearly ten sétiers of grain (a mixture of wheat and barley) and an additional ten sétiers of *vina puri* from the abbot for the rest of her life. Despite what amounted to a life annuity, Agnes and her children were said to hold the *honor* from the monastery *ad usaticum* and that they had done *hominium* for the privilege. Clearly, they were valued tenants.

The *de Vairaco* family had been locally influential as well for at least a generation prior. A certain Andreas of Veyrac and his brother William had been among the witnesses of the initial donation by William Frezol and his wife Ermessende, a seigneurial family originating from Cabrières, in March 1139 (1138) to the monastery of Ardorel of their land in *Tortoreria* specifically for building a church of their order at a place called *Vallis Magne*¹²¹. Andreas and his brother had also been tasked, evidently on more than one occasion, to reveal the total dimensions of the new abbey's lands in the area¹²²; their assessment had been consistently referenced at least until the mid-1150s¹²³. They were a family of considerable means, to be sure. As part of his final donation of his portion of the mill before being welcomed as a lay brother, Peter of Veyrac had included (among many rural properties throughout the *villa*) his portion of a house in Montpellier from which he collected six d. as an *usaticum* from Berengar of Palas and his mother¹²⁴. Despite their wealth, Peter, his relatives *Genesisius* and Peter the White (*Blanchus*), together with a Gerald Bedos, had still owed hospitality services for thirteen knights (*alberc entier*) to the Cistercians – a service, which others have shown, was a legal sign of dependency¹²⁵.

These tenants of Veyrac with a degree of seigneurial authority (i. e. 'tenant-lords') evidently match the ambiguous social status of the Vairati family of Béziers and their associates. But does the similarity of their surnames necessarily imply a connection beyond a reasonable doubt? Of course, without specific evidence, a definitive answer is lacking; though, several aspects lend a degree of support for such a contention. Scribal

exchange four years later (n. 359, fol. 116r), Agnes is called *uxor quondam Petri Blanchi de Vairaco*, suggesting her husband's death between March 1182 and March 1184.

¹²¹ See Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 81, fols. 25v–26r; and n. 82, fol. 26r. For the history of the Abbey of Valmagne, see BARTHÈS, *Le cartulaire* (as note 53), pp. 299–302.

¹²² Andreas of Veyrac had revealed the boundaries of *Tortoreria* at least on two occasions: Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 80, fols. 25r–25v (1148); and Cart. Valmagne, vol. 2 (as note 102), n. 768, fol. 165r (1138). For the tradition of notable peasant families measuring plots of land, see BOURIN-DERRUAU, *Villages médiévaux*, vol. 1 (as note 7), p. 260.

¹²³ For example, dating to 1155, see Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 88, fols. 27r–27v.

¹²⁴ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 354, fols. 113r–114r.

¹²⁵ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 398, fols. 128v–129r. Considering the familial ties between three of the four men, does Gerald Bedos' inclusion here belie a similar connection? For more on the *albergum* and other dues owed by serfs, see CHEYETTE, Ermengard of Narbonne (as note 1), p. 151. For more on twelfth-century Cistercian leasing, a supposedly forbidden source of income, see DEREK R. BENSON, *From the Fruits of Tenant Labour. Agricultural Rents and Cistercian Leasing in the Region of Narbonne (Twelfth Century)*, in: *Mutations en Méditerranée 2*, 2024, online (last accessed 09/01/2025) <https://www.revue-mem.com/411?lang=en>.

variations cannot be discredited, especially when considering the different contexts for the production of these records. These were not disconnected communities, as we have seen; but an individual notary or scribe's unfamiliarity with a foreign family might have affected the rendering of their names on parchment. The influence of vernacular on Latin conventions within the minds of the scribes who wrote the charters of this period have been investigated by linguists and historians alike ¹²⁶. While a general hallmark of Medieval Latin may be the use of prepositional phrases to convey the grammatical function of a more rigid case system in the classical period (i.e. *de Vairaco* as opposed to the genitive *Vairaci*), declensions within the vernacular languages of modern France themselves have been shown to have had considerable variation in their use and were highly independent of Latin grammatical standards of the time ¹²⁷. How all of this may have affected individual scribes when recording placenames of course necessitates a nuanced analysis, not least when considering the morphology of toponymic surnames, themselves subject to inconsistencies. Case usage aside, the articulation of Occitan toponyms derived from the Latin *-acum* suffix (of Gallo-Roman origin designating the people of a given individual, in this case "the people of *Varius*" ¹²⁸) have led to orthographic confusion within certain dialects of Old Occitan where the postvocalic /k/ and /t/ became muted ¹²⁹. When pronunciation evolved, rendering *-ac* and *-at* endings similar, variants naturally could follow.

