

THE MEDIEVAL LOW COUNTRIES
HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, ART, AND LITERATURE

THE MEDIEVAL LOW COUNTRIES

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The Medieval Low Countries

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Between 1484 and 1495, panel, 175 × 139 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 991. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

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Rebooting Discussion about the Ancestry of the First Counts of Loon*

▼ **ABSTRACT** A critical analysis is presented of the state of knowledge concerning the tenth-century origins of the medieval county of Loon, which was roughly equivalent to modern Belgian Limburg. The dominant hypothesis of Leon Vanderkindere, published in 1900, and the update by Jean Baerten in the 1960s, are compared to both the earlier writers who influenced them, and the latest understandings of the medieval evidence. Rather than conducting a systematic reappraisal of the evidence, Vanderkindere's approach was fundamentally dependent upon a core assumption which is still unquestioned. This is that the counts of Loon must be heirs of the so-called Reginar family, ancestors of the later dukes of Brabant. The original proposal can be traced back to Christophe Butkens in the early seventeenth century. Although understandings of the medieval evidence have changed, published analyses of the origins of Loon have had difficulty breaking free from this old narrative. Several leads implied by ignored evidence will be outlined.

Introduction

The county of Loon, sometimes referred to by its French name Looz, was roughly equivalent to the modern Belgian province of Limburg. The first known seat of its count, Loon, is located at Borgloon. In its heyday,



* The author would like to thank Hans Vogel, In Bijnsterveld, Hein Jongbloed, Bas Aarts, and also many other people, for helpful discussions in the years before this article took shape.

it was a large and influential county. Like many such counties, however, its origins are poorly attested. Borgloon's first motte-and-bailey fort, and its collegiate church of St. Odulphe, were probably built around the late tenth or early eleventh century, a bit earlier than Loon's first appearances in medieval records.¹ These records, mostly created much later, mention the first generally accepted count of Loon, named Gilbert (*Giselbert*), and his two brothers, Bishop Balderic II of Liège (bishop from 1008, d. 1018) and Arnulf, who was also a count, probably in the same Haspengouw region which contains Borgloon.²

This article will focus especially upon the question of the paternal ancestry of Gilbert and his brothers. There is a surprisingly clear and stable consensus, established long ago, about the ancestry of these brothers. However, the factual building blocks of that consensus turn out to be difficult to pin down. The critical assumptions will be delineated and compared to the medieval evidence.

Apart from the typical paucity of records in the tenth and eleventh centuries, which is alleviated somewhat because one brother was a bishop, we face another complication in trying to untangle this subject: there is a dominant 'grand narrative', represented by the still-powerful influence of Brussels historian Léon Vanderkindere (1842-1906), whose proposals about Loon were integrated into his two-volume vision of the formation of 'Belgian principalities' in 1902.³ This still provides a popular framework for modern understandings of county origins and continues to be routinely cited as an authority. In the 1960s, the main outlines of Vanderkindere's Loon narrative were defended by Jean Baerten, although his understand-

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- 1 Motte: Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, *Restanten gravenburcht: heuvel en gracht*; <https://id.erfgoed.net/erfgoedobjecten/302700> (2017; accessed July 2020). Church: Hubert Van de Weerd, 'De Herkomst van Loon Parochie, Stad, Graafschap', *Limburg*, 26, 1 (1946), 5-10; Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, 'Les sépultures des comtes de la Meuse inférieure: les cas des Régnier et des Baldéric (X^e siècle), des comtes de Looz (XI^e siècle) et des comtes de Gueldre (XII^e-XIV^e siècles)', in *Sépulture, mort et symbolique du pouvoir au moyen âge. Tod, Grabmal und Herrschaftsrepräsentation in Mittelalter. Actes des 11es Journées Lotharingiennes. 26-29 septembre 2000*, ed. by Michel Margue, Publications de la Section Historique de l'Institut G.-D. de Luxembourg, 118 (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 2006), pp. 373-404, 745-51, here pp. 386-87.
- 2 Discussion of the evidence for the brothers: Jean-Louis Kupper, *Liège et l'Église impériale aux XI^e-XIII^e siècles*, Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'université de Liège, 228 (Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 1981); <https://books.openedition.org/pulg/1442>, I, chapter 1, § 2, 33.
- 3 Léon Vanderkindere, *La formation territoriale des principautés belges au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1902).

ing of the evidence was often quite different.⁴ Since then, Baerten's works have become the accepted authority on early Loon.⁵

We will see that while the details have changed many times, one specific narrative which they always follow is surprisingly old, going back at least as far as the seventeenth-century work of Christophe Butkens (1590-1650). Repeatedly, scholars have found different ways to make the counts of Loon, heirs, and not just relatives, of the Reginar family.

Since Vanderkindere, the counts of Loon have been considered to be descendants of a marriage between a Reginar bride and a groom from the so-called Balderic family. We will review the basic evidence and see how it was used to create the core of a scholarly consensus. We will also see that important evidence has been downplayed or ignored, while other evidence has been used incautiously. In recent decades, Bas Aarts and Hein Jongbloed have given examples, and this article will examine such problems systematically.⁶ This will include the following:

- The standard accounts rely upon evidence of links between Loon and the Rhine delta, but do not discuss the only individuals from there for whom there is medieval evidence of a family connection to Loon: Count Dirk III of Holland and Count Balderic of Upladium.

4 Jean Baerten, *Het Graafschap Loon (11de – 14de eeuw)*. Maaslandse Monographiën, 9 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969). This was supported by more detailed articles: Baerten, 'Les origines des comtes de Looz et la formation territoriale du comté', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 43 (1965), 459-91, 1217-42; Baerten, 'Les Ansfrid au X^e siècle', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 39 (1961), 1144-58; Baerten, 'De Ansfrieds en de Balderiks (X^{de} e.)'. Onderzoek over de afstamming van de graven van Loon', *Limburg*, 43 (1964), 211-21; Baerten, 'In Hasbanio comitatus quatuor (Verdrag van Meersen, 870)', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal, Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, 19 (1965), 5-14.

5 Geert Souvereyns and A.-J. Bijsterveld, 'Deel 1: De graven van Loon', *Limburg – Het Oude Land van Loon*, 87 (2008), pp. 111-52: 'Het voornaamste referentiewerk over het graafschap Loon vóór de inlijving bij Luik in 1361-1366 blijft de doctoraatsverhandeling van Jean Baerten (1969)'. Jan Vaes, *De Graven van Loon. Loons, Luiks, Limburgs* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2016), p. 10: 'Jean Baertens onovertroffen standaardwerk'. These refer to Baerten's 1969 work. His 1965 'Origines' articles are described by Kupper as providing 'la démonstration concluante' of 'les liens familiaux qui unissaient les premiers comtes de Looz à la dynastie des Regnier' (*Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2, n. 51).

6 Bas Aarts, 'Het "Ansfrid-probleem" in Hilvarenbeek elders', in *Hilvarenbeek Duizend Jaar. Bijdragen tot een symposium over de geschiedenis van Hilvarenbeek en Diessen*, ed. by Jan Scheirs (Hilvarenbeek: Heemkundige Kring Hilvarenbeek en Diessen, 1988), pp. 7-64; Aarts, 'Ansfrid, graaf en bisschop. Een standbeeld in Hilvarenbeek', in *Opera Omnia II. Een verzameling geschied- en heemkundige opstellen van J. Aarts*, ed. by J. Coolen and Jacques Forschelen (Thorn: Geschied- en Heemkundige Kring Het Land van Thorn, 1994), pp. 7-85; Aarts, "'Montferland" en de consequenties', in *Middeleeuwse kastelen in veelvoud. Nieuwe studies over oud erfgoed*, ed. by Hans L. Janssen and Wendy Landewé (Wijk bij Duurstede: Nederlandse Kastelenstichting, 2009), pp. 13-59. Hein H. Jongbloed, 'Flamenses in de elfde eeuw', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen Gelre*, 99 (2008), 27-90, here pp. 49-53.

- They presume the counts of Loon were in a family that could influence the investiture of a bishop, but do not discuss the evidence concerning such families in this region and period.
- Arnulf of Valenciennes, another known relative of the counts of Loon, will require step-by-step discussion to reveal several layers of questionable assumptions.
- The Balderic family is central to the standard account, but discussion of one family member, Rudolf, the son of Ricfrid, has been studiously avoided. Consideration of his case shows that Vanderkindere and Baerten effectively assumed the name Rudolf was unusual.
- Strikingly, as pointed out by Jongbloed in 2008, Count Gilbert's father was called Otto in a local fourteenth-century record. Vanderkindere and Baerten ignored this.
- Tenth-century records show counts in the Borgloon region named Werner (966) and Eremfrid (982). Serious discussion of them being predecessors of the counts of Loon has been avoided.

Overall, a misleading impression has been created, even among experts, that the standard account cannot be improved upon in any major way, or even that it has been proven.⁷

1. A Long Tradition: Rudolfs and Reginars

The dominant explanation since the early twentieth century, published in its first well-known form by Vanderkindere in 1900, has been that the father of Count Gilbert and his brothers was Rudolf, the son of Nevelung.⁸ This idea was first worked out over many years by Borgloon native Joseph Daris (1821-1905) in a short 1896 article.⁹ His earlier 1887 article, which influenced Vanderkindere, had come to slightly different conclusions, but gave a more detailed review of the medieval sources, and earlier modern ideas which he was grappling with since at least 1859.¹⁰ The publications of

⁷ Examples: Karel Verhelst, 'Een nieuwe visie op de omvang en indeling van de pagus Hasbania', Part 1, *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandsche Maatschappij Voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, 38 (1984), 231-52, here p. 246; Vaes, *De Graven van Loon*, pp. 32-33.

⁸ Léon Vanderkindere, 'A propos d'une charte de Baldéric d'Utrecht', *Académie royale de Belgique Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, xx (1900), 37-53. His *Formation territoriale* (1902) which reproduced parts of 'Une charte' is the more widely cited work.

⁹ See Vanderkindere's postscript to 'Une charte', p. 51; Joseph Daris, 'Notes sur l'origine des deux Balderic, évêques de Liège', in *Notices historiques sur les églises du diocèse de Liège*, 17 vols (1867-1899), vol. 16, (Liege: Demarteau, 1896), pp. 105-12.

¹⁰ Joseph Daris, 'Notes sur l'origine de Balderic, évêque d'Utrecht, et des deux Balderic, évêques de Liège', in *Notices*, 13 (1887), 5-22; Daris, 'Arnoul 1^{er}, Comte de Looz', *Bulletin Société scientifique et littéraire du Limbourg*, 4 (1859), 37-70.

Daris are an important missing link, needed to understand the true origins of today's consensus, and the potential for alternative understandings.

Of course, if Daris and Vanderkindere both eventually chose this specific child, Rudolf, as the ancestor of the future counts of Loon, there must have been a reason. But it was not simply a matter of neutrally interpreting new evidence.

First, in 1887, Daris originally homed in on Rudolf when he wrongly believed that he and his uncle, Balderic the bishop of Utrecht (bishop from 918 d. 975), were both male-line members of the Reginar family. By 1896, Daris realized this was wrong, and his short new article that year, and Vanderkindere's 1900 article, can both be seen as corrections of the 1887 article. However, both scholars kept the convenient new idea of Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, being a Loon ancestor and Reginar heir, even if he was not in the Reginar male line (see Figure 1).

Second, historians and genealogists had been looking for someone like Rudolf for centuries. Daris placed Rudolf in the genealogical position where most historians and genealogists of the time had been placing a 'Count Louis', who probably never existed. Vanderkindere believed that Louis had been invented by Joannes Mantelius (Jan Mantels 1599-1676), without any evidence.¹¹

As explained by Mantelius himself, though, he did not invent Louis. His source was the sixteenth-century writer Joannes Leo Placentius, who has a poor reputation as a historian.¹² Mantelius grafted Louis into another genealogy first published by his contemporary Butkens, which made the counts of Loon ancestors of a quite different Rudolf, who really was in the Reginar family.

Butkens was clear that he had no medieval evidence that this elder Rudolf was the father of Count Gilbert of Loon and his brothers.¹³ Instead, the idea came from a '*personnage curieux*', perhaps Charles van Reidwijck, who was specifically described as a '*personnage curieux*' and important contributor in Butkens' note to the reader. This Rudolf, brother of Reginar III, was mentioned by the annalist Flodoard. In a Lotharingian conflict of 944, the brothers held forts (*castella*) as followers (*fideles*) of the West Frankish

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- 11 Joannes Mantelius, *Historiae Lossensis libri decem* (Liège, 1717), pp. 34-40, 297-301; Daris, 'Arnoul 1^{er}', p. 62 ('l'opinion commune des ... odernes'); Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 49 n. 1; Vanderkindere, *Formation* ..., p. 138 n. 2.
- 12 Joannes Leo Placentius, *Catalogus omnium ... angarorum Trajectensium ac ...* (Antwerp, 1529); Alphonse Delescluse, 'Placentius (Jean)', in *Biographi ...* 17: *Peraxyle-Pomreux* (Brussels, 1903), pp. 696-7 ('Hélas! il lui manquait la qualité maîtresse de l'historien, l'esprit critique').
- 13 Christophe Butkens, *Trophées tant sacrées que profanes du Duché de Brabant*, 10 vols, (Antwerp, 1641 1st ed.), Book 2, p. 50 ('cecy ne se preuue autrement par quelque Charte ou escript d'auteur ancien'). Same pagination and text in vol. 1 of 2 in 3rd ed. (The Hague: van Lom, 1724).

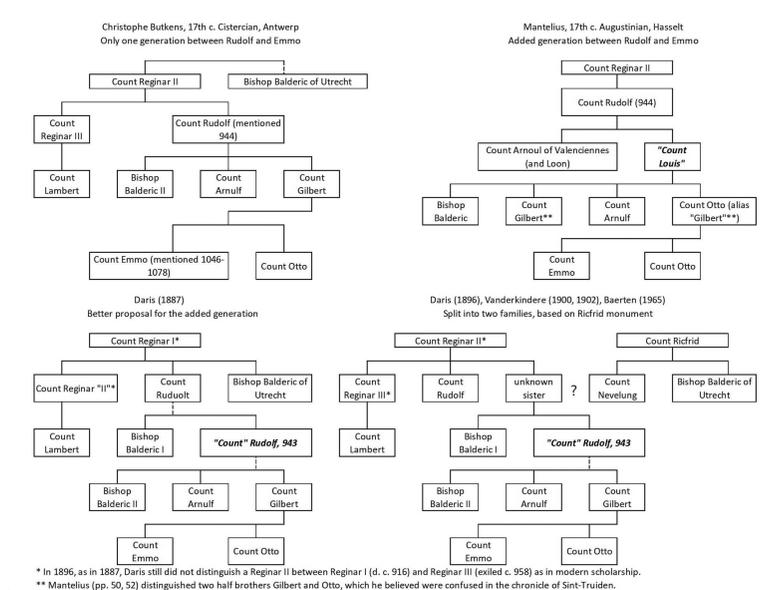


Figure 1. Some proposals concerning the parentage of the first Counts of Loon. (See text for sources and discussion.)

king, Louis IV, but had no sufficient stronghold (*praesidium*) to defend themselves from the forces sent by the East Frankish king, Otto I, and so they gave many gifts, and he received them at Aachen.¹⁴ Connecting him to the future county of Loon, Butkens proposed this Rudolf could be equated to a count named Rudolf whose county contained Aldeneik on the Maas river in 949, a record we will discuss further below.¹⁵

Chronologically, it is unrealistic to believe that either of these records represents the father of Count Gilbert in the eleventh century. Mantelius and Daris clearly knew an extra generation was needed. Nevertheless, the basic idea that the counts of Loon are heirs of the Reginars has been extremely influential and is still with us today. Butkens already knew the details could not be proven, but he felt it was quite likely (*asses vraysem-*

- 14 Flodoard of Reims, *Annales*, s.a. 944 ('Ragnarii ac Rodulfi fratrum, Ludowici regis fidelium'); *Les Annales de Flodoard*, ed. by Philippe Lauer (Paris: Picard et Fils, 1905), p. 92; *The annals of Flodoard of Reims, 919-66*, trans. by Steven Fanning and David S. Bachrach, *Readings in medieval civilizations and cultures*, 9 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004; repr. 2011), p. 39.
- 15 DiBe ID 1120: MGH *Diplomata Otto I*, ed. by Theodor Sickel (Hannover: Hansche, 1879-1884), no. 154, pp. 235-36. Commentary: Mathieu Gorissen, 'Hocht, zetel van een graafschap', *Het Oude Land van Loon*, 5 (1950), 138-45.

blable) that the eleventh-century county of Loon had its roots in a ninth or tenth-century county of the ancestor of the Reginars, Reginar I, or his children.

Reginar III's family had been important throughout Lotharingia, but there is no evidence that they had specific counties containing all or part of the eastern Haspengouw. Despite this weak foundation, for centuries, scholars have in effect been trying to construct a believable version of Butkens' proposed link between Loon and the Reginars. The younger Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, is thus the new 'missing link' proposed by Daris and Vanderkindere. He fits so well where Louis was once fitted for one simple reason: we know, because of the chance survival of one document, that Rudolf descended from the Reginars via his mother.

Note that even with its extra generation, the new version of this inheritance story still has chronological difficulties. Rudolf was alive in 943, and his supposed son Gilbert died about one hundred years later. At least two different proposals have been made to add yet another generation.¹⁶ These do not address the more basic concerns which are the focus of this article.

In summary, Butkens, in 1641, published a speculation that the counts of Loon were descended from the Reginar family. The works of Daris reveal how this was adapted to fit new understandings of the evidence. A new connection to the Reginars was salvaged for Count Gilbert via his proposed father's mother. This is still the idea which dominates historiography today.

2. Balderics and Reginars

Having seen how Vanderkindere and Baerten fit within a tradition, the next step is to lay out the relevant evidence, starting with the Balderic family as reconstructed by Daris.

There is only one 943 record which mentions Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, in passing, within a charter made in his mother's favour by her brother-in-law, Bishop Balderic of Utrecht. Balderic gave the usufruct of various lands near Sint-Odiliënberg and modern Roermond to Nevelung's widow, for her life, and then the life of her son named Balderic, and then his brother named Rudolf.¹⁷ In return, she was to give the bishopric of

16 Johanna Maria van Winter, 'De voornaamste geslachten in de Nederlanden 10de en 11de eeuw', in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, ed. by Dirk Peter Blok and others, 13 vols (1977-1983), I (Haarlem: Fibula-Verlag, 1981), pp. 225-29; Donald C. Jackman, *Geldern, Looz, and Public Succession*, in *Archive for Medieval Prosopography*, 9 (Pennsylvania: Enlappage, 2010), pp. 29-30.

17 *Diplomata Belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta*, ed. by Maurits Gysseling and Anton C. F. Koch, 2 vols (Brussels: Belgisch Inter-Universitair Centrum voor Nederlandistiek, 1950), I, no. 190, pp. 331-32: 'atque post discessem vestri de hac luce



Utrecht lands and church rights near Krefeld, about 47km to the northeast of Sint-Odiliënberg.¹⁸

Nevelung is mentioned in only one other record: Nevelung and his brother Balderic appeared along with two more brothers, in the poetic epitaph in Utrecht on the tomb of their parents, Count Ricfrid and his wife Herinsinde.¹⁹ Daris did not use this in 1887, but it subsequently led to the new conclusions he and Vanderkindere published, and which are still with us.

At a young age, Rudolf's older brother became Bishop Balderic I of Liège (bishop from c. 955 d. 959), about 166km south of Utrecht. The man he replaced, Rather 'of Verona', published a complaint describing this Bishop Balderic as a boy (*puer*), and the son of a brother of Bishop Balderic of Utrecht.²⁰ While Rather might have been exaggerating, Balderic's little brother must have been a young boy in 943.

Rather complained that young Balderic got his office through his father's brother's influence, along with the archbishops of Cologne and Trier, and two counts to whom he was *nepos*, 'Reginerus' and 'Ruoduoltus'. Neither of these are brothers of Nevelung mentioned on Ricfrid's monument, but Folcuin and Sigebert of Gembloux helpfully specify that the boy's ally, Count 'Raginerus', was his uncle (*avunculus*).²¹ Put together, these sources make it clear this Reginar was the boy's maternal uncle, and that he is known today as 'Reginar III'. He was expelled from Lotharingia in about 958.²² The 943 charter confirms that Balderic's mother's late father was also a Count Reginar ('Rainerus'), clearly Reginar II.

filii vester nomine Baldricus, in vita nichilominus sua, nec non insuper post eum Rodulfus frater suus eatenus'; also *Oorkondenboek der graafschappen Gelre en Zutphen tot op den slag van Woeringen, 5 juni 1288*, ed. by Ludolf A. J. W. Sloet, 3 vols (1872-1876), I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1872), no. 84, p. 79.

- 18 Jongbloed, 'Immed "von Kleve" (um 950) – Das erste Klevische Grafenhaus (c. 885–c. 1015) als Vorstufe des geldrischen Fürstentums', *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, 209 (2006), 13–44, here pp. 33–4.
- 19 Carl Wilhelm Vollgraff and Gerardus van Hoorn, 'Bijlage IV: Epitaphium Ricfridi', in *Opgravingen op het Domplein te Utrecht. Wetenschappelijke Verslagen III 1934* (Haarlem: Willink en Zoon, 1936), pp. 124–27; Cf. *Oorkondenboek van het Sticht Utrecht tot 1301*, ed. by Samuel Muller and Arie Cornelis Bouman, 5 vols (1920–1959), I (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1920), no. 115, p. 117. Dutch version given in Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', pp. 52–53 n. 385.
- 20 Rather of Verona, *Phrenesis*, ed. by Peter L. D. Reid and others, CCCM, 46A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1984), pp. 199–218, here p. 199.
- 21 Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 4 (Hannover, 1841), pp. 67–9; Sigebert of Gembloux, *Chronica Sigeberti Gemblacensis monachi*, ed. by Ludwig Conrad Bethmann, MGH Scriptores, 6 (Hannover, 1844), pp. 349–52 (Balderic: s.a. 956; Reginar's exile: s.a. 959).
- 22 Defeat in 957: Flodoard, *Annales*, s.a. 957, ed. Lauer, p. 144; trans. Fanning and Bachrach, p. 62. Exile in 958: *Continuator Reginonis Trevirensis*, ed. by Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 1 (Hannover, 1826), p. 623. See also Michel de Waha, 'Filii Ragineri in terra patrum suorum relocati sunt. Pouvoir, opposition et intégration dans le Hainaut du Xème siècle', *Hainaut*

3. The Rudolf(s) Who Started it All

As discussed above, although we have no clear information about his lands or offices, it was Rudolf, the brother of Reginar III in 944, and not Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, who was the original inspiration for the tradition of linking the Reginars to Loon. Mantelius, Daris, Vanderkindere, and Baerten all continued to give Rudolf of 944 an important role in their accounts, although the understanding of the relevant evidence kept changing.

Since Butkens, the 944 Rudolf has been equated to most Rudolfs appearing in documents of that period. However, Nevelung also had a brother named Rudolf, in the same generation (see Figure 2). We will see that that this northern Rudolf was likely established in the Maas river area. Despite the importance of his family and his name to Vanderkindere and Baerten, they did not seriously consider his possible relevance. The medieval records concerning Rudolfs who were adults in the mid-tenth century need to be listed, as they are important to further discussion.

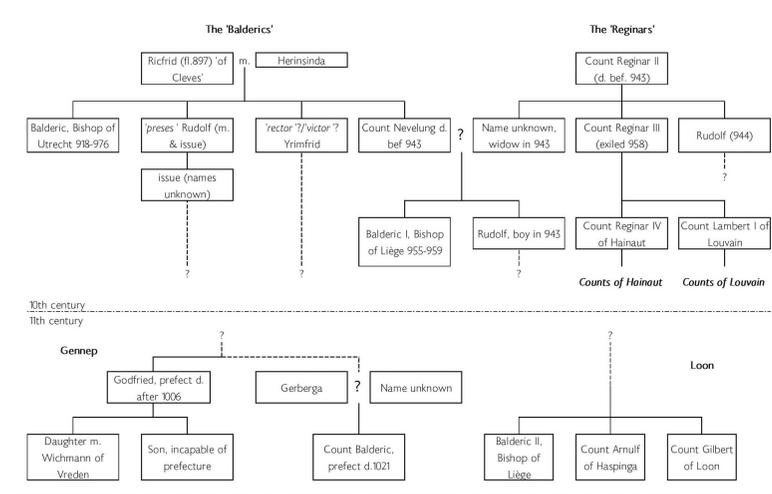


Figure 2. The tenth-century Balderics and Reginars; and some possible Balderic descendants. (See text for sources and discussion.)



et Tournaisis, regards sur dix siècles d'histoire. Recueil d'études dédiées à la mémoire de Jacques Nazet (1944-1996), ed. by Claire Billen (Brussels: Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 2000), pp. 61-85.

- We have seen that Rather of Verona described Balderic I of Liège as *nepos* of Count Ruoduolt. In 1887, Daris called him ‘Ruodvoltus’, but in his 1896 article, Daris silently converted this name to ‘Rodolphus’. This equation has apparently never been questioned.²³ There are three obvious problems with this. First, Ruoduolt is a real name, distinct from Rudolf. Second, the word *nepos* can be used for a wide range of relationships, so Rather did not necessarily mean that Ruoduolt was Reginar’s brother.²⁴ Third, ignoring the name problem, Balderic had two uncles named Rudolf, not one. In any case, this record does not specify any counties this count held.
- As Butkens noted, a royal charter of Otto I dated Quedlinburg, 4 July 944, now believed to be from 949 or 952, mentions the monastery of Aldeneik (*monasterium Eiche*) near modern Maaseik. This places Aldeneik in the territory (*pagus*) of ‘Husce’, perhaps originally written ‘Huste’, in the county of a Rudolf (*in comitatu Ruodulphi*).²⁵
- A royal charter of Otto I dated Magdeburg, 7 October 950, granted the tolls from Echt to Count Ansfried (Ansfried the elder) in *Cassallum*, which is described as being within the *pagus* of *Masalant in comitatu Ruodulfi*.²⁶ Although there is uncertainty about this location, most proposals are near Echt, where the tolls had been previously, and this lies across the Maas from Maaseik and just south of Roermond.²⁷
- Remarkably, in a Sint-Truiden charter dated by Dierkens to 958/59, concerning a land swap between the abbey and a ‘noble’ called Gotbert (*quidam nobilis Gotbertus*), this ‘Husce’ appears to be mentioned again in a very different place, this time as a county, and written ‘Hufte.’²⁸

23 Vanderkindere, ‘Un charte’, p. 65; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, p. 135 (‘le comte Ruodvoltus, frère de Regnerus, ne peut pas être différent du Rudolphus de 944’); Baerten, ‘Ansfrieds en Balderiks’, p. 212; Baerten, ‘Origines’, p. 463.

24 Cf. *rād-wald* v. *rād-wulf* in the ‘Lemmatisiertes Personennamenregister’, *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*, ed. by Johanne Autenrieth, Dieter Geuenich, and Karl Schmid, MGH Libri Memoriales et necrologia, NS 1 (Hannover: Hansche, 1979), pp. 138-9.

25 DiBe ID 1120: MGH *Diplomata Otto I*, ed. Sickel, no. 154, pp. 235-36 has ‘Huste’, but see M. Gorissen, ‘Hocht’.

26 Oldest charter of Thorn: *Diplomata Belgica*, I, no. 219, pp. 369-70 (also MGH *Diplomata Otto I*, ed. Sickel, no. 129, p. 210). Commentary: Adrianus D. A. Monna, *Zwerftochten met middeleeuwse heiligen* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), p. 125; Hartwig Kersken, *Zwischen Glaube und Welt: Studien zur Geschichte der religiösen Frauengemeinschaft Thorn von der Gründung bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Maaslandse Monografieën, 81 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2016), pp. 57-59. The term *Masalant*: Ulrich Nonn, *Pagus und Comitatus in Niederlothringen: Untersuchungen zur politischen Raumgliederung im früheren Mittelalter* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1983), pp. 90-91.

27 Monna, *Zwerftochten*, p. 129; Aarts, ‘Ansfried, graaf en bisschop’, pp. 28-29.

28 DiBe ID 1296: *Diplomata Belgica*, I, no. 213, pp. 361-62 (Also, *Cartulaire de l’Abbaye de Saint-Trond*, ed. by Charles Piot, 2 vols (1870-1874), I (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1870), no. 3, pp. 6-7). Commentary: Alain Dierkens, ‘Quelques réflexions sur

It included the *villae* of Engelmanshoven and Heers, about 6km southwest of Borgloon. Just to the west of these, lands in Heusden (in Kerkom), Muizen, and Buvingen are described as being within another county called Avernas (*in comitatu Auernascse*), clearly named after the place of that name, 7km to their southwest. The two counties apparently had a boundary running north-south near the Melsterbeek. No counts are named. This charter states that both these land packages had a neighbouring landholder named Rudolf, but he is not described as a count.

- Some years earlier, in 946, lands in Lens-Saint-Servais, were also 'in the county of Avernas, ruled by Count Rudolf',²⁹ Vanderkindere and Baerten assumed that this early Count Rudolf was the same one who held the county near Aldeneik, and they equated him to the brother of Reginar III. This is the only clear record of a Rudolf with a county in Haspengouw. Vanderkindere and Baerten read it to say that Rudolf no longer held Lens-Saint-Servais. Therefore, Vanderkindere argued that the charter must really be from a time after the 958 expulsion of Reginar III from Lotharingia.³⁰ Baerten proposed, instead, that Lens had been taken from Rudolf as a result of the 944 revolt reported by Flodoard, similarly attempting to link this count to the Reginars.³¹ Neither of these proposals are suggested by the medieval evidence.
- A 966 royal charter is critical to the position of Vanderkindere and Baerten. It mentions in passing that a Rudolf had lost his possession of the *curtis* Gelmen, next to Engelmanshoven, for infidelity.³² This Rudolf, who is not described as a count, matches the above-described neighbour of Gotbert in 958/59. The charter involves a count named Immo, who was to receive Gelmen in exchange for twelve geographically dispersed estates, all east of the Maas. Vanderkindere and Baerten both equated this count to a Lotharingian magnate discussed in detail

l'abbaye de Saint-Trond à la fin du IX^e et au X^e siècle', in *Studia in honorum Adriaan Verhulst* (Gent: Willemsfonds, 1995), pp. 363-77, here p. 371 n. 54; M. Gorissen, 'Hocht'; Hubert Van de Weerd, 'De herkomst van het graafschap Loon (vervolg en slot)', *Limburg*, 27 (1947), 41-52.

29 Rudolf A. W. J. Hackeng, *Het middeleeuwse grondbezit van het Sint-Servaaskapittel te Maastricht in de regio Maas-Rijn*, Publicatie: Nationaal Historisch Centrum Limburg, 1 (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1966) no. 21, p. 271: 'in comitatu Avernas temporibus Rodulphi comitis'. Als *Handbuch zur Geschichte der jetzt die Preussischen Regierungsbezirke Coblenz und Trier umschließenden mittelrheinischen Territorien*, 3 vols, (1860-1874), I, *Von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart*, 9, ed. by Heinrich Beyer and Leopold von Eltester (Koblenz: J. Hölscher, 1860), no. 184, p. 246. Interpretation: Hackeng, *Het middeleeuwse grondbezit*, pp. 176-87; Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 1220-22.