Even within charters produced for the *de Vairaco* family themselves regarding their properties near the mill, variations occur. A certain *Guilelma Vairaga* sold with her sister and her children a garden attached to the dike of the mill – chief among the witnesses of this act were *Genesius* and Peter of Veyrac ¹³⁰. Though undated, a partial *censier* labelled a Guirald of Vairag as one of the laborers of the viscountess of Béziers within the cartulary composed for the Trencavel lords ¹³¹. Indeed, one of the earliest

¹²⁶ For a useful discussion of the linguistic arguments concerning the appearance of Old Occitan in the charters of Languedoc starting in the tenth century, see JÉRÔME BELMON – FRANÇOISE VIELLIARD, *Latin farci et occitan dans les actes du XI^e siècle*, in: Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes 155, 1997, pp. 149–183. For a recent interpretation of the function of vernacular in diplomatic sources, see DÉBAX, *La voix des vassaux* (as note 87), pp. 113–126.

¹²⁷ For a general discussion of the evolving case system in Old Occitan, see WILLIAM D. PADEN, *An Introduction to Old Occitan*, New York 1998, pp. 287–289. For an analysis of the variation of vernacular case morphology in comparison to Latin, see LENE SCHØSLER, *How Useful is Case Morphology? From Latin to French*, in: ANNE CARLIER – CÉLINE GUILLOT-BARBANCE (eds.), *Latin tardif, français ancien. Continuités et ruptures* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 420), Berlin – Boston 2018, pp. 127–161, esp. 153–155.

¹²⁸ HAMLIN, *Toponymie de l'Hérault* (as note 89), p. 423, col. 2.

¹²⁹ For an example from Pessat-Villeneuve in Auvergne, see JEAN-PIERRE CHAMBON – EMMANUEL GRÉLOIS – BERNARD CLÉMENÇON, *Notes de toponymie auvergnate* (III), in: *Nouvelle revue d'onomas-tique* 55, 2013, pp. 167–189, esp. p. 175; as well as more generally EMMANUEL GRÉLOIS – JEAN-PIERRE CHAMBON, *Les noms de lieux antiques et tardo-antiques d'Augustonemetum/Clermont-Ferrand. Étude de linguistique historique*, Strasbourg 2008, pp. 172–173.

¹³⁰ *Cart. Valmagne*, vol. 1 (as note 84), n. 365, fol. 118v.

¹³¹ Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Société Archéologique de Montpellier, MS 10, n. 467, fol. 181v.

recordings of the town itself can be found with this same spelling: *villa Vairago*¹³². Of the known given names of the Vairati, furthermore, the most common (Peter and Guiraud/Gerald) number among those used by the *de Vairaco*. Peter of Veyrac and Petrus Vairatus the 'Traitor' in this light might even appear to be the same man; while they were contemporaries, this is impossible considering the former's donation in 1182. The introduction of the Vairati into Béziers would necessarily have had to occur at least a generation earlier. Recall from above the presence of Guiraud *Nairati* beside Bernard *Bonifati* in the mid-1140s¹³³. In a charter from 1133 detailing the exchange of properties between Saint-Nazaire and Saint-Étienne recorded in the 'Cartulary of the Bishopric of Agde', interestingly we can also find among the witnesses assembled by both bishops a Bernard *Bonfati* together with a William of Veyrac¹³⁴.

A REBELLION OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE

If the Vairati were connected to the *de Vairaco*, or even simply to the *villa* in the Agathois rather than the *castrum* Neyran or the Hautpoul family suggested by Duhamel-Amado and Débax respectively, a division tantamount to a common origin rather than aristocratic, what does the difference actually entail? In other words, if the Vairati were rich and influential landowners in Béziers during and after the death of Viscount Raymond in 1167, operating in a clearly privileged manner, does the exact nature of their status truly make a difference? By consulting the sources left with which the above is based, the answer to this question is frustratingly ambiguous.