30 Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, pp. 136-37.

31 Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 1220-23; Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 8.

32 DiBe ID 3973; MGH *Diplomata Otto I*, ed. Sickel, no. 316, pp. 429-31.

by Kurth, Dierkens, and Jongbloed, possibly ancestral to the counts of Loon, and discussed below.³³ The record, however, clearly states that the county which contained Gelmen was that of Count Werner, not Rudolf or Immo.

- In 967, a donation was made to Sint-Truiden abbey for a dying widowed countess named Bertha, by her son Count Arnulf.³⁴ As emphasized by Baerten, the fourth witness was a Count Rudolf. This record will be discussed at length below.
- A royal charter dated 26 July 982, and made in Italy by King Otto II, mentions Velm, immediately west of Heusden in Kerkom, which was mentioned in 958/59 (above). Velm is described as being in the county of a Count Eremfrid, and under him it had been held by a certain 'Cunrad, son of the late count Rudolf' who died at the battle of Cotrone.³⁵ Because Longlier and Joudreville are involved, several earlier charters of this family can be identified.³⁶ Apparently it has never been suggested that Cunrad's father might have been the Rudolf of 958/59. If he was, then he was a count, and perhaps he, or a relative, was Rudolf the count of Avernas in 946. However, their possessions apparently lay mainly in the Ardennes and Upper Lotharingia. Cunrad's grants were in favour of Sint-Truiden's superiors in Gorze Abbey. Several conclusions can be drawn from this evidence:

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- 33 Godefroid Kurth, 'Le Comte Immon', *Bulletin de l'Académie royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 68 (1889), 320-33; Alain Dierkens, 'Un membre de l'aristocratie lotharingienne au X^e siècle: le comte Immon', *Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Liégeois*, 100 (1988), 21-32; Jongbloed, 'Listische Immo en Herswind. Een politieke wildebras in het Maasdal (938-60) en zijn in Thorn rustende dochter', *Jaarboek. Limburgs Geschied- en Oudheidkundig Genootschap*, 145 (2009). Jongbloed's vision is significantly different from those of Kurth and Dierkens. A contemporary of Butkens, David Blondel stated that Immo was the father of Otto of Loon, who was father of Bishop Balderic II and Count Gilbert, *Genealogiae Francicae plenior assertio*, (Amsterdam, 1664), CX, table 143.
- 34 *Gestorum Abbatum Trudonensium Continuatio Tertia*, 3, 12-14, s.a. 964-72, ed. by Camille de Borman, *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Trond*, 2 vols, (Liège, 1877), II, p. 131; trans. by Emiel Lavigne, *Kroniek van de abdij van Sint-Truiden*, Maastrandse Monographieën, 43, 3 vols (1986-1993), II (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), p. 221. 1146 confirmation, DiBe ID 1613: *De oorkonden der graven van Vlaanderen (Juli 1128 – September 1191)*, Uitgave 2, Band I: *Regering van Diederik van de Elzas (Juli 1128-17 Januari 1168)*, ed. by Thérèse de Hemptinne, Adriaan Verhulst and Lieve De Mey, *Verzameling van de akten der Belgische Vorsten* (Brussels: Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis, 1988), no. 95, pp. 155-57; also *Cartulaire de Saint-Trond*, I, p. 72.
- 35 DiBe ID 3899: 'Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Gorze', ed. by Armand D'Herbomez, *Mettensia*, 2 (Paris, 1898-1901), no. 199, pp. 334-36, notes 587-89; MGH *Diplomata*, Otto II and Otto III, ed. by Theodor Sickel (Hannover, 1893), no. 280, p. 326; Joseph Depoin, 'Obits mémorables tirés de nécrologes luxembourgeois, rémois et messins', *Revue Mabillon*, 6 (1910-1911), 261-79, here p. 267.
- 36 Christian Dupont and Arlette Laret-Kayser, 'A propos des comtés post-carolingiens: les exemples d'Ivoux et de Bastogne', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 57 (1979), 805-23; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, pp. 342-3.

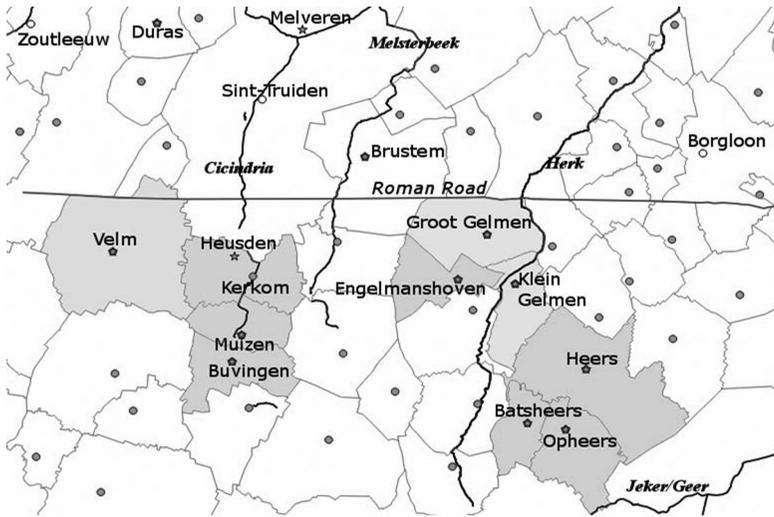


Figure 3. The modern waterways and Flemish *deelgemeenten*. (Data source: OpenStreetMap.)

First, nothing in these records indicates a connection to the Reginar family. Vanderkindere and Baerten were wrong to treat the 966 royal charter as proof that a Rudolf had lost a county, or that he was subject to sanctions at the same time when Reginar III was expelled. There is no justification for assuming the landholder Rudolf was a Reginar.

Second, the only Rudolf recorded with a county in the Haspengouw was in 946, earlier than the rest. His county of Avernas apparently did not stretch east of the Melsterbeek or include Borgloon. The relevance of this early Rudolf to Loon should be doubted.

Third, the jurisdiction called Husce, Huste, or Huftē is more promising. It apparently connected the areas of Borgloon and Maaseik, which are about 45km apart, and that is a notable coincidence because, despite the distance, both were in the later medieval county of Loon. In fact, even Echt, east of the Maas and today in the Netherlands, was recorded in the twelfth century as being in the county of the count of Loon.³⁷ It thus appears that estates near Borgloon were in a county named after an area near Maaseik because that is the place where a *pagus* of this name is recorded. This suggests that the valley count, perhaps named th



37 DiBe ID 6153: ed. by Emil von Ottenthal and Hans Hirsch, MGH Diplomata, Lothar III and Richenza (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1927), no. 12, pp. 14-15. Discussion: Henk Verdonk, 'Stammen de heren van Herlaer af van de graven van Loon?', *Limburg, het oude land van Loon*, 77 (1998), 243-57, here p. 249.

Rudolf, acquired a comital jurisdiction near Borgloon. Baerten agreed with predecessors such as Hubert Van de Weerd and Pieter Gorissen that this county was likely to be the precursor of Loon.³⁸ Baerten, like Gorissen, calls this county 'Hocht'. The Maas river Count Rudolf appears in only two records, both from about 950.

Fourth, in or before 950, Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, was too young to be mentioned in most types of records, but the only two counts recorded with counties near Borgloon between 950 and 1000 were named Werner and Eremfrid, not Rudolf.

4. Balderic II and His Bishopric

The simplest and strongest argument for a link between Bishop Balderic II of Liège and Nevelung's family, though it is only circumstantial evidence, is that he had a predecessor from that family with the same name. Bishoprics were not heritable, but families could influence such offices. Furthermore, Balderic I of Liège did receive his bishopric through nepotism, and from an uncle who was a bishop with the same name. Should we expect this uncle-nephew pattern to repeat?

Although Vanderkindere and Baerten did not spell-out what evidence they were using, there is one outstanding example of a Lotharingian family that consistently influenced high clerical positions in both the tenth and eleventh centuries, and used one specific name for boys designated for clerical office. This is the so-called House of Ardenne, who consistently used the name Adalbero for boys who became bishops mainly in Upper Lotharingia and the nearby archdiocese of Reims in France. As Figure 4 demonstrates, after the first generation, this quasi-inheritance is no longer a matter of uncles and nephews. Their tradition came to have an even bigger effect on the position of *primicerius* of Metz, a high office that often led to a bishopric. Every known one of these from 1065 to 1136 was named Adalbero.³⁹ Notably, while personal names tended to be inherited from close family in the Middle Ages, even in the milieu of the House of Ardenne this clerical name was not restricted to close blood relatives.⁴⁰

38 Van de Weerd, 'Parochie, Stad, Graafschap'; Pieter Gorissen, 'Omtrent de wording van het graafschap Loon', *Jaarboek van de Vereniging van Oudheidkundige en geschiedkundige kringen van België: 32e zitting Congres van Antwerpen 27-31 juli 1947*, xx (1950-1951), 126-37.

39 Arnaud Hari, *Ecrire l'histoire des évêques de Metz au Moyen Âge: les Gesta episcoporum de la fin du VIII^e à la fin du XIV^e siècle* (Doctoral thesis, Université Paul Verlaine – Metz, 2010), p. 189 n. 5; Michel Parisse, 'Les princiers messins au XII^e siècle', *Annuaire de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de la Lorraine*, 71 (1971), 23-28.

40 Michel Margue, 'Les Adalbéron – un "lignage épiscopal"? Fonction épiscopale et structuration parentale en Lotharingie (X^e-XI^e siècle)', *The Medieval Low Countries*, 6 (2019), 27-53; Régine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII^e-X^e)*

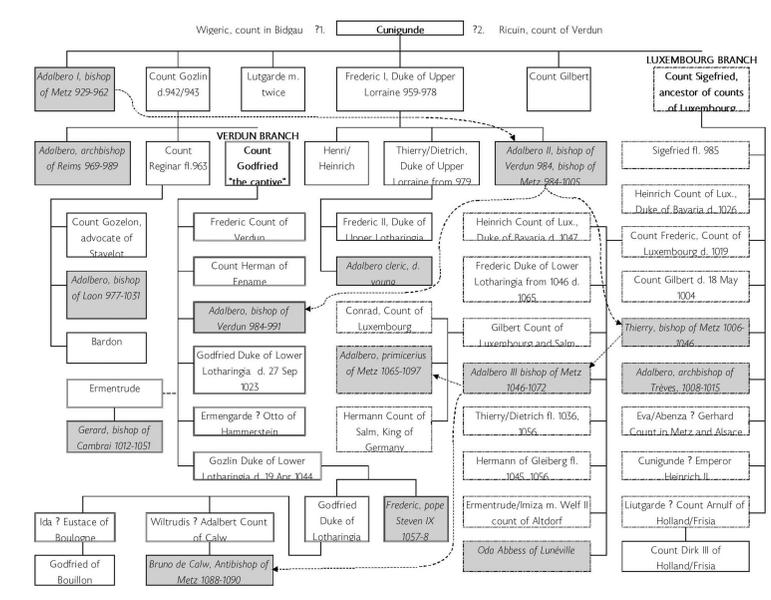


Figure 4. Some of the early House of Ardenne, clerics mainly named Adalbero. Michel Parisse, ‘Généalogie de la Maison d’Ardenne’, *La maison d’Ardenne X^e-XI^e siècles. Actes des Journées Lotharingiennes, 24-26 oct. 1980* (Luxembourg, 1981), pp. 9-41. For Bishop Gerard of Cambrai and his mother: Aarts, ‘Excurs 1’, in Henk Verdonk, *Alzey-Zutphen. Een onderzoek naar het rijksleen te Alzey van de graven van Zutphen* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2012), pp. 77-91.

The Verdun branch of the Ardenne family, the descendants of Godefrid ‘the captive’, were influential in the bishopric of Liège in the eleventh century. Here they did not stick to the Adalbero naming tradition. Kupper has identified them as dominating the combined office of provost and archdeacon of the cathedral chapter of St Lambert in this period. The first known members of the family in this high position were Frederic (later Pope Stephen IX d. 1058) and Gregory, the nephew and son of Count Herman of Enname, respectively. Two later family members who followed into this double office were named Herman, so apparently this name was used for designated Liège clerics for a few generations.⁴¹ However, in the midst of this sequence, was a brother of a count, also named Herman, men-



siècle). *Essai d’anthropologie sociale* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1995); <https://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/24609>, chapter 6.

41 Kupper, *Liège et l’Église*, II, chapter 1, § 2, 23.

tioned in a record of 1047.⁴² This could indicate an alliance between the counts of Loon and the House of Ardenne, who could have influenced Balderic II's appointment. We will see that Godefrid 'the captive' may also have been a relative through his mother's Matfried family of Count Werner, a tenth-century predecessor of the counts of Loon.

A specific person who might have influenced the assignment of a bishopric in Lower Lotharingia in this period was Balderic II's older contemporary, Ansfried the younger, bishop of Utrecht (bishop from 995 d. 1010) whose long-reigning predecessor, Bishop Balderic of Utrecht, and paternal uncle (*patruus*), Archbishop Robert of Trier (bishop from 931 d. 956), were once described as close blood relatives (*consanguinitate proximi*).⁴³ Ansfried was influential with the king, had no male heir, and his family was well connected to both the Rhine delta and the Liège area. Ansfried was probably also related to Goderan, an advocate of Gembloux Abbey who had a connection to Haspengouw.⁴⁴ A Gembloux Abbey charter, dated 3 April 961, shows Goderan's son Eremfrid held Donceel, which was described as being in a county named after the whole Haspengouw ('*in comitatu Asbanio*'). Jongbloed proposes that Goderan was also advocate of St Servais in Maastricht, who was involved in the transaction concerning Lens-St-Servais in 946 (above), near Donceel, in the county of Avernas.⁴⁵ Aarts has explicitly proposed that this Eremfrid might be the one found in later records such as the one concerning Velm in 982.⁴⁶

In contrast, after the tenth century, there is no evidence that Ricfried's descendants were influential over any bishoprics; and it is doubtful that being a relative of the repeatedly rebellious Reginars would have helped anyone become a bishop.⁴⁷ The bishops Balderic of Utrecht and Balderic I of Liège were long dead when Balderic II of Liège was invested in 1008, and the Reginarid Count Lambert of Louvain was an enemy of the king and the church. While Balderic I's supporters caused a notable controversy, medieval accounts describe Balderic II as someone who rose up as a church officer (*vicedomnus*) and royal chaplain for Otto III and Henry II,

42 Daris, *Histoire de la bonne ville, de l'église et des comtes de Looz*, 2 vols (Liège, 1864-1865), I, p. 131; II, section 'Documents historiques de l'église de Looz', p. 1.

43 *Vita Brunonis altera*, ed. by Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 4 (Hannover, 1841), chapter 14, p. 278. 'Patruus': Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, ed. and trans. by Werner Trillmich (Darmstadt: xx, 1957; repr. 1974), 4. 31; *Ottonian Germany. The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. by David A. Warner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 4. 31, pp. 174-75.

44 *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*, chapter 11, pp. 529-30; Jongbloed, 'Listige Immo', pp. 29-30; Baerten, 'Ansfrieds en Balderiks', p. 214; Baerten, 'Les Ansfrieds', pp. 1147, 1156.

45 Donceel: Charles-Gustave Roland, *Recueil des chartes de l'Abbaye de Gembloux* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1921), no. 5, pp. 15-16. Lens: Hackeng, no. 21, p. 271, and pp. 185-6.

46 Aarts, 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', p. 74 n. 103.

47 Cf. Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2 who suggested the king aimed to pacify Lotharingia with this appointment.

and this is believable.⁴⁸ In this period of the 'Imperial Church', German kings were relatively successful in selecting loyal bishops.