Status mattered, surely, on a social level. The ability to be seen by others (and recorded) wielding influence and power counted as much, if not more, than the right to do so. We see, from the aftermath of this one event, 'commoners' (both urban and rural) exerting such influence. Richer had collected seigneurial fees in the Bourg of Maureilhan through mortgage, suggesting the lord who leveraged those rights, Arnaud of Maureilhan, was not concerned about doing so with someone who might, conceivably, be considered beneath him on the social spectrum. Peter of Veyrac, despite owing services of his own, collected monetary rents from tenants in Montpellier. Such a situation of course was not unique. More remarkable yet, however, the *de Vairaco* family had enough familiarity with the Cistercians of Valmagne that Agnes, Peter's relative, received payments of grain and wine from the monks following the sale of an *honor* held from the abbey. To what extent can these disparities in the social order, as defined by *acaptum* contracts in which social divisions are stressed, be interpreted as an effort on the part of the 'tenant-lord' to insert themselves into aristocratic society? Or were these situations possible simply because reality was less rigid than customary practices entailed, suggesting those involved did not doubt nor object to their blended

¹³² Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 5, n. 150, col. 318 (dated 990).

¹³³ See note 99 above.

¹³⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 9999, n. 31, fols. 40r–41r.

social status? These actions suggest, however, that a division itself was fundamental, one which was echoed in the ecclesiastic narratives of Newburgh, Breuil, and Torigni – the collective *cives* or *burgenses* had killed the viscount and took control of the city, not specifically the knights or landed nobility. As seen time and time again in the cartulary evidence, in which rights and privileges were meticulously recorded, many of the Vairati and their peers are seen in both worlds, suggesting that these differences were apparent to all but more strongly felt in ecclesiastic circles (not to mention foreign chroniclers). It becomes clear that while the boundary between these social strata was real enough it was not entirely impermeable. This in fact points to a theme which has not been emphasized regarding these events previously: How might these ‘tenant-lords’ – separated from those who held real power in the city regarding legal practices while simultaneously operating within these circles in practical experience – exert their influence upon their society? To what means might they be compelled in the face of regimented social structures imposed by at least one of the co-lords of the city – say, to communal rebellion? Considering these questions, let us return to William of Newburgh’s ‘*Historia rerum anglicarum*’.

It was the interaction of a townsman and a knight which initiated the murder of the viscount and the revolt of the city. While the account in the ‘*Historia*’ is full when compared to others like Breuil’s ‘*Chronica*’ or Torigni’s, little is given about the specifics which transpired between that man and the knight. It is clear that the theft of the knight’s warhorse and its subsequent reuse as a pack animal was a major insult, and the punishment and debasement of the townsman at the hands of the knights – leaving him *sine honore* – was more than he or his fellows could bear. Nothing more is given. Vincent Challet has suggested that physical punishment for his crimes might have infringed newly won franchises by the townspeople of the city for which pecuniary fines ought to have been levied. It was indeed in the struggle to establish a consulate that Challet placed the context of the revolt; perhaps this could explain the severe response of initiating a murderous conspiracy to deprive the Trencavel family of their city¹³⁵. This could have been a factor in the slight felt by the townspeople of Béziers, a broken promise by their lord which had been written on parchment. But what of the symbolism of the events themselves?

The theft of a horse from a knight by a commoner, one of the very symbols of knighthood itself, allowed that man to exist simultaneously in two roles, emphasized again by the use of that horse in assisting the baggage train. In a period in which it has been argued that social meaning, and lordship itself, was in part derived from the public spectacle of the exercise and use of property and rights, this scene was equally unacceptable by the viscount’s knights, evidently sympathetic to Raymond himself, and grounds enough for the whole community to revolt when one of their own was maligned¹³⁶. What is more, it is clear from the diplomatic evidence that the only in-

¹³⁵ CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls (as note 2), pp. 209–210.

¹³⁶ CHEYETTE, Ermengard of Narbonne (as note 1), pp. 128 and 203.

dividuals implicated in the crime itself from the multitude of the townspeople who had revolted in 1167, a certain Richer and Petrus Vairatus the 'Traitor', were similarly operating in dual roles of commoner and lord.