In summary, the evidence of Balderic II's name and bishopric cannot be used as proof of any specific relationship to any one person or family. To the extent that some connection to the Balderics is arguably implied, then a blood relationship is not necessary. A Balderic had been bishop of Utrecht for most of the tenth century, so Balderic was a very likely name for any boy with Rhine-Maas delta family connections, if a clerical career was planned.

5. Balderic II and His Connections to the Rhine-Maas Delta

There are at least four pieces of evidence which connect Balderic II to the Rhine delta region, where the Balderic family had been important in the tenth century.

- Unusually for Haspengouw, the patron saint of the church established at Borgloon is the Utrecht missionary to the Frisians, St Odulphe. Indeed, Bishop Balderic of Utrecht had a known interest in the relics of this saint.⁴⁹ In 1180, when Borgloon's church was burnt down, the collegiate church of Saint Salvator in Utrecht, which Balderic had given Odulphe's relics, agreed to supply new relics to Borgloon.⁵⁰
- Of several known estates donated by Balderic II to Liège churches while bishop, the fortified town (*oppidum*) of Pannerden was an allod from his own inheritance.⁵¹ Pannerden is where the Rhine and Waal diverge, very close to Cleves and Herwen, both associated with the family of Balderic of Utrecht, and more than 140km north of Liège.⁵²
- Third, in a royal charter of 1008, King Henry II (king since 1002, emperor from 1014, d. 1023) made a grant of forest rights between Antwerp and Louvain to Bishop Balderic II and a Count Balderic

48 Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2, n. 51 bis. *Vita Balderici Episcopus Leodiensis*, ed. by Pertz, MGH Scriptorum, 4 (Hannover, 1841), n. 107; *Vita Balderici Episcopi Hildesheimenses*, ed. by Waitz, MGH Scriptorum rerum Germanicarum, 8 (Hannover, 1878), p. 30.

49 Van de Weerd, 'Parochie, Stad, Graafschap', *Handboek van de parochie van Bijsterveld*, 'Les sépultures', pp. 386-37.

50 Daris, *Histoire de Looz*, I, p. 134.

51 Pannerden: Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapitre 1, § 2, n. 51 bis; 'indiscutablement du patrimoine privé de l'évêque'; Bijsterveld, 'Sépultures', p. 386; *Vita Balderici*, chapter 3, pp. 725-26; Anselme, *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium, Traiectensium et Leodiensium*, ed. by Rudolf Köpcke, MGH Scriptorum, 7 (Hannover, 1846), p. 206.

52 Herwen: *Gelre en Zutphen*, I, no. 70, p. 70. Ricfrid's memorial, discussed above, mentioned his alias Dodo. Cleves: Jongbloed, 'Immed von Kleve'.

together.⁵³ It seems that the two people involved had claims to these lands which needed to be handled at the same time. The coincidence of their name adds to the impression that the count and the bishop were related. This Count was from the lower Rhine. We know from Alpertus of Metz that he had a fort named *Upladium* and that he successfully claimed the prefecture of an uncle (*avunculus*), the *praefectus* Godfried.⁵⁴ This involved leading the defence of the Rhine-Maas delta during Viking raids, and possession of a fort (*municipuncula*) in Gennep (*Ganipae*) with a tower, perhaps at the Gennepershuis site, handily positioned at the confluence of the Maas and the Niers.⁵⁵ Aarts has argued that this may also have been held by Ricfrid, ancestor of the Balderics, and perhaps his son Rudolf.⁵⁶ Ricfrid's monument, discussed above, mentions that he drove heathens away (*paganos stravit, hinc et eos pepulit*) and calls Rudolf '*preses*', a term which could have a similar meaning to *praefectus*, and did not normally mean bishop, as assumed by Vanderkindere.⁵⁷ Aarts has explicitly proposed that Count Balderic is a male-line descendant of Ricfrid.⁵⁸ Jongbloed and van Winter have suggested less direct connections between Count Balderic and the Balderics⁵⁹ (see Figure 2 above). Aarts also believes, like Vanderkindere, that this charter, together with other evidence, indicates that Balderic II and Count Balderic shared common ancestry with Ansfried.⁶⁰

- Finally, Balderic II was called a kinsman of Dirk III of 'Frisia' (West Frisia, later Holland) in the *Vita Balderici*. This reports that in the lead up to the Battle of Vlaardingien in 1018, Duke Godefrid, leader of

53 DiBe ID 1127: ed. by Harry Bresslau, Hermann Bloch and Robert Holtzmann, MGH Diplomata, Heinrich II and Arduin, (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1900-1903) no. 186, pp. 221-2.

54 Upladium: Jongbloed, 'Balderik "van Upladium" (c. 970-5 juni 1021). Karoling met een krasje in nu Gelderse contreien', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen Gelre*, 103 (2012), 7-44.

55 Alpertus of Metz, *De diversitate temporum*, I. 8-9, 16; II. 1, 5-6, ed. by Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 4 (Hannover, 1841), pp. 704-5, 708, 710-11 (*Gebeurtenissen van deze tijd*, trans. by Hans van Rij (Hilversum, 1999), 50-52, 57, 61, 64-65; *Warfare and Politics in Medieval Germany, c. 1000: On the Variety of Our Times by Alpert of Metz*, trans. by Bachrach, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, 52 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), pp. 17-21, 29, 35, 41-43).

56 Aarts, 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', pp. 50-52, 'Montferland', p. 32; Alpertus of Metz, II. 6 (ed. Pertz, p. 712; trans. van Rij, p. 65; trans. Bachrach, p. 43).

57 Vollgraff and van Hoorn, "Bijlage IV", p. 125 (line 5 of epitaph; see also note p. 127); Jan Frederik Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 831-32 ('praefectus'), pp. 839-40 ('praeses'); Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, 294.

58 See Aarts, 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', and 'Montferland', pp. 22, 27 for examples.

59 Jongbloed, 'Immed von Kleve'; Jongbloed, 'Listige Immo'; Johanna Maria van Winter, 'Middenrijks Friesland een Markgraafschap?', in *Middeleeuwers in drieboud* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2017), pp. 135-60 (originally published as 'Mittelreichisches Friesland, eine Markgraafschafft?', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis*, 13 (2010), pp. 33-57).

60 Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', pp. 34-35; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, pp. 124, 298.

the imperial campaign against Dirk, accused Balderic II of taking the side of his blood relative (*videlicet ob societatem cognati sanguinis illum favere partibus inimici*).⁶¹ Ironically, this duke's father, Count Godefrid 'the captive', was a first cousin to Dirk's mother, in the House of Ardenne (see Figure 4 above). Coming from him then, this accusation implies that the relationship of Balderic and Dirk was quite close. There are gaps in our knowledge of Dirk's ancestry, but he has no known connection to the Balderics or Reginars. We will, however, see that his grandfather Dirk II was part of the Flemish margrave's circle in Ghent, and gave his son, the father of Dirk III, the typical Flemish name Arnulf.

Clearly, these are all indications of a possible family alliance to the most powerful families of the Rhine delta and the bishopric of Utrecht, but it must be emphasized that none of them prove a blood relationship between Balderic II and the Balderic family, let alone any specific person in that family.

6. Other Relatives of Balderic II

Apart from Dirk III of Frisia, and Count Balderic, both from the Rhine delta, some more relatives of Balderic II were directly named or hinted at in medieval records.

First, Count Lambert of Louvain was described as a blood relative (*consanguineus*) of Bishop Balderic II of Liège.⁶² As shown in Figure 2, he was a member of the Reginar family, and a first cousin to Rudolf, son of Nevelung. This is weak circumstantial evidence in favour of Vanderkindere's proposal that Balderic II descends specifically from Rudolf. Notably, it was not an argument used by Vanderkindere or Baerten, but it is mentioned as relevant evidence by Kupper.⁶³ To look at it another way, Rudolf and his brother are the only known cousins of Lambert, known only because of the chance survival of the 943 charter. In effect, the argument would be that the cousin we know by accident must be the one we are looking for.

Second, Balderic II's medieval life story, the *Vita Balderici*, emphasizes his close kinship with Count Arnulf of Valenciennes.⁶⁴ This requires sepa-

61 *Vita Balderici*, chapter 27, p. 735. Identification of 'Gothelo' in the *Vita*: van Winter, 'Middenrijks Friesland', p. 154.

62 *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, 3.5, ed. I, 1, MGH Scriptores, 7 (Hannover, 1846), pp. 467-68. Date estimate: Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, 'Introduction', n. 31.

63 Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2, including notes 51, 53, 54.

64 *Vita Balderici*, chapter 4, p. 726; chapter 21, p. 732: 'unico suae cognationis flori'. Interpretation: Daris, 'Arnoul 1^{er}', pp. 70. The relationship is also mentioned in a falsified charter of 1015, DiBe ID 3310 (new transcription online by DiBe collaborator: <https://>



rate discussion below. We will see that despite the commonly accepted assertions of Vanderkindere and Baerten, the ancestry of Arnulf is largely uncertain. However, like Dirk III's family, we will see that Arnulf was associated with the circle of the margrave of Flanders in Ghent.

Third, Kupper has also proposed a blood relationship with Balderic II's younger colleague, Bishop Gerard of Cambrai, who Balderic described as *proximus*, in correspondence with another bishop, Arnulf of Reims.⁶⁵ This term is used for close relatives, but clerics often used the term for their spiritual relatives in the church, and this case involves three bishops.⁶⁶ Gerard's father was another Arnulf, lord of Florennes and Rumigny. His mother was a member of the Verdun branch of the House of Ardenne.

7. Nevelung's Brothers

If Balderic II and the Balderic family had a common ancestry, must Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, necessarily be the link? Having identified the Balderics as possible ancestors of the later counts of Loon, Vanderkindere and Baerten should have considered whether the brothers of Count Nevelung might be ancestors of the counts of Loon.

Although a full analysis of the evidence cannot fit in this article, we can say that after the above-discussed 943 charter of Balderic of Utrecht, which mentioned his brother Nevelung being dead, we find counts with the same names as their two other brothers, Rudolf and Yrimfrid, near the areas which that charter associates with Nevelung's widow.

Concerning Yremfrid, there has been much speculation. In short, around 940-70, the fragmentary records suggest most of the Lower-Lotharingian region between Maas and Rhine was under a count or counts named Eremfrid, and the advocate of the abbey of Stavelot-Malmedy was

www.diplomata-belgica.be/charter_details_en.php?dibe_id=3310). Older edition: Roland, 'Chartes namuroises inédites', *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur*, 27 (1908), no. 13, pp. 223-25.

65 Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2, n. 51. The letter: 'Appendix ad cod. D. Phill. 4632', in *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibliothecae regiae bruxellensis, pars 1: Codices latini membrane*, 2 vols (Brussels: Typis Polleunis, Ceuterick et De Smet, 1889), vol. 2, pp. 485-86, here p. 486: 'cum proximo nostro communi Gerardo Arnulfi filio'. Cf. Nicolas Ruffini-Ronzani, 'Enjeux de pouvoir et compétition aristocratique en Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse (fin x^e-milieu xi^e siècle). Retour sur les fondations de Saint-Gengulphe et de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Florennes', *Revue Bénédictine*, 122 (2012), 1-24, here p. 18 n. 132.

66 'Proximus': Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, 'La désignation des relations et des groupes de parenté en latin médiéval', *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi*, 46-47 (1986-87), 65-108, here pp. 88-89: 'le proximus est aussi et surtout ce parent spirituel qu'est le "prochain", frère en Dieu que l'ancien français désigne précisément du terme de "proisme".'

also a count of this name.⁶⁷ Aarts and Jongbloed have presented evidence that at least some of these records represent Ricfrid's son.⁶⁸ In some counties, he was (or they were) succeeded by Count Palatine Herman *pusillus* ('the small'), ancestor of the so-called Ezzonid family, whose ancestry is uncertain.⁶⁹ On at least one occasion, in a royal charter of 949 made in Nijmegen, a Count Eremfrid used a short form of his name, which Herman's descendants also used, Ezzo.⁷⁰ Also appearing in that charter was a Count Rudolf.

There was probably a younger Eremfrid also. The one with the county containing Velm in 982 is decades after the main concentration of Rhineland records, and in a new place. As mentioned above, Aarts has argued that he may be the son of Goderan the advocate. This younger Eremfrid might also appear in the 966 Gelmen charter described above, mentioned as having a county in the Mühlgau (*Mulehkeuue*) just east of Sint-Odiliënberg. He may also have been the first witness in the 967 grant for Countess Bertha, which is discussed below.

Concerning Rudolf, the son of Ricfrid, we have already noted Aarts's proposal that his title *preses* probably connects him to a Maas river jurisdiction. Of Nevelung's three brothers, only Rudolf is described on the Utrecht epitaph as marrying and having a family (*preses Rodolphus duxit et unde genus*)⁷¹ Thus, if there was a younger Count Eremfrid in this family, Rudolf is a logical candidate to be his father. Surprisingly though, there has apparently never been any published proposal that this *preses* Rudolf might account for any of the Rudolfs recorded in Haspengouw and Maas regions in the mid-tenth century.

In summary, the least discussed brother of Nevelung, *preses* Rudolf, may have been the count of 'Hocht' around 950, and an ancestor of later counts in the region. More generally, we can expect that Ricfrid had more descendants than the ones we have records of, perhaps even including the powerful Ezzonids.

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- 67 Most of the evidence is gathered in Nonn, *Pagus und Comitatus*, pp. 75, 83, 85, 87-88, 177-79, 181 including notes. Stavelot Eremfrid: *Recueil des chartes de l'Abbaye de Stavelot-Malmédy*, ed. by Joseph Halkin and Roland (1909), as witness, nos 64, 65, pp. 149-53; as advocate, nos 66, 68, 71, 72, 75-77, pp. 153-5 and 77 Eremfrid was a count. Jongbloed, 'Listige Immo', pp. 20-22, 54 n. 1. Those who believe he was count of Huy, but he argues against this.
- 68 Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', pp. 34-37; 'Ansfried, bisschop', pp. 50-55; 'Montferland', p. 27; Jongbloed, 'Immed von Kleve', pp. 38-40.
- 69 Nonn, *Pagus und Comitatus*, pp. 87-88; Verdonk, *Alzey-Zutphen*, p. 97 n. 654; Ursula Lewald, 'Die Ezzonen. Das Schicksal eines rheinischen Fürstengeschlechts', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 43 (1979), 120-68, here p. 125.
- 70 MGH *Diplomata*, Otto I, ed. Sickel, no. 111, pp. 194-95.
- 71 Vollgraff and van Hoorn, "Bijlage IV", p. 125, line 12.

8. Hiding in Plain Sight: Count Otto of Loon

Having examined the standard account of the parentage of Count Gilbert of Loon and Bishop Balderic II, we now turn to the medieval evidence, which gives a different account.

Jongbloed, in his 2008 ‘Flamenses’ article, was the first to take strong issue with the striking fact that Vanderkindere and Baerten all but ignored the passage in the fourteenth-century third continuation of the chronicle (*Gesta*) of the Abbey of Sint-Truiden, which names the father of Count Gilbert and Bishop Balderic II as Count Otto of Loon.⁷² This is the only medieval source to say anything about their parents. Clear medieval documentation thus exists, but is in direct conflict with the dominant understanding found in history writing for over a century. We might expect the authorities on this subject, Vanderkindere and Baerten, to have published strong arguments against this account, but this is not the case. Vanderkindere does not even mention it. Baerten only mentions Count Otto in a footnote, where he calls him mythical (*mythique*) because he only appears in one record.⁷³ This is obviously unsatisfactory because his alternative proposal, Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, is himself only known from one record, and, in contrast to the Sint-Truiden chronicle, that record does not mention Loon at all. For this period, all too many facts are only known from one record. When attempting to reconstruct what is most likely, we need to use weak evidence in a careful way.

The third continuation’s identification of the mother of Gilbert and Balderic as Lutgarde demonstrates the need for caution. The writer attempted some erudite genealogical observations about her, but three errors can be identified, and her status as their mother is now justifiably questioned.

The first two errors are straightforward. Lutgarde’s mother, Ermen-garde, known from other records, is called a daughter of the Carolingian Duke Otto of Lower Lotharingia; but, she was his sister.⁷⁴ The text also confuses Ermengarde with her sister, Gerberga, when it describes her as an ancestor of Godfried of Bouillon (1060-1100).⁷⁵ The relationship with this Godefrid, and Ermengarde’s marriage to a count of Namur, is enough to identify the family (see Figure 5).

72 *Continuatio Tertia*, s.a. 1007 (ed. de Borman, II, p. 139; trans. Lavigne, II, p. 227).

73 Baerten, ‘Origines’, pp. 459-60.

74 *Genealogia ex stirpe St Arnulfi*, ed. by Johannes Heller, MGH Scriptores, 25 (Hannover, 1880), p. 383; *Genealogica comitum Buloniensium*, ed. by Bethmann, MGH Scriptores, 9 (Hannover, 1851), p. 300; *Vita Arnulfi Episcopi Suessionensis*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores, 15.2 (Hannover, 1888), p. 879; *Fundatio Ecclesae S. Albani Namucensis*, ed. by Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores, 15.2 (Hannover, 1888), p. 962.

75 *Continuatio Tertia*, s.a. 1005, ed. de Borman, II, p. 139; trans. Lavigne p. 227.

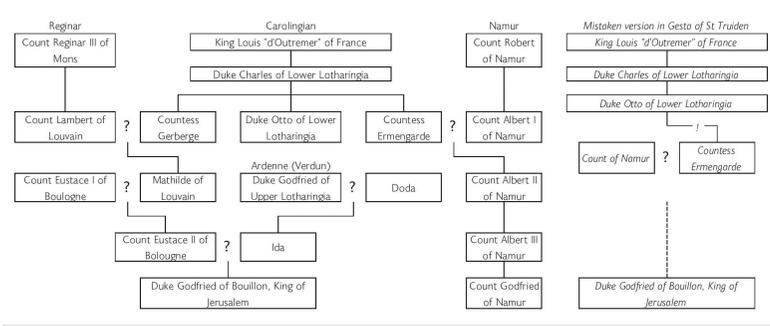


Figure 5. The real connections of Namur and Bouillon to Duke Otto, compared to those reported in the third continuation of the *Gesta* of Sint-Truiden. (See text for sources.)

The third problem is that it is chronologically impossible for Lutgarde to be Balderic II's mother.⁷⁶ The solution is supplied by the only other medieval source which mentions Lutgarde. This is a genealogical note which occurs in several of the manuscripts of the *Vita Arnulfi Episcopi Suessioniensis*, a twelfth-century life story of Bishop Arnulf of Soissons (d. 1087) by Lisiard of Soissons (d. 1126) and Hariulf of Oudenburg (d. 1143). Although also imperfect, it was made only a few generations after Lutgarde, and it used close relatives as informants, so it can be considered a strong source for Arnulf's contemporary cousins.⁷⁷ It calls Lutgarde the mother of Counts Emmo and Otto, not Bishop Balderic II and Count Gilbert. Count Emmo of Loon appears in records between 1046 and 1078, so by accepting this account as Lutgarde's correct connection to the counts of Loon, the chronological problem disappears (see Figure 6).⁷⁸

The doubts about Lutgarde do not necessarily apply to Otto. We do not have direct medieval evidence for the relationship of Emmo to his predecessors, Gilbert, Balderic, and Arnulf. A traditional guess, which is used by Baerten and widely reported as a fact (see Figure 1), has been to say that Emmo must be Gilbert's son and Lutgarde must be Gilbert's wife.⁷⁹ In fact, Count Emmo of Loon should not be assumed to be the son

76 Jongbloed 'De Flamenses', pp. 82-83 n. 110. *Annales*, s.a. 945, ed. Lauer, p. 96; trans. F. Van der Vliet, *Annales de Loon*, p. 41. Balderic II chronology: Kupper, *Liège et l'Église*, I, chapter 1, § 2, n. 77 Renée I. A. Nip, *Arnulfus van Oudenburg, biograaf van de bisschop van Soissons (1087), mens en model: een bronnenstudie*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Groningen, 1995), chapter 4. 78 For Emmo: Verdonk, 'Heren van Herlaer?', pp. 243-57; Verdonk, 'Graaf Arnold van Loon (eind 11de-begin 12de eeuw): Was er één of waren er twee?', *Limburg – Het Oude Land van Loon*, 84 (2005), 73-81. 79 Baerten, 'Origines', p. 460.

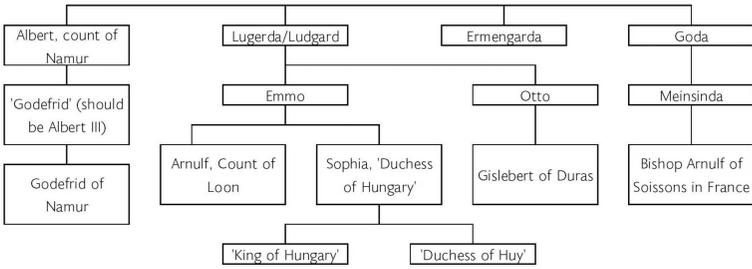


Figure 6. The cousins of Bishop Arnulf of Soissons as explained by the *Vita Arnulfi Episcopi Suessioniensis*. (See text for sources.)

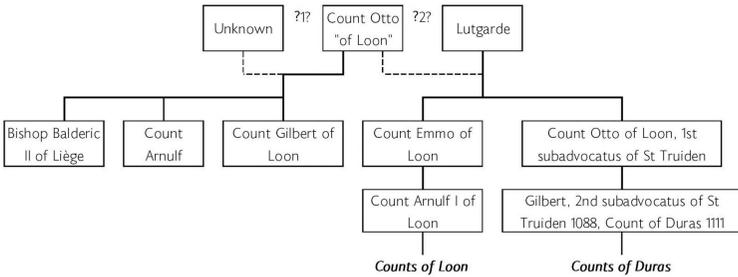


Figure 7. The unconsidered possibility of second marriages. (See text for discussion.)

of Gilbert, as already pointed out by Verhelst in 1984, but neither can we assume that he is the son of Arnulf.⁸⁰ Proposing a second marriage for Otto would fit easiest with our medieval sources, as in Figure 7.

In contrast, Jongbloed was mistaken to try to resolve the problems with Lutgarde by using the 1936 proposal of Félix Rousseau.⁸¹ Rousseau simply found a completely different Duke Otto who lived early enough to superficially fix the chronological problem.⁸² This is not justifiable from the Sint-Truiden text, which clearly describes the Carolingian Otto. Even more problematic, because of the way he reconciled the several medieval

80 Verhelst, 'Nieuwe visie', p. 248; Bijsterveld, 'Sépultures', p. 383.

81 Jongbloed, 'De Flamenses', p. 83 n. 111.

82 Felix Rousseau, *Actes des Comtes de Namur de la première race, 946-1196* (Bruxelles: Marcel Hayez, 1936), pp. XXXVI, XLVII-L, CXXIV; Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 44 n. 4.

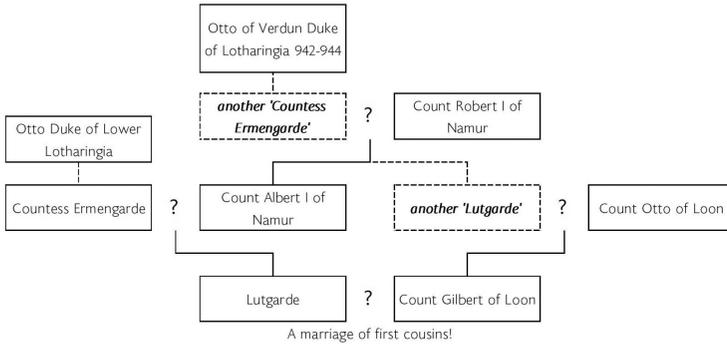


Figure 8. Consanguinity problem with the proposal of Rousseau (also used by Jongsbloed). (See text for sources and discussion.)

records, Baerten correctly pointed out that Rousseau's proposal demands a marriage of first cousins, as shown in Figure 8.⁸³

In short, it has been wrong for historiography to ignore the clear naming of Otto in the third continuation of the Sint-Truiden Abbey chronicle. For any discussion of the father of Count Gilbert and his brothers, this is logically the most important record we have. It was clearly written by a well-informed and interested medieval writer with access to relevant local records which we no longer have.⁸⁴ The same continuation is frequently relied upon by historians, including Vanderkindere and Baerten, and there is no other medieval record which disagrees with it concerning the father of Count Gilbert and Balderic II.

The likely existence of Otto, on its own, is sufficient reason to say that the boy Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, is a problematic candidate for father of Gilbert and his brothers.

9. Otto, Brother of Arnulf, in Flanders

Can we identify Otto of Loon in any other record? Eduard Hlawitschka once remarked in a different context that there are not many Ottos in



⁸³ Baerten, 'Origines', p. 460 n. 6.

⁸⁴ Niels De Rooij, *From the highest peaks into the deepest abyss. The construction of monastic identity in the Gesta abbatum Trudonensium by Rudolph of St. Trond* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Utrecht, 2017); <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/352272>, pp. 60-64.

tenth-century Lotharingia, apart from some in the Ardennes region.⁸⁵ Jongbloed has proposed an identification of Otto in two records from the abbey of St Peter's Blandinium in Ghent.⁸⁶ This Otto is certainly worth consideration because he has long been proposed to be a brother of Count Arnulf of Valenciennes, a known relative of Bishop Balderic II.⁸⁷ More generally, writers such as Verdonk and Aarts have noted that several early counts of Loon were named Arnulf, and this Otto certainly had a brother of that name.⁸⁸

Jongbloed refers to three records from St Peter's, two of which involve a Rodger with brothers named Otto and Arnulf, and one which mentions a Rodger who is brother to Arnulf of Valenciennes. The first record is dated '29 June 960', though we can only be confident that the original was made between 955-64 according to Koch. It involves a grant by a certain Rodger of his patrimonial rights at Anzegem (*Ansoldingehem*).⁸⁹ This was in Flemish territory, west of the Scheldt, and thus in the Kingdom of France. One group of witnesses is named as the grantor's brothers: Odo (Otto), Hugo, Arnulf, Rainer, and Rodbert. The rest of the witness list is impressive, including Arnulf the margrave of Flanders himself, Count *Theodericus*, presumed to be Dirk II of Holland, grandfather of Dirk III, and two more counts named Arnulf, one of whom may be Dirk II's son and Dirk III's father.

A second shorter record about the same grant by Rodger is dated '2 October 983', and was made between 981-85 according to Koch. It mentions the same place (*Ansoldengim*), and this time the brothers named are Arnulf, Odo, and Rainer.⁹⁰

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- 85 Eduard Hlawitschka, 'Die Verbreitung des Namens Zwentibold in frühdeutscher Zeit. Personengeschichtliche Beobachtungen und Erwägungen', in *Festschrift Herbert Kolb zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Klaus Matzel and Hans-Gert Roloff (Bern etc: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 264-92, here pp. 274-75 n. 60.
- 86 Overlapping editions of St Peter's Blandinium early charters: *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland tot 1299*, 1: *Eind van de 7e eeuw tot 1222*, ed. by A. C. F. Koch (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970); *Chartes et documents de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre au Mont Blanchin à Gand, depuis sa fondation jusqu'à sa suppression. Avec une introduction historique*, ed. by Auguste van Lokeren, 2 vols (Ghent, 1868-1872), I: *Liber Traditionum Sancti Petri Blandiniensis: livre des donations faites à l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Gand, depuis ses origines jusqu'au XI^e siècle, avec des additions jusqu'en 1273*, ed. by Arnold Fayen, in *Oorkondenboek der Stad Gent, 2e série: Chartes et documents*, 1 (Ghent, 1906).
- 87 *Vita Balderici*, pp. 724-38; falsified charter of 1015, DiBe ID 3310 as cited above ('Arnulfo comite de Valencines consanguineo meo'); Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, pp. 54, 86 n. 3; Baerten, 'Origines', p. 1234 n. 4.
- 88 Verhelst, 'Nieuwe visie', p. 248 n. 53; Aarts, 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', p. 72 n. 66.
- 89 Koch ed., no. 38, pp. 65-66 = Van Lokeren ed., no. 28, pp. 33-34. Date discussion: Koch, 'De dateringen in het "Liber traditionum sancti Petri Blandiniensis" van omstreeks 1035', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire*, 123 (1958), 137-90.
- 90 Koch ed., no. 56, p. 107; = Van Lokeren ed., no. 59, pp. 53-54; = Fayen ed., no. 92, pp. 90-91; Koch, 'Dateringen', no. 92, pp. 174-75, 175 n. 1.

The third record, dated '29 June 983', explicitly mentions Arnulf count of Valenciennes (*Arnulfus comes Valentianensis*), and his brother named Rodger.⁹¹ Koch estimates that it was made between 982-86.⁹² However, no other brothers are mentioned this time, and this Rodger was deceased already, even though this grant was made at a similar time to, and maybe even before, the second record of this Anzegem grant, which mentioned a living Rodger. Although historians including Vanderkindere, Gorissen, and Baerten have equated these two sets of Arnulfs and Rodgers, Koch, in his detailed analysis of these records, rejected this equation.⁹³ Jongbloed gives sufficient counter arguments to show that Koch's position is also uncertain, but not enough to prove Koch wrong.⁹⁴

In favour of Koch's doubts, none of the Anzegem brothers are described as counts or associated with Valenciennes, including Arnulf. In favour of Jongbloed's proposal, three of the Anzegem brothers' names, Arnulf, Rainer, and Rodger, are also found in the 967 grant for Countess Bertha (discussed below), the presumed mother of Arnulf of Valenciennes. However, they are not called brothers in that record, and we will see that evidence has been identified by Aarts which suggests different names for the brothers of Count Arnulf of Valenciennes. It is also worth mentioning that Arnulf of Valenciennes, and his wife Lietgard and son Adalbert, had an interest in Mater (*Materna*), now a part of Oudenaarde, 13km east of Anzegem, in imperial territory, next to the frontier fort of Ename on the Scheldt. However, this is also not conclusive evidence of a connection.⁹⁵

In summary, Jongbloed has made the only serious proposal so far concerning the identity of the Count Otto of Loon who is named in the *Gesta* of Sint-Truiden, making him a brother of Arnulf of Valenciennes. In the next section we will discuss further evidence relevant to this proposal.

10. Bertha and Her Son Arnulf

In his proposal about Otto and Arnulf of Valenciennes, Jongbloed raised a doubt (described below) about Baerten's interpretation of the grant made

91 Koch ed., no. 58, pp. 108-9; = Van Lokeren ed., no. 53-54; = Fayen ed., no. 93, p. 91.

92 Koch, 'Dateringen', no. 93, p. 175.

93 Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, I, pp. 123-4; Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', p. 129; Baerten, 'Origines', p. 1234 n. 4; Koch, 'Dat

94 Jongbloed, 'De Flamenses', pp. 61-62, 83-84.

95 Charter dated 30 September 998, (estimated 995-1012 by Koch, 'Dateringen', no. 104a, p. 182): Koch ed., no. 65, pp. 120-21 = Fayen ed., no. 104, p. 98 = Van Lokeren ed., no. 87, p. 69. For the identification of Materna, see Maurits Gysseling, *Toponymisch Woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West-Duitsland (voor 1226)*, 2 Vols (1960), II, p. 671.