As discussed above, it was recorded in the charter of 1172 in which Petrus was first labelled a traitor that he had held a manse and an oven in the city which had belonged to the bishop and were confiscated. Undoubtedly, it was in connection to this oven that the Vairati had made some of their wealth – and perhaps, even distantly, from the mill in Veyrac. Interestingly enough, the other implicated man, Richer, not only had held seigneurial fees in the Bourg of Maureilhan through mortgage from Arnaud of Maureilhan but had owned and operated yet another mill south of town in Saint-Pierre-du-Bosc, one which the canons had confiscated from his daughter and her husband in 1191 because they had left it derelict *longo tempore*¹³⁷. This mill was likely not among the confiscated properties captured by the bishop following the revolt itself as not only was it well south of town and outside the district associated with the known confiscated properties, but it was also over twenty years since the revolt itself. Perhaps Garsinde and her husband had been unable to maintain the mill due to the financial difficulty stemming from the punishment of her father's crimes. Her husband Arnaud had sold to the abbot and monks of Valmagne Abbey a manse he had held in the district *extra portale* in March 1181 for 300 sol. in which Petrus Vairatus appeared as a witness; though, evidently, Garsinde was still attempting to improve her situation nearly fifteen years later when she reached a settlement with Bishop Ermengaud regarding her father's once-claimed seigneurial rights¹³⁸. As her mill had been confiscated, nevertheless, held under the condition of its profitability and given to new tenants by the canons (who were similarly obligated to maintain the property), her family's status is equally tied to tenancy¹³⁹. In this light, the Bourg of Maureilhan appears as a district rife with the emergent burghers who used their wealth to bridge the social divide, and whose properties were targeted by established power structures following the revolt. As questions of status implied by Latin vocabulary regarding the provisions behind the evolving conceptions of property ownership in this period suggest, as indicated above in Gregory's charters, the extent of these developments and their effects upon society are telling.

These themes have been lost by the repetition of the more accepted version of the events promulgated by Breuil's 'Chronica', that of Count Raymond V of Toulouse's meddling, which was in part supported by Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay in his 'Hystoria Albigensis'. The context of the 'grande guerre méridionale' as well as the enmity between Viscount Raymond Trencavel and Count Raymond V of Toulouse, surely influenced the events of 1167, if not simply because of the exactions placed upon the city to support his nephew, implied by Breuil. The Revolt of Béziers itself did not exist

¹³⁷ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 313, pp. 451–453.

¹³⁸ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 2 (as note 102), n. 759, fols. 158r–158v.

¹³⁹ Cart. Béziers (as note 14), n. 313, p. 452.

in isolation; three other twelfth-century Occitan cities experienced similar moments, that of Carcassonne (1107, 1112, 1120), Lavaur (1139), and Montpellier (1141)¹⁴⁰. Political reasons rooted in these well-attested facts offer a compelling solution when the social conflict attested by a foreign commentator is questioned. And yet, even in Breuil's 'Chronica' the townspeople are given more of the blame than the count of Toulouse in that the original conspiracy stopped short of seigneurial murder¹⁴¹.

Certainly, the account of William of Newburgh ought not to be placed above all others without due consideration – the geographic and temporal separation of William from events related to his *Willelmus Trenchaveil* are enough to give one pause. The material he used in constructing the narrative, nevertheless, may have come from a much closer source: Elaine Graham-Leigh believed Newburgh's misspelling belied a connection to the Aragonese allies of his King Henry II – a similar misidentification was made in the inquiry produced to support King Alfonso's claims to the city of Carcassonne c. 1175¹⁴². Interestingly, the same error was also made in Torigni's 'Chronica', identifying Raymond as *Guillelmum Trencheneil*¹⁴³. Direct use of this text by Newburgh is dubious as other erroneous details – like the death of Raymond's infant son – were not repeated; though perhaps it speaks to a similar, Angevin distortion¹⁴⁴. William's preoccupation with the divisions of the secular world, however, certainly explains his narrative of a personal struggle between knight and townsman – the references to subverted roles involving the use of a warhorse most of all.

According to Nancy F. Partner, "[i]n general, an unspecified code of feudal, chivalric behavior with some deference to religion is the tacit standard for William's judgement of conduct in the lay, secular world which, he usually assumes, is aristocratic and agrarian."¹⁴⁵ His view of towns and their vigorous activity, Partner went on to

¹⁴⁰ DÉBAX, La féodalité languedocienne (as note 1), pp. 80–81 and 87. For more on the revolt of Montpellier between 1141–1143, see JEAN BAUMEL, Histoire d'une seigneurie du Midi de la France, vol. 1: Naissance de Montpellier (985–1213), Montpellier 1969, pp. 129–138; PIERRE CHASTANG, La ville, le gouvernement et l'écrit à Montpellier (XII^e–XIV^e siècle). Essai d'histoire sociale, Paris 2013, pp. 30–40, and 48–49; and, summarily in comparison to the events in Béziers, CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls? (as note 2), p. 213.

¹⁴¹ See note 27 above.

¹⁴² GRAHAM-LEIGH, Justifying Deaths (as note 31), pp. 297–298. For the inquiry, see Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 5, n. 6, col. 31–33; as well as the analysis in FREDRIC L. CHEYETTE, The "Sale" of Carcassonne to the Counts of Barcelona (1067–1070) and the Rise of the Trencavels, in: Speculum 63, 1988, pp. 826–864, esp. pp. 863–864.

¹⁴³ Torigni, Chronica (as note 25), [1169], p. 278. On *ibid.*, p. liii, Thomas Bisson reflected that Torigni's own source for the original material in his 'Chronica' after 1146 is difficult to determine, though his Norman contacts in the Mediterranean (and the popularity of Le Mont Saint-Michel for pilgrims) may well have brought news of this tale to Normandy.

¹⁴⁴ See note 25 above.

¹⁴⁵ NANCY F. PARTNER, Serious Entertainments. The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England, Chicago (IL) 1977, pp. 51–140 for a long discussion of William of Newburgh and his writings, esp. p. 111 for the quote.

discuss, was one generally of uncertainty if not suspicion. The rebellion was treated unfavorably by William not because of his innate support of the wealthy, but rather due to his suspicion of the "upstart, wrongheaded, violent urban men who had no respect for the inevitable patterns of an orderly society", who instigated the revolt¹⁴⁶. Yet, the involvement of the burghers in a plot of some kind was corroborated by other chroniclers, as we have seen. Equally as plausible, then, might be that William found in Raymond Trencavel's murder an event which seemed to confirm his social biases, a sentiment, perhaps, at least in a pragmatic sense, shared by Bishop Bernard who himself was insistent on the continued success of his aims in the Bourg of Maureilhan in suppressing burgher properties (despite the unabated communal support for the *proditor* himself). Details about Roger's revenge upon the citizens of Béziers in all of the narrative sources, furthermore, appear not to be true in so far as the cartulary evidence suggests. Rather than indiscriminately kill the population of a whole quarter of the city, Roger seems to have been reconciled with some of the very individuals involved in the revolt itself. The question is why?

This may point, oddly enough, toward yet another aspect of Newburgh's account which was not fully supported by other chroniclers: Roger's delay in seeking his revenge. In the '*Historia rerum anglicarum*', it is mentioned that Roger was not moved to seek retribution immediately following the revolt once he and the bishop were reinstated in the city, sometime near the end of 1169 or early 1170¹⁴⁷. A nameless nobleman in Roger's court, however, suggested (perhaps in jest) that the new viscount was reluctant to retaliate because he had gained everything from his father's murder; forced to act, Roger conspired for an army of his Aragonese allies to storm the city and settle the confiscated properties¹⁴⁸. Breuil claimed that in 1168, a year after he believed the city was retaken, Roger feigned to march on an enemy, sending his own army instead into the city to hang the perpetrators along with some notables¹⁴⁹. Both Newburgh and Breuil relate an element of secrecy in the events, how Roger waited until the opportune moment to strike. To Torigni, however, his revenge followed immediately upon recovering the city in 1169, where all the men and women were killed by hanging and other means, allowing others to repopulate Béziers¹⁵⁰. Largely combining the accounts of Newburgh and Breuil, Dom Devic and Vaissete stated that Roger's invitation of the Aragonese into the city under the faulty pretense of shelter on their way through the city occurred the following year after his reinstatement, near the end of

¹⁴⁶ PARTNER, *Serious Entertainments* (as note 145), pp. 111–114.