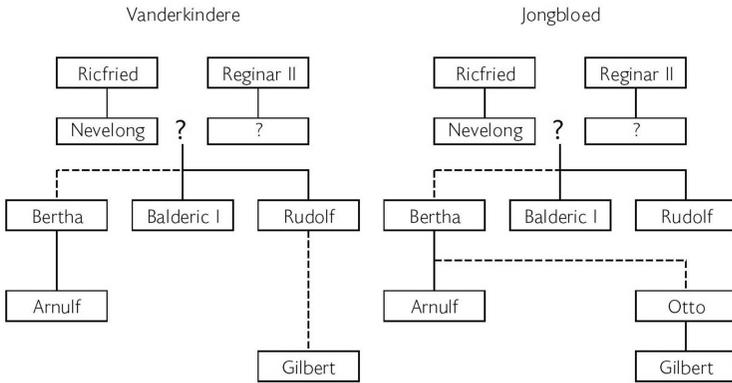


Figure 9. Comparison of Vanderkindere and Jongbloed. Dotted lines: connections with no medieval documentary evidence. (see discussion in text).

to Sint-Truiden Abbey in 967, for a dying countess named Bertha.⁹⁶ In fact, there are bigger problems with the standard interpretations of this grant than commonly realized, and this creates misunderstandings about what has been proven concerning the origins of Loon. As an example, despite being critical of some of their most basic assertions, Jongbloed went along with Vanderkindere and Baerten concerning Bertha being both a daughter of Nevelong on the one hand, and the mother of Count Arnulf of Valenciennes on the other (see Figure 9).

Jongbloed's acceptance of Vanderkindere's basic assumption about Bertha's parentage is not unusual. While historians sometimes note that the connection between Rudolf and Loon is not completely proven, since Baerten, only Aarts has raised doubts about Vanderkindere's proposal concerning Bertha's parentage. He has also argued against the equation of Bertha's son Arnulf with Count Arnulf of Valenciennes.⁹⁷

Both Vanderkindere and Baerten presented Bertha's grant, made for her by her son Arnulf, as supporting their account of the Balderics as ancestors of the counts of Loon. Despite this, Vanderkindere's explanations are scattered thinly, and he did not discuss it at all under Loon or Haspengouw. Baerten worked hard to reconcile Vanderkindere's ideas with the evidence and has succeeded in making them almost unquestioned. Therefore, we will work through this topic in several steps, beginning with the fundamental doubts raised by Aarts.

⁹⁶ Jongbloed, 'Flamenses', p. 84 n. 118.

⁹⁷ Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', pp. 52-53 n. 365; 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', p. 72 n. 66.

There are two medieval records of Bertha's son's grant, both from much later. One is in the third continuation of the chronicle of Sint-Truiden.⁹⁸ The earlier record is an 1146 reconfirmation by the margrave of Flanders of that time, Thierry of Alsace (d. 1168).⁹⁹ This Flemish confirmation only concerns Provin, between Lille and Lens in French Flanders, 164km to the west of Sint-Truiden. Neither record gives an exact date, but the original grant was clearly made before Bertha died, which the chronicle tells us was 16 July 967.¹⁰⁰ Although the third continuation writer was apparently influenced by the text of the confirmation, this was not the chronicle's only source. The chronicle adds, for example, that the grant included tithes from Brustem, and a forest in Melveren, both near Sint-Truiden.

Notably, the original witnesses named in the 1146 confirmation were all explicitly called counts: Eremfrid, Herman, Reyner, Rodulf, Geveard, and Rotger. In the tradition of equating all Reginars and Rudolfs in this period to Reginar III and his brother, Dhondt, followed by Aarts, argued that the Provin grant must have happened before the expulsion of Reginar III c. 958.¹⁰¹ But these two names are not unusual enough to be used to overturn clear evidence. We have already seen that Rudolf was a name used in the Sint-Truiden area, and that in this period the name Reyner or Reginar appears in Ghent, and in the Ardennes (Figure 4). It was also the name of a half-brother of Wicbert, founder of the abbey of Gembloux, and used twice in the seigneurial family of Florennes-Rumigny.¹⁰²

Aarts is correct to say that Baerten did not present any clear arguments for equating Bertha's son Count Arnulf with Count Arnulf of Valenciennes. This is important because despite a comment by Dhondt to the contrary, we have seen that the name Arnulf was very common among nobles with connections to Flanders at this time.¹⁰³ However, Baerten's sources, Dhondt and Vanderkindere, pointed to a shared connection to the Provin area, about 45km west of Valenciennes. The Ghent charter of '29 June 983', which we discussed above, shows that Arnulf of Valenciennes not only had a deceased brother named Rodger, but also that he had land at *Corulis* in Caribant or Carembaut (*in pago Karabantensi*), the small *pagus* near Lille

98 Narrative record of the grant: *Continuatio Tertia*, 3.12-3.14, s.a. 964-72, ed. de Borman p. 131; trans. Lavigne pp. 220-1.

99 1146 confirmation DiBe ID 1613 as cited above.

100 Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, I, p. 2.

101 Jan Dhondt, 'De crisis van het grafelijk gezin van Baerten, Graafschap Loon, p. 11.
102 Wicbert: *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*, ed. by Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 8 (Hannover, 1848) chapter 20, p. 533. Florennes: Alain Dierkens, *Abbayes et chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VII^e-XI^e siècles): Contribution à l'histoire religieuse des campagnes du Haut Moyen Âge*, Beihefte der Francia, 14 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1985), pp. 262-3.

103 Dhondt, 'Crisis', p. 52.



which contained Provin.¹⁰⁴ Another record from St Peter's dated 1 January 994 (987-95 according to Koch) shows that Arnulf of Valenciennes with his wife and son, Lietgard and Adalbert, granted rights in Carvin, also very close to Provin.¹⁰⁵ Arnulf clearly had a strong link to that region, which in 967 was under French royal control, while Margrave Arnulf II was still a minor.¹⁰⁶

Bertha, and her son's connection to Brustem and Melveren in the Sint-Truiden and Borgloon area, also arguably makes it likely that her son is Arnulf of Valenciennes because we know he was a relative of Bishop Balderic II, whose brothers were later counts in the region. But that is inconclusive because surviving records probably only scratch the surface of Bertha and her son's widely dispersed lands between the Maas and Scheldt. At an unknown date, a Bertha and her three sons gave land to Nivelles Abbey in the area near Loupaigne.¹⁰⁷ Aarts is surely correct to argue that her three sons Harnulf, Herman, and Givard must be the same three mentioned in the 967 Provin charter.¹⁰⁸ It is worth noting that in the same document, there is also a grant of one manse at nearby Perwez (*Petrosowado*) by 'Berta Yda' – presumably a grant made by two people. Furthermore, there was a later Nivelles grant made by a Count Arnulf in 1011. It involved Walsegem in Balegem, today part of Oosterzele, in East Flanders, east of the Scheldt. In this period, it was still in Brabant, in a county called Biest (*in pago Brabantensi in comitatu Bisii*).¹⁰⁹ The second lay witness was Ida. We have already seen above that Count Arnulf of Valenciennes also held Mater, so it appears he and his mother held several lands in the *pagus* of Brabant, including the Ename march. (Perhaps relevant, Bishop Balderic II later granted a place named Mater to help found the abbey of St James in Liège.¹¹⁰)

104 Dhondt, 'Crisis', pp. 47-75; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, I, p. 294, II, p. 84.

105 Fayen ed., no. 101, pp. 95-96; = Van Lokeren ed., no. 75, p. 53. Koch, 'Dateringen', no. 101, p. 178.

106 Dhondt, 'Crisis'.

107 Grants to Nivelles, DiBe ID 3648: ed. by Martien Dillo and Geertruid A.M. Van Syngel and others, *Oorkondenboek van Noord-Brabant tot 1312*, 2: *De heerlijkheden Breda en Bergen op Zoom*, 1: (709-1288) (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2000), no. 890, pp. 5-12: 'Bertha cum filiis suis Harnulfo, Hermanno, Giuardom mansas quinque super fluvio Trer, prata et silvam'; cf. MGH *Diplomata Otto I*, ed. Sickel, no. 318, pp. 432-3 reading 'Girard' instead of 'Givard'. The Trer is the upper Dyle near Loupaigne because the same document mentions a 'villa que dicitur Luponio, super fluvio Trer'.

108 Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', p. 51 n. 365; Aarts, 'Ansfried, graaf en bisschop', p. 72 n. 66.

109 DiBe ID 3808: ed. by Alphonse Wauters, 'Chartes inédites concernant le chapitre de Nivelles', *Revue d'Histoire et d'Archéologie*, 3 (1862), 444-45; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, 84 n. 1. County of Biest: Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 106; Nonn, *Pagus und Comitatus*, pp. 124-26; Aarts, 'Ansfried-probleem', p. 14.

110 Falsified charter of 1016, DiBe ID 3777: ed. by Paul Harsin in Annexe to 'Les chartes de Saint-Jacques du XI^e siècle', *Bulletin de la Société d'Art et d'Histoire du Diocèse de Liège*,

	967. Bertha, St Truiden, son and witnesses	Bertha and son, Nivelles grant	Count Arnulf of Valenciennes, '983'	Brothers with Anzegem, '960' and '983'
Arnulf	grantor/son	1st son	himself	3rd then 1st
Eremfrid	1st witness			
Herman	2nd witness	2nd son		
Reginar	3rd witness			4th then 3rd
Rodulf	4th witness			
Geveard	5th witness	3rd son		
Rotger	6th witness		dead brother	grantor
Odo (Otto)				1st then 2nd
Hugo				2nd in '960'
Rodbert				5th in '960'

Figure 10. Comparison of some contemporary brothers and witnesses, including Arnulfs, as discussed in text.

Arnulf and his son Adalbert also possessed rights at Visé near Liège, which they granted to the cathedral of St Lambert in Liège. Their deaths are commemorated for this in the necrology from there.¹¹¹ During the bishopric of Balderic II, Lietgarde, the widow of Arnulf of Valenciennes, is also recorded to have granted Hanret, in Haspengouw, today in the province of Namur, to Count Lambert of Louvain, who then granted it to the church of St James in Liège.¹¹² Vanderkindere suggested it might have been her own inheritance, but this is speculation.¹¹³

In summary, Aarts discovered a second record involving Bertha and Arnulf, and based upon that we can suggest some more records involving them. On the other hand, Aarts's doubts about the dating of the grant, and Bertha's connection to Valenciennes are misplaced. The coincidence of a connection to the small faraway *pagus* of Caribant is strong circumstantial evidence that Arnulf of Valenciennes is Arnulf the son of Bertha. The apparent association of both with Nivelles Abbey also supports this proposal. It is thus likely that Arnulf of Valenciennes had brothers named

22 (1930), 53-72. Stiennon proposed that 'Matrena' is Marneffe in Haspengouw: Jacques Stiennon, *Étude sur le chartrier et le domaine de la cathédrale de Saint-Jacques de Liège (1015-1209)* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1951), p. 219.

111 *L'obituaire de la cathédrale Saint-Lambert de Liège (IX^e à XII^e siècles)* ed. by Alain Marchandisse (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, Centre de Recherches Historiques, 1991), p. 44: 'III kalendas apriles [30 March]: commemoratio Arnulphi comitis qui dedit nobis Viosaz'; p. 145: 'kalendas novembres [23 October]: commemoratio Arnulphi comitis qui dedit nobis Viosaz'.

112 *Vita Balderici*, pp. 724-38; falsified charter of 1015, DiBe ID 3310 as cited above.

113 Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 85; Niermeyer, *Onderzoekingen*, pp. 99-100; Stiennon, *Saint-Jacques de Liège*, p. 96.

Herman, Geveard, and Rodger. These names do not match the Anzegem brothers proposed by Jongbloed, and if the Anzegem Otto was not a brother of Arnulf of Valenciennes, this weakens his argument for that Otto's connection to Loon.

Having laid out what we can say most confidently about Bertha and her son, we can begin to untangle the widely accepted supporting narratives of Baerten and Vanderkindere.

11. Did Baerten Prove that Rudolf, the Son of Nevelung, Was a Witness to the Bertha Grant?

There is an unjustified belief that Baerten demonstrated Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, to be the fourth witness in the 967 Provin charter for Bertha.¹¹⁴ Such a discovery might support Vanderkindere's and Baerten's proposal, but there was no such discovery.

Baerten, like Gorissen and Dhondt before him, tried to fit the witnesses into Vanderkindere's original narrative.¹¹⁵ This was clearly not easy, and there are problems with the resulting story. Jongbloed pointed out, for example, that if Bertha was dying and granting away family possessions, then it is remarkable that her living brother Rudolf would only be a fourth witness, even after Reyner, who Baerten believed to be a younger son of Bertha.¹¹⁶

Published discussions about the fourth witness Rudolf show the remarkable difficulty historiography has had to escape the Reginar narrative since Vanderkindere. Only two proposals have been published, and both are problematic. Either, as per Dhondt's 1943 thinking, this Rudolf is the brother of Reginar III, who was supposedly exiled many years earlier;¹¹⁷ or, as per Baerten, this is the only record of the son of Nevelung as an adult, arriving in the area as a new Rudolf to replace the old one. The possibility that another Rudolf could be involved, such as the son of Ricfrid or the father of Cunrad (d. 982), has apparently never been considered.

Baerten's explanations of this witness list provide a good example of his approach to updating Vanderkindere. By walking through some of these, it becomes clear that he was not attempting to reject, nor indeed to really prove, Vanderkindere's main conclusions.

¹¹⁴ For example, Verhelst, 'Nieuwe visie', p. 246 n. 48.

¹¹⁵ Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon'; Dhondt, 'Crisis'.

¹¹⁶ Jongbloed, 'De Flamenses', p. 84 n. 118.

¹¹⁷ Dhondt, 'Crisis' (1943), pp. 53-54. He came to doubt this position after Gorissen's 'Wording van Loon' article; see Dhondt, *Proloog van de Brabantse Geschiedenis: een inleiding tot de politieke geschiedenis van Noord-Brabant in de 9e en 10e eeuw*, Bijdragen tot de studie van het Brabantse Heem, 3 (Bergen op Zoom: Brabants Heem, 1952), p. 37 n. 70.

Q. Where is the county of Count Rudolf the fourth witness, who Baerten says is the son of Nevelung?

Although some of these counts may have come from as far away as France, given the lands involved, Baerten asserted that the fourth witness's county had to be the precursor of the county of Loon, which he calls 'Hocht'. This is simply because Rudolf is an ancestor of the counts of Loon. In fact, Baerten did not believe that any places involved in the grant were in that county, but Rudolf's presence as a witness is explained by the fact that he and Bertha are relatives, an assertion we will discuss below.¹¹⁸

Baerten's two assertions come directly from Vanderkindere. The contribution of Baerten here is simply to equate Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, with this witness, and this is simply based on the name, without any new analysis of medieval evidence.

Q. What happened to Count Werner, who Baerten also called count of 'Hocht'?

Baerten agreed with Gorissen that Werner's county, which contained Gelmen in 966, was 'Hocht'. But he also proposed that only a few months later, at the time of Bertha's 967 grant, Rudolf the fourth witness would have this county. Baerten's explanation was that in the months between the two documents, Rudolf must have come of age.¹¹⁹

However, Werner was not killed until 973, by Count Lambert of Louvain and his brother Reginar IV, and legitimate, loyal counts did not normally have their counties simply taken from them.¹²⁰ Baerten's back-up explanation in 1969 was that 'apparently' (*blijkt*) Emperor Otto I had decided the matter.¹²¹ However, there is no medieval evidence of Werner losing any county.

Baerten was again following Vanderkindere, not the evidence. Specifically, as will be discussed below, Vanderkindere assumed that Rudolf was a kind of heir to the earlier count Rudolf, and that Werner was in contrast a special kind of temporary count.