¹⁴⁷ For the most precise date of Roger's return into the city (reference in a charter dated: *Actum anno 1170, paucis diebus antequam Rogerus ope Alphonso regis Aragonum comitis Barcinonensis recuperasset civitatem Biterrarum, quam parricidae parentis diu detinuerant, illo ac prasule in urbem ingressis*), see Gallia Christiana (as note 6), vol. 6, col. 319.

¹⁴⁸ Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum* (as note 22), bk. 2, ch. 11, p. 129.

¹⁴⁹ Breuil, *Chronica* (as note 25), bk. 1, ch. 63, par. 2, p. 69 (French translation on p. 204).

¹⁵⁰ Torigni, *Chronica* (as note 25), [1169], pp. 278–279.

1169¹⁵¹. Henri Vidal himself wondered if the favorable obligations for asylum seekers (not restricted to churches) and to foreign residents (freed from servility) recorded in the urban customary of 1185 were not in fact attempts to encourage resettlement following the reported horrors of Roger's revenge¹⁵². To Louis Noguier, the viscount's preoccupation with the count of Toulouse, stemming from his own association with Barcelona, explained his delay; though, we are told, "Roger never forgot the murder of his father" and retaliation was his first priority¹⁵³.

Though the 'Livre Noir' makes no reference to the 'revenge' other than allusions to confiscated properties (and, considering the ecclesiastic origin of the cartulary, it should come as no surprise that these properties and rights primarily aggrandized the bishop or chapter), perhaps Roger's recorded leniency toward Garsinde, or the inferred leniency toward Petrus Vairatus, may indicate some truth behind Newburgh's claim that the new viscount himself was reluctant to move against at least some of the perpetrators. Considering what has been suggested about the Trencavel authority over the urban elites of Béziers in establishing a consulate as well as maintaining control over the assemblies of *boni homines*, there appears here to be a link in the struggle for dominance between the two leading powers of the city¹⁵⁴. Who better to support in that struggle against the bishop than one of the prominent (if not rebellious) tenants of his district, Petrus Vairatus, who himself, and his family, were influential not only in the episcopal court but also among the community of burghers in the Bourg of Maureilhan?

CONCLUSION

Bishop Bernard's insistence on the continued banishment of Petrus Vairatus the *proditor*, as well as his shared authority over the reformed notariate of the city – both documented in 1180 – was in part to secure control over the Bourg of Maureilhan and influence over all public instruments, as others have suggested¹⁵⁵. Yet, in the light of the cartulary evidence discussed above concerning the seigneurial privileges held by these dual status, 'common' families, like those of the Vairati and Bofat, the ecclesiastical confiscation of at least a portion of them appear targeted toward these rising elites as

¹⁵¹ See Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 6, ch. 27, p. 32, and 34, p. 38–39 for the siege of Béziers and the reinstatement of Roger in the city in 1168, as well as Roger's revenge on the population the following year.

¹⁵² VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), p. 31.

¹⁵³ NOGUIER, *Les vicomtes de Béziers* (as note 21), pp. 305–306, esp. p. 306 for the quote.

¹⁵⁴ See CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 211–212 and 217–220; and DÉBAX, *Proconsuls et consuls* (as note 18), pp. 107–123, esp. pp. 121–122. For support of this theory, firmly tying Raymond's murder to the struggle for an urban consulate, see VERGOS, *Les Guilhem de Montpellier et leur entourage urbain* (as note 11), par. 6.

¹⁵⁵ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *Genèse des lignages méridionaux*, vol. 1 (as note 2), pp. 208–210; and DÉBAX, *La féodalité languedocienne* (as note 1), pp. 90–91.

a means of limiting their influence principally in areas within Saint-Nazaire's control. After all, of the confiscated properties later mortgaged by the Maureilhan lords, only the seigneurial rights were maintained, rights returned to them *propter prodicionem*. Social order regarding these lands, it would seem, had been restored – an effort perhaps akin to Lord Guilhem V of Montpellier's insistence on class divisions following the union of the Aimon and Faidit families in the early twelfth century¹⁵⁶.

It is true, nevertheless, that we know of these efforts only from ecclesiastical sources, perhaps imparting a one-sided view of this struggle. Not all of these elite burghers, for instance, appear to have been implicated in the plot of 1167, such as the Bofat themselves. While the collective, communal action on the part of the *cives*, as described at least in part by all narrative accounts of the revolt, lends support to the idea of a battle to wrest control over civic administration by a nascent consulate – itself in dispute within the historiography – in light of the diplomatic evidence in which only two individuals are implicated in the crime (and curiously only those subject to seigneurial clemency), perhaps it is of no coincidence that they were subjects of the bishop's district¹⁵⁷. Little can be said about the districts controlled by the viscount – the bourgs of Nissan, Lespinan, and of La Salvetat – as written evidence is sparse, but considering their shared access to the old market and the 'French Road', the artisanal and commercial center of the city, they surely were not devoid of wealthy tradesmen, money lenders, and merchants¹⁵⁸. These sources indicate the willingness of Viscount Roger to support at least some of the individuals involved in the communal plot, suggesting that these reconciliatory patterns, perplexing considering the crime, belie a degree of usefulness on the part of Garsinde or Petrus Vairatus to the viscount despite their implication in the dispossession of his patrimony and indirect involvement in the death of his father. Such leniency may indicate a degree of reflection on the part of the viscount, shifting from revenge by pacifying urban discontent, similar to the Guilhems of Montpellier when increasing the administrative function of many burghers following the 1141–1143 revolt¹⁵⁹. These aims were opposed to those of the other co-lord of the city, however, in a period of mounting episcopal strength¹⁶⁰. As influential tenants of the chapter of Saint-Nazaire, Roger's mercy and support of Garsinde and Petrus Vairatus naturally would have been at odds with an episcopal agenda intent upon property acquisition in the Bourg of Maureilhan, stemming the growth of a rival lord in acquiring influential allies within the bishop's half of the

¹⁵⁶ LEWIS, *Seigneurial Administration* (as note 11), pp. 562–577, esp. p. 567, note 37. See also *Cart. Montpellier* (as note 78), n. 127, pp. 260–261 for Guilhem V's declaration.

¹⁵⁷ See notes 12–19 above for a historiographic discussion which postulates a much later origin of the Béziers consulate, as well as the initiative to establish a consulate to the revolt itself.

¹⁵⁸ DUHAMEL-AMADO, *De la cité wisigothique* (as note 43), pp. 82–85. Also, see MONIQUE BOURIN, *Une ville royale*, in: SAGNES, *Histoire de Béziers* (as note 43), pp. 115–135, esp. pp. 118–119 for a brief discussion of these districts throughout the thirteenth century.

¹⁵⁹ VERGOS, *Les Guilhem de Montpellier et leur entourage urbain* (as note 11), par. 52.

¹⁶⁰ VIDAL, *Episcopatus et pouvoir épiscopal* (as note 4), p. 54.

city. Shared religious affiliations between the Trencavel and these ‘tenant-lords’ with the Cistercians of Valmagne, furthermore, may have leant a compassionate view; the growing influence of the abbot in the city surely would not have escaped the attention of the viscount either – nor, for that matter, the bishop’s ¹⁶¹.

What is more, despite the failure of the revolt itself and the reprisal of Trencavel authority, the continued vagueness of the statuses of these elites, and the traitor’s own continued support, in the aftermath of 1167 indicates that Roger and the bishop together were not capable of preventing their regrowth ¹⁶². Here we see a hint at the slow but steady progression of the communal aims initiated by the revolt itself – aims which are only supported within the ‘*Historia rerum anglicarum*’ of William of Newburgh. Henri Vidal saw the failed impact of the customary of Béziers as a symptom of urban decay; a latent but unmaterialized potential when compared to its eastern neighbor, Montpellier ¹⁶³. These general conclusions about the social and economic context of the city, decades before the Massacre of 1209, may well be true. But the eventual acquiescence of the viscount and bishop to concede rights and privileges of their own prerogatives to the townspeople in 1185, eighteen years after the death of Raymond Trencavel, must surely have been a culminating triumph to those former rebels and to our Petrus Vairatus the ‘traitor’, so near the end of his life.