Q. What happened to Werner between 966 and his death in 973 near Mons?

Baerten accepted Vanderkindere's assertion that in 959 Werner was the advocate of Sint-Truiden, the abbey central to this important transac-

118 Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, pp. 10-12, here p. 10; Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 1237-8, here p. 1237: 'la présence de Rodolphe pour ce lieu est due à la présence de sa famille'.



nders zou hij die titel voeren tenzij in het gebied, waar zijn afstammelingen als zo len?'; Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 1237-8, here p. 1237: 'la présence de Rodolphe pour ce lieu est due à la présence de sa famille'.

119 Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 464-65, 1230, 1237-8; Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 12.

120 *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, 1.95, p. 439; Sigebert, *Chronica*, p. 351; Thietmar, *Chronicon*, Book 7 ed. and trans. Trillmich, chapter 46, pp. 402-5; trans. Warner, chapter 46, pp. 339-40.

121 Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 12.

tion.¹²² Werner was not mentioned in Bertha's charter, though advocacies of abbeys were generally for life, and he was still alive.¹²³ Baerten saw the problem but pointed out correctly that our surviving records do not explicitly mention any advocate.¹²⁴ However, problems remain for his preferred account.

Baerten also believed that this advocacy already went together with a county, the future Duras, so if Werner was still advocate, he still had this local county. Baerten's solution was that Otto I's decision happened in two phases. First, he gave Werner's county of 'Hocht' to young Rudolf, but Baerten felt compelled to modify Vanderkindere's idea and allow Werner to keep a distinct western county and advocacy a little longer.

Q. How does Baerten explain Count Eremfrid, the first witness in Bertha's charter?

Like Gorissen and Dhondt, Baerten believed that Eremfrid, the first witness, who had the same name as the count recorded in 982, must have replaced Werner as advocate and as local count.¹²⁵ However, unlike them, Baerten followed Vanderkindere by avoiding any discussion of legitimate successors of Werner, claiming that 'it seems that after 966, emperor Otto I gave the counties of the rebellious Rudolf to two members of the Balderics, namely Eremfrid and Rudolf junior, and previously to one count only, Werner.'¹²⁶ Thus, he accounted for Count Eremfrid in 982, whose county would contain Velm but keep him and Werner out of Loon's story. Clearly this is intended to fit Vanderkindere, not medieval, evidence.

This conflicts with the approach Vanderkindere and Baerten relied upon for the eastern county, where they attempted to bridge the poor records by proposing a logical chain of succession claims. Baerten did not make young Rudolf's eastern county dependant only on Otto's whim, but also upon him being a nephew and successor of the older Rudolf, the supposed brother of Reginar III.¹²⁷

However, if Baerten felt comfortable to propose that Eremfrid received the other supposed ex-Reginar county simply on the emperor's whim, then

122 DiBe ID 1292: *Cartulaire de Saint Trond*, I, pp. 11-12. Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, pp. 9-10, 13; Baerten, 'Origines', pp. 1231, 1234-1235; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 149.

123 Constant Leclère, *Les avoués de Saint-Trond* (Louvain/Paris, 1902), p. 18.

124 Baerten, 'Origines', p. 1234: 'Aucun des témoins de la donation de Berthe (967) ne porte le titre d'avoué de l'abbaye de Saint-Trond. [...] Comment peut-on, d'autre part, refuser à Garnier le titre de comte d'Avernas tout en admettant le lien existant entre cette qualité et l'avouerie de Saint-Trond qu'il exerçait en 959?'

125 Dhondt, 'Proloog', p. 38 n. 79; Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', pp. 132, 135.

126 Baerten, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 12: 'blijkt, dat keizer Otto I na 966 aan twee leden van de Balderiks de graafschappen van de opstandige Rodolf heeft gegeven, nl. aan Erenfried en Rodolf junior, en tevoren aan één enkele graaf, Werenharius.'

127 For example, Baerten notes, *Graafschap Loon*, p. 12: 'Rodolf zelf was te jong om in 958 zijn oom op te volgen.'

it is difficult to accept Baerten's reasoning concerning the supposed eastern county. Logically, if these counts did not need Reginar blood, then there is no clear reason to propose any distinct eastern county, let alone the existence of any Count Rudolf there. The medieval evidence on its own, without the inheritance hypothesis, only mentions one count in the whole region between Werner's death and Gilbert, and his name was Eremfrid.

Q. Did 'Hocht' have an overlord (suzerain)?

Baerten did not believe that the county of 'Hocht' in the mid-tenth century was under the suzerainty of any other lordship. However, Baerten faced a significant complication because of his research into Loon's later feudal history.

Baerten concluded that by Gilbert's time, Loon came under the suzerainty of a neighbouring county to the south, called Haspinga.¹²⁸ He furthermore believed that this county had already existed in the tenth century, and that its count in 967, who he suggested might be Count Immo, was not a successor of the Reginars. He proposed the two counties were connected after an unattested marriage, and it was Immo's inheritance, not the Reginar inheritance, which became the senior one.

In short, according to Baerten, the eleventh-century counts of Loon were only cadets of Gilbert's poorly attested brother Arnulf, who Baerten believed to be senior to Gilbert, and to have died childless. According to this account, Arnulf is the same as Count Arnold in a royal charter of 1040, which mentions his county in Haspengouw, that had a name based on the name of the *pagus* itself (*comitatum Arnoldi comitis nomine Haspinga in pago Haspingowi sitem*).¹²⁹

We have already seen that Baerten's ideas about the Sint-Truiden advocacy led to his proposal that half of the Reginar inheritance went to a person with no known Reginar blood, because Otto I liked him. When Baerten's complex proposals about suzerainty over Loon are analysed carefully, the effective heir of the rest of the supposed old Reginar overlordship of 'Hocht' or Loon is not Count Gilbert of Loon, but the holder of Immo's county, and after 1040, this very indirect successor of the Reginars was the prince-bishop of Liège.

In summary, Baerten followed Vanderkindere on many points, but his concentration upon practical details such as the advocacy of Sint-Truiden

128 Baerten, 'De Luikse suzereiniteit over het g', *Limburg*, 43 (1964), 119-28; Baerten, 'Le comté de Haspinga et l', *Revue hesbayaise de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 40 (1962), 1-10; Baerten, 'Une mise au point', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 54 (1976), 1109-22; Baerten, 'Middeleeuwse erfenisoorlogen: naamgeving en oorsprong, de voorbeelden van Holland en Loon (13e-14e eeuw)' in *Munsters in de Maasgouw. Archaeologie en Kerkgeschiedenis in Limburg* (Maastricht: LGOG, 1986), pp. 174-83.

129 Royal charter of 1040: MGH Diplomata Heinrich III, ed. by Bresslau and Paul F. Kehr (Berlin, 1931), no. 35, p. 45.



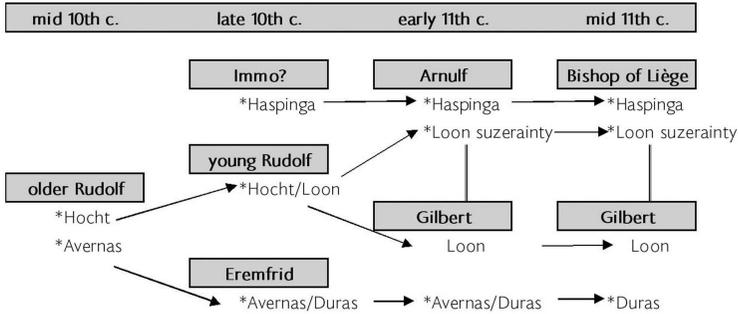


Figure 11. Baerten's explanation of Loon's suzerainty and the inheritance of counties.

and the suzerainty of Loon revealed problems Vanderkindere had not fully considered. The resulting defensive explanations ironically undermine Vanderkindere's basic premises and methodology, which had, in effect, assumed that Loon could and should be explained as a predictable inheritance. Baerten's efforts show that this is not possible without making assumptions that go far beyond the evidence. The names of the witnesses of the Provin grant can undoubtedly fit all-too-many narratives, with or without Reginars, but that is insufficient to prove anything about the counts of Loon or Bertha. We need to continue searching for other possible justifications for the widely accepted proposals of Vanderkindere and Baerten.

12. Did Vanderkindere Prove that Bertha was a Daughter of Nevelung?

As mentioned already, another common belief we need to confront is that Vanderkindere succeeded in proving that Countess Bertha was the daughter of Nevelung. Vanderkindere wrote surprisingly little about this topic at all. Gorissen and Dhondt, writing before Baerten, considered his idea highly speculative.¹³⁰ Some of Vanderkindere's clearest statements are in his discussion of Valenciennes. He said that Bertha's travel in Haspengouw, when she became ill, can probably be explained by her being related (*parenté*) to the counts of Loon.¹³¹ We have seen that Vanderkindere probably identified her son correctly, so Bertha was likely a relative, at least by marriage, to the future counts of Loon, or at least Balderic II. But he

¹³⁰ Dhondt, 'Crisis', p. 54; Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', p. 130.

¹³¹ Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, I, p. 294; II, pp. 84-85.

was probably not yet born, so who would she have been visiting in 967, and how could any of this show that Bertha is specifically a daughter of Nevelung? Vanderkindere did not give any satisfactory explanations.

Vanderkindere's family-visit explanation does not fit easily with the small amount of evidence we have. The chronicle of Sint-Truiden is clear: Bertha was returning from a pilgrimage to Aachen, stopped to visit the grave of Saint Trudo, and fell seriously ill.¹³² The chronicle continuer described her and her son Arnulf as Flemish, and noted that Arnulf had to travel hastily to get to Sint-Truiden in time. Grants were arranged by him, and she died there. As Gorissen explained, these were logical steps for an elderly travelling countess to take in this situation.¹³³ Vanderkindere's family-visit explanation is not required.

Given that Bertha's son, Arnulf of Valenciennes, was probably a close relative of Balderic II in the early eleventh century, is there any evidence at all that Bertha is also related to him by blood? Vanderkindere clearly had a terminological technicality in mind concerning this point. He wrote that the Latin word '*cognatio*', used in the *Vita Balderici* to describe the relationship between Balderic II and Arnulf of Valenciennes, specifies a female-line blood relationship (*la parenté féminine*):¹³⁴ Gorissen and Baerten accepted this statement.¹³⁵ However, *cognatio* referred to family by common descent. It was only sometimes used to contrast with male-line descent.¹³⁶ Indeed, in another part of the same work, the term is normally understood to be referring to Balderic's relatives collectively.¹³⁷ Even if the term was intended to imply a female-line relationship, the passage still cannot be read to specify that Arnulf's mother is sister to Balderic's father.

There is also a simple chronological problem with using the Provin charter to argue that Bertha is the daughter of Nevelung, which does not appear to have been mentioned before. The core of Vanderkindere's proposal is that Bertha was not only sister to Rudolf and Balderic, who were infants in 943, but also a dying widow in 967, with at least one adult son. In other words, she was significantly older than her supposed brothers. This is not impossible, so if we had other evidence this might not be troubling. However, it is a significant problem that the only records we have, taken on their own, demonstrate an unlikely age difference between Bertha and her supposed brothers.

132 *Continuatio Tertia*, 3. 12-14, s.a. 964-72, ed. p. 131; trans. Lavigne pp. 220-1.

133 Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', p. 127.

134 Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, pp. 131-132; *Vita Balderici*, chapter 21, p. 732. Cf. Daris, 'Arnoul 1^{er}', p. 70.

135 Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', p. 130; Baerten, 'Ansfrieds en Balderiks', p. 212.

136 Guerreau-Jalabert, 'La désignation des relations', pp. 72, 77; Charles Lays, *Étude critique sur la Vita Balderici episcopi Leodiensis* (Liège: xx, 1948) p. 96 n. 8; Daris, 'Arnoul 1^{er}', p. 70.

137 *Vita Balderici*, chapter 4, p. 726.



In summary, Vanderkindere's widely accepted proposal about Bertha's parentage must be rejected as baseless. The parentage of Bertha should be considered unknown. Dhondt believed she was a relative of the Flemish margraves, and Gorissen found this preferable to Vanderkindere's proposal.¹³⁸ Another medieval hint is found in the third continuation, which reproduces the lines of praise that were recited for her in Sint-Truiden. These suggest that she had royal ancestry (*stemma prefulsit ei regalis progeniei*).¹³⁹

It is still reasonable to propose that Arnulf of Valenciennes was a relative of both Bishop Balderic II, and of Countess Bertha. There is also still a possibility that Bertha may have inherited a connection to the Haspengouw area. But even in that case, Balderic II's relationship to the Balderics family of Cleves and Utrecht remains uncertain, and there is no evidence at all that such a Balderic connection would also involve Arnulf or Bertha, or even the Borgloon area.

13. Werner: 'Royal Agent' from Another Country?

The third influential supporting narrative to be confronted concerns Count Werner. Given the probability of the Borgloon area being divided into several small counties in the mid-tenth century, the 966 Count Werner whose county contained Gelmen, only 6km from Borgloon, is the clearest documented predecessor of the counts of Loon. But Werner, killed by the Reginars in 973, cannot fit Vanderkindere's core theme of Reginar succession.

Vanderkindere portrayed Werner as an outsider who temporarily benefitted from the extraordinary expulsion of Reginar III in 958.¹⁴⁰ Vanderkindere simply asserted that Werner was in Haspengouw as 'one of those royal agents temporarily placed in charge of a vacated governance'.¹⁴¹ As we have seen in Baerten's case, this critical assumption has framed discussion in such a way that logical questions simply do not arise about who the predecessors and heirs of Werner were in Haspengouw, and whether they are ancestors of the counts of Loon. Remarkably though, this 'royal agent' scenario, which impedes historians from fully considering the fragments of medieval evidence we have, is not based upon any medieval evidence itself.

138 Dhondt, 'Crisis', p. 54; Gorissen, 'Wording van Loon', p. 130.

139 *Continuatio Tertia*, 3.14, s.a. 964-72, ed. de Borman, p. 132; trans. Lavigne p. 221.

140 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 50.

141 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 48: 'un de ces agents royaux chargés temporairement d'un gouvernement devenu vacant'.

First, there is no evidence that Werner was not a normal legitimate heir, for example, a son or cousin or son-in-law, of whomever preceded him. In fact, we have no evidence about when he received the county. Predictably, Vanderkindere and Baerten place it at the time of the expulsion of Reginar III, but there is no evidence for this. Unless other evidence can be found, Werner, whose county contained Gelmen, might, for example, be a legitimate successor to the Count Rudolf of around 950, who had a county near Maaseik that apparently came to contain Engelmanshoven and Heers by 958/59, adjacent to Gelmen.

Second, there is nothing to suggest that Werner would not have successors after he died, such as perhaps Count Eremfrid in 982, or even Otto, the father of Count Gilbert. If he was the Count Werner who died in 973 in Hainaut, then he was not killed as a rebel, but by Reginarid invaders from France, who were not successful. Despite the impression given by Vanderkindere and Baerten, these Reginars struggled to attain any secure comital legitimacy in Lotharingia until the next century.¹⁴² Count Lambert in the early eleventh century could still be described by Alpertus of Metz, perhaps with some exaggeration, as a leader of bandits (*praedones*), hiding in forests.¹⁴³ The counties they fought for from 973 were based in Mons and Louvain, and although it would have been a very notable turn, there is no record of similar claims in eastern Haspengouw.

Who was Werner? The county of Mons in Hainaut, which Werner and his brother died defending, had previously been held by Count Richer, who held counties in the *pagi* of Hainaut and *Liugas* (between Liège and Aachen) before his death in 972. A previous count in the early tenth century named Sigehard held a similar combination of Hainaut and *Liugas* counties. Perhaps not noticed previously, a similar pattern appeared again, probably on a smaller scale. After Werner, Hainaut was divided between two counts who appear to have worked together closely in the royal interest – Count Godefrid ‘the captive’, and Count Arnulf, the close kinsman of Balderic II. We have seen that this Arnulf not only held the fort of Valenciennes in Hainaut, but also the *vicus* of Visé, which the Meerssen treaty of 870 indicates was in *Liugas*.¹⁴⁴ His colleague Godefrid probably held the adjacent fort of Argenteau.¹⁴⁵

In Hainaut, Richer had replaced not a Reginar, but a Duke Godefrid, who died in 964. According to Hlawitschka, the family that linked Werner, Richer and these two Godefrids are the so-called Matfried family, which



¹⁴² De Waha, ‘Filiu Ragineri’.

¹⁴³ Alpertus of Metz, I, 11, ed. Pertz, pp. 705-6; trans. van Rij, pp. 53-4; trans. Bachrach, pp. 21-3.

¹⁴⁴ Nonn, *Pagus und Comitatus*, pp. 100, 102, 126.

¹⁴⁵ John Knaepen, ‘Évolution d’un domaine jusqu’à son acquisition par la cathédrale Saint-Lambert de Liège’, *Bulletin de la Société Royale Le Vieux-Liège*, 6 (1963), 261-87, here p. 272.

had several Lotharingian bishops named Wigfried in the tenth century, and continued to be important in Lotharingia in the eleventh century.¹⁴⁶

Another record believed to represent Werner is a Stavelot Abbey charter, judged by the modern editors to be most likely from 963.¹⁴⁷ This Count Werner, a *fidelis* of the abbot, was exchanging property at Bodeux (*Baldav*), next to Stavelot, for property in the Eifel *gau*, in the county of Zülpich. He did this with the consent of his wife, sons, and friends (*cum consensu uxoris et filiorum et amicorum suorum*). The lay witnesses listed are Reginard, Gevard, and Richar. Hlawitschka understandably equates Reginard to Werner's brother Reginald, and notes the presence of their predecessor in Hainaut, Richar.¹⁴⁹ But as we have noted, the name Gevard is found in both of Bertha's grants, in that case referring to an apparent brother of Arnulf of Valenciennes. Hlawitschka, instead, noted that this is another name found in the Matfried family, and suggested this is a brother to Duke Godefrid who had held Mons (d. 964). In the 967 Provin grant, there is also a *Reynerus*, who it is tempting to associate with this Reginard.

In summary, there is no evidence that Werner was not count in Haspengouw by normal inheritance, and he had relatives with the right connections to enforce succession claims. In fact, Arnulf of Valenciennes, who held Visé as well as Valenciennes, might be a relative of Werner.

14. The Elephant in the Room: Why Heirs of the Reginars?

According to his own somewhat surprising explanations, what really convinced Vanderkindere that Count Gilbert of Loon and his brother Bishop Balderic II were sons of Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, was onomastic evidence, or naming patterns. However, Vanderkindere's examples show that he selected evidence guided by a strong desire to patch up a connection between Loon and the Reginars.

Vanderkindere made the exact same methodological declaration in 1900 and 1902, presenting it as an important justification. "The choice of

146 Eduard Hlawitschka, *Die Anfänge des Hauses Habsburg-Lothringen. Genealogische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Lothringens und des Reiches im 9., 10. und 11. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung, IV (Saarbrücken: Minerva Verlag, 1969), pp. 97-101.

147 *Stavelot-Malmédy*, no. 74, pp. 169-71. Further comments: *Urkunden- und Quellenbuch zur Geschichte der altluxemburgischen Territorien bis zur burgundischen Zeit*, ed. by Camille Wampach, 11 vols (Luxembourg: St-Paulusdruckerei, 1935), I, no. 167, pp. 213-16; Verdonk, *Alzey-Zutphen*, pp. 73 n. 481; Otto Oppermann, *Rheinische Urkundenstudien*, I: *Die kölnisch-niederrheinischen Urkunden* (Bonn: Gesellschaft für rheinische Geschichtskunde, 1922), pp. 201-02.

149 Hlawitschke, 'Die Anfänge', p. 146 n. 252.

names in the Middle Ages is never arbitrary,' wrote Vanderkindere, 'they reveal the connections between generations.'¹⁵⁰ Vanderkindere gave three such onomastic arguments in favour of his Loon hypothesis, which can be summarized as follows.

First is a remarkably weak argument in support of the old speculation that we have traced back to Christophe Butkens, namely, that Gilbert and Balderic must descend from the Reginar family. According to this, Count Gilbert of Loon's name, on its own, proves Reginar ancestry.¹⁵⁰ This argument is quite clearly an over-statement to say the least, and ignores most evidence. There was one Reginarid Gilbert in the tenth century, the duke who died in 939 and is not an ancestor of later Reginarids, and one Gilbert in the ninth century who might be an ancestor.¹⁵¹ But other families like the House of Ardenne (Figure 4.) used this name at least as often. Furthermore, no one in the comital family of Loon was named Reginar, nor indeed Rudolf, Lambert, or Ruoduolt.

Second, it is asserted that Count Emmo (or Immo) of Loon in the eleventh century, successor of Count Gilbert, must derive his name from the tenth-century figure with the same name who we have discussed above.¹⁵² In reality, though Vanderkindere did insert Immo into the story, he developed a narrative whereby the Counts of Loon are described not as Immo's family, but as Reginar heirs who managed to recover their past status by marrying Immo's heiress. Vanderkindere wrote as follows:

We also understand how the eastern Haspengouw, which had been previously taken from the Reginars, is found half a century later, in the possession of a comital family who are related to them. It is the union of Rudolf, grandson of Reginar II, with the heiress of Count Immo, which erased the traces of the confiscation of 958, and it is thus in the 11th century that the descendants of the Reginars have succeeded to recapture, in Lower Lotharingia, the vast field which they had occupied from the 9th century: Hainaut, Western Haspengouw (in the county of Louvain), Eastern Haspengouw (in the County of Loon).¹⁵³

150 'Le choix des noms, au moyen âge, n'est jamais arbitraire; c'est par eux que visiblement les générations s'enchaînent.' Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 48; *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 138 (same words in both publications).

150 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 48; *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 138 (same words in both publications).

151 See for example the pedigree in Kupper, *Liege*, Annexe 2.

152 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 48; *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 138 (same words in both publications).

153 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 50: 'On comprend aussi comment la Hesbaie orientale, qui avait été enlevée naguère aux Régner, se retrouve, un demi-siècle plus tard, en la possession d'une race comtale qui leur est apparentée; c'est l'union de Rodolphe, petit-fils de Régner II, avec l'héritière du comte Immon, qui a effacé les traces de la confiscation de 958, et il se trouve ainsi qu'au XI^e siècle les descendants des Régner ont réussi à reprendre, dans la

This ardently worded passage reveals the critical assumption for Butkens and Vanderkindere. It is the origin of today's standard account of Loon, but its connection to medieval evidence is tenuous. Like Butkens in the seventeenth century, he believed the Reginars were ninth-century counts of the Borgloon area. This can only mean that the entire edifice is built upon one sentence about Reginar I, written by the unreliable tenth-century Norman historian, Dudo of Saint-Quentin, who called him *dux* of Haspengouw and Hainaut (*Hasbacensem et Hainaucensem ducem*).¹⁵⁴ But even putting aside the question of Dudo's reliability, he was clearly not describing any comital jurisdictions. Reginar I was being described as the military leader for a larger region, who was called upon to support the people of Walcheren against the Norman invader Rollo.

The third and last onomastic argument in Vanderkindere's declaration is clearly the strongest by far, because it does not only rely on name coincidences. It was also the one Baerten chose to emphasize in a less-known Dutch article.¹⁵⁵ This is the argument that Bishop Balderic II's name and bishopric are a coincidence we cannot ignore, linking them to the family of Bishop Balderic I of Liège and his uncle, Bishop Balderic of Utrecht – the family of Nevelung.¹⁵⁶ As we have discussed above, this and other information does make some sort of alliance seem likely. However, this connection might be quite indirect.

Vanderkindere and Baerten omitted discussion of the other names found in the comital family of Loon, such as Herman, Arnulf, Otto, and Louis, which fit neither the Reginars nor the Balderics.

Unfortunately, in the published reasonings of Vanderkindere and Baerten, all discussion about promising leads, including the Balderics and Immo, is used selectively to serve the Reginar narrative. Although his mother was a Reginar, there is in fact no evidence at all that either Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, or the later counts of Loon, were heirs of any member of the Reginar family. Vanderkindere and Baerten treat it as obvious that young Rudolf, apparently the youngest son, must be heir to the brother of

Lotharingie inférieure, le vaste champ que, dès le IX^e siècle, ils avaient occupé: Hainaut, Hesbaie occidentale (dans le comté de Louvain), Hesbaie orientale (dans le comté de Looz):

- 154 Dudo of St Quentin, *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, ed. by Jules Lair, *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, 23 (Caen, 1865) II, 9, p. 150; *History of the Normans*, trans by Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 33-34, 189-90. Cf. *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 133; Claire Bernard, 'Études sur le domaine ardennais de la famille des Régner', *Le Moyen Âge*, 63 (1957), 1-22, here p. 13.
- 155 Baerten, 'Ansrieds en Balderiks', p. 212. 'Vanderkindere vermoedde – wij geloven terecht – dat Balderik II (en dus Gislebert van Loon) in deze familie thuis hoorde aangezien de voornaam die hij droeg en de functie hij bekleedde.'
- 156 Vanderkindere, 'Une charte', p. 48; Vanderkindere, *Formation territoriale*, II, p. 138 (same words in both publications).

his mother. We have seen how both Baerten and Vanderkindere resorted to unattested and arbitrary royal interventions in their explanations.

Baerten's presentation lacked Vanderkindere's sweeping rhetoric, but he obscured the possibility of alternative explanations from recent generations of readers, who have tended to misunderstand how weak the evidence of Vanderkindere's Reginar speculation was. As we have seen with the example of the Provin witness list, Baerten struggled to make the evidence fit, but constantly guided readers to assume that Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, has to be the ancestor of the counts of Loon, and that the counts of Loon have to be successors to the Reginars. For example, Baerten's most detailed discussion concerning the predecessors of count Gilbert is entitled 'The problem of the Reginar succession' (*Le problème de la succession des Régner*).¹⁵⁷

Apart from the onomastic arguments, there is not only the vague (and unnecessary) idea of counties going back to Reginar I but, more importantly, the circumstantial evidence we have discussed initially, which can be used to defend Butkens' proposal. This helps explain Baerten's efforts to defend the overall narrative. To restate:

- First, there is indeed evidence that there was a Count Rudolf in the Reginar family alive during 944.
- Second, in an area which would much later be part of Loon, there were one or more Count Rudolfs in that period.
- Third, because the above is weak indirect evidence, it was critical to Vanderkindere's and Baerten's new versions of the argument that, at the same time when Reginar III was exiled, a Count Rudolf who held Gelmen, near Borgloon, was punished by the king for infidelity. We have demonstrated that the evidence does not support this.

Looking at these three arguments in their basic form, we notice that it is a fundamental weak point for all variants of Butkens' proposal, that, quite simply, neither Rudolf nor Reginar were unusual names in this time and place. In short, there is really no reason to assume that any counts in Haspengouw were heirs of the Reginars, especially after their big defeats in 939 and 957.

Though we must reject the Reginar inheritance assumption, it is not possible to exclude that Rudolf, the son of Nevelung, or someone from his family, is an ancestor of the later counts of Loon. In addition to the above arguments for this, we have listed es of circumstantial evidence, including Balderic II's relationship with Lambert of Louvain, and his possession of Pannerden.

On the other hand, there is no evidence that Rudolf ever became an adult. He was the youngest son of a widow, and, if he survived, there

¹⁵⁷ Baerten, 'Origines', p. 1230.

is no reason to think he would have become a count, a position which naturally not even all the sons of counts ever attained. His older brother Balderic, rather than becoming a count, became a cleric. Presumably, there were no spare counties going around. If he grew up, Rudolf might have pursued a similar clerical career or taken up residence as a tenant lord in someone else's county.

Conclusion

It is time to give up the idea that the counts of Loon were heirs of the Reginars. Since 1641, and the first published proposal that the counts of Loon were descended from a Rudolf in the Reginar family, the details of the idea have already had to change fundamentally to fit new understandings of the evidence. The original reasoning of Butkens no longer has any force. Our two great twentieth-century authorities concerning Loon did not confront this problem, however, nor encourage future researchers to do so. Vanderkindere cut corners to synthesize his great narrative, and Baerten's defence of Vanderkindere's convenient assumptions led to misunderstandings. Their most concrete new argument, that a Count Rudolf lost his county when Reginar III was expelled, is not supported by the evidence, unless we accept that Rudolf was an unusual name, which is clearly untenable. In other words, the standard accounts are wrong, and there is no evidence linking the Loon area to the Reginar family in any relevant way.

The only medieval evidence we have tells us that the father of Count Gilbert of Loon was named Otto. The modern proposal, Rudolf the son of Nevelung, is therefore a tenuous speculation which conflicts with the medieval evidence. This is widely misunderstood, probably because this evidence was not even discussed by Vanderkindere or Baerten. Jongbloed has made the first serious proposal concerning the identity of Otto. While we have raised doubts about the details of the proposed connections of this Otto to Arnulf of Valenciennes, Jongbloed's proposal is not disproven.

Likewise, Counts Werner and Eremfrid, the only two counts recorded with counties near Borgloon between 950 and 1000, should always have been considered likely ancestors of the counts of Loon. At least one scholar (Hlawitschka) has argued that Werner was a kinsman of the Matfried family. Possible relatives of Eremfrid who held Velm in 982 include the future bishop Ansfried, Herman *pusillus*, and the Balderics. Furthermore, Eremfrid could be Werner's kinsman and successor because there is no evidence that Werner was not count in Haspengouw by normal inheritance, and it is not at all certain that they had different counties.

Despite suggestive leads, there is in fact no proof of a blood relationship between Balderic II and the Balderic family. The best argument for

this, the coincidence of Balderic II's name and bishopric, is not surprising because in the late tenth century, Balderic was a predictable name for a young cleric with links in the bishopric of Utrecht. Such links are strongly suggested by his inheritance of Pannerden, and his connections to Dirk III of West Frisia, and Count Balderic of Upladium.

The Balderics cannot be excluded as relatives. However, Nevelung's brothers should be considered at least as likely as his son to be ancestors of Count Gilbert. His brother *preses* Rudolf may have held a prefecture like the one later held by Count Balderic. He is also likely to have been the count of Husce, Huffte, or Huste (Baerten's 'Hocht') around 950, and an ancestor of later counts in the region. Nevelung's other brother, another Eremfrid, was probably also very influential around 950. In contrast, the medieval record of a blood relationship between Balderic II and the Reginarid Count Lambert cannot prove that Balderic II is specifically the son of Rudolf, the son of Nevelung.

Two more major misunderstandings also need to be cleared up. First, Baerten's speculations about the names of the witnesses to Bertha's 967 grant did not provide any usable conclusions. Second, Vanderkindere's widely accepted proposal about Countess Bertha's parentage should be rejected as a poorly constructed speculation. Instead, she may have had royal ancestry, and lands in the old *pagus* of Brabant. Furthermore, her son Arnulf's name and his connection to Flanders is something he shares with the father of Dirk III of Frisia, a fellow kinsman of Balderic II. We have also noted that Arnulf was a successor of Werner's Matfried associates in the regions of both Hainaut and Visé.

History writing about the origins of Loon has built upon history writing, not the medieval evidence. The counts of Loon were probably relatives of the Reginars. But no neutral systematic review of the evidence by someone uninfluenced by the older modern literature could lead to the idea that Count Gilbert of Loon was the *heir* of the Reginars, nor could it lead to the conclusion that the heir of Reginar III's brother would be the youngest son of a specific widowed sister.