The stain of the epithet *proditor*, however, inserts Petrus into the seigneurial world of oaths and owed services. Though no oath remains between him and the bishop, in a society governed by such compacts functioning on the trust they naturally instilled, severing this bond was thus particularly egregious ¹⁶⁴. It was his rejection of societal norms that garnered such a moniker; but his return to Béziers and his elite position speak to a status that could endure beyond the whims of the powerful. We see here a man transcended; one who bargained with his prominence, which may easily have been undone without communal support.

In 1211 another Petrus Vairatus – perhaps the traitor’s son – was firmly in the orbit of the new seigneurial order of the city in the aftermath of the tragedy of 1209, witnessing, together with a member of the notarial Alsona family, the growth of Valmagne’s influence in the city: Simon of Montfort’s agent, Robert Mauvoisin, allowed

¹⁶¹ For a discussion on the fluctuating support for Valmagne via donations from both the Trencavel and lords of Montpellier, see BARTHÈS, *Le cartulaire* (as note 53), p. 301. Cf. VIDAL, *Episcopatus et pouvoir épiscopal* (as note 4), p. 65, however, where the relationship between Saint-Nazaire and Valmagne was not as turbulent as with other abbeys within the diocesan boundaries.

¹⁶² See CHALLET, *Y a-t-il des consuls* (as note 2), pp. 221–222, and DÉBAX, *Proconsuls et consuls* (as note 18), p. 122, for a similar conclusion regarding the diminishing appearance of the title *proconsul Biterris* during Roger II’s reign, perhaps an indication that consular efforts were gaining traction even after the failed revolt.

¹⁶³ VIDAL, *La coutume de Béziers* (as note 6), p. 37.

¹⁶⁴ For an overview of such oaths as a defining feature of meridional society, see HÉLÈNE DÉBAX, *Oaths as an Instrument of Power in Southern France, 11th–12th Centuries*, in: PHILIPPE BUC – THOMAS D. CONLAN (eds.), *Oaths in Premodern Japan and Premodern Europe* (*Medieval Worlds. Comparative & Interdisciplinary Studies* 19), Vienna 2023, pp. 163–194.

two *cives* in his lord's district of Nissan to sell to the monks their *casale*, portions of rural agricultural land, and even *una tabula in mercato ad coinatariam*¹⁶⁵. Not only were other families like the Bofat seemingly unmarred in the decades which followed, Petrus's family continued to occupy a privileged position; the 'traitor' himself had even done so for at least five years following his renewed exile in 1180¹⁶⁶. In the formal act of submission sworn by fifty-four *probi homines* of the city to King Louis VIII in 1226, two of those signatories were members of this clan¹⁶⁷. Sixty years later still, a century after the traitor's renewed exile, a late-thirteenth century consul bore the name Petrus Vairatus¹⁶⁸. Whatever troubles followed Petrus' ignominy in 1180, they proved fleeting. Like the efforts of other 'tenant-lords' – such as Agnes of Veyrac who received her life annuity from the monks of Valmagne, her landlords – Petrus had tended his associations well enough that not even the failed revolt of 1167, nor the enmity of the bishop, could stamp them out.

¹⁶⁵ Cart. Valmagne, vol. 2 (as note 102), n. 765, fols. 159v–160r. Could this have been the same man as "P. Vairati" who appeared beside Bernard Cota in Sauvian in January 1188 (Cart. Aniane [as note 87], n. 37, pp. 175–176)?

¹⁶⁶ See CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls (as note 2), p. 219, note 65, for the assertion that Petrus likely was of advanced age in 1185 to hear the affirmation of the urban customary, as were his companions Bernard Bofat and Raymond *Ledderius*.

¹⁶⁷ The act of submission, Paris, Archives Nationales, J 337, n. 2, has been copied in Hist. Languedoc (as note 14), vol. 8, n. 257, col. 843–844, as well as in TEULET, Layettes du Trésor, vol. 2 (as note 16), pp. 78–79, both without a full list of the fifty-four *probi homines*. For the published full list, consult the annex in CHALLET, Y a-t-il des consuls (as note 2), pp. 225–226.

¹⁶⁸ See SOUCAILLE, Le consulat de Béziers (as note 12), pp. 233 and 468.