

CHAPTER SIX

MAUGER, COUNT DE CORBEIL AND MORTAIGN Twenty-second in Ancestry

Section 1, Mauger and His Family; Corbeil—Section 2, Richard the Good, Duke of Normandy; History.

SECTION 1.

*22. MAUGER de Normandie, COUNT OF CORBEIL, son of Richard I, surnamed the Fearless, Duke of Normandy, Chapter 5, Section 1, married Germaine de Corbeil, daughter of Aymon, Count of Corbeil, and his wife Elizabeth, a near relation of Avoye the wife of Hugh the Great and sister of the Emperor Otho. [Mauger was the second son of Richard Duke of Normandy. The records of Normandy do not disclose what, if any, title he held except that of de Normandie, although he married the daughter of Aymon, Count of Corbeil, and must have been given by his parents an estate of equal importance in order that the marriage could be brought about. Mauger is known in history as Count of Corbeil, which title he obtained in right of his wife. The history of Mauger seems to center around that of Corbeil, which we shall briefly notice, particularly so far as it relates to our genealogy. The properties that came to his second son Haymon Dentatus, will give some indication of the great wealth Mauger had in his own right.] Children:—

1. *21. GUILLAUME, surnamed WERLAC, Chapter 7, Section 1.
2. Hamon, surnamed Dentatus, Chapter 7, Section 3.
3. Hugh, Bishop of Bayeux, of whom little is known, and upon whose death the bishopric was given to William d'Ivri, and upon his death William the Conqueror gave the bishopric to his brother Odo, whom he afterwards made earl of Kent in England. [Ecclesiastical History of England & Normandy, by Ordericus Vitalis, vol. 2, page 416.]

The series of events which led to Mauger becoming Count of Corbeil began with the death of his Grand father. For when Richard the Fearless, father of Mauger was a little child his father died and he was taken away from Normandy by the King of France under an excuse that the child was to be educated, but really it was to make him a prisoner and possibly to kill him. He was placed in the care of a learned and good man known in history as Osmon the Dane, who took compassion upon him and, by concealing him in a load of hay, carried him safely back to Normandy, and placed him in the custody of his powerful relation Bernard of Senlis, surnamed the Dane. Thereupon Louis, King of France, with the aid of Hugh the Great, in the year 945 made war upon the Normans. Bernard called to his assistance the King of Denmark and King Louis was defeated. Peace was concluded and Richard secured a further grant of territory. Osmon then skillfully arranged a marriage between the young Duke and Esmé daughter of Hugh the Great, then Count of Paris and the most powerful man in France.

Le Paire, in his book on the History of the Town of Corbeil, published in Paris, in 1901, referring to the marriage of Richard, father of Mauger, and Esmé, daughter of Count Hugh, states that the betrothal ceremonies were carried out at Paris in 956. All the nobility of Normandy were present at this festivity, amongst them being Aymon, son of Osmon the Dane, a young man of much promise, 'beloved and made much of by the ladies.' In the French Court was a lady equally prominent, by name, Elizabeth, a near relative of Avoye, wife of Hugh the Great and sister of the Emperor Otho. These young people fell in love with each other, and the match being approved by the statesmen on both sides, Elizabeth was married to Aymon in the following year, viz. 957. As a wedding gift, Hugh the Great gave Aymon the Earldom of Corbeil and the manor of Gournay, on the Marne. At this time Hugh the Great was at enmity with the Emperor Otho, and hoped by these intermarriages to keep the support of Normandy. The marriage of Richard, the young Duke of Normandy, with a daughter of Hugh the Great was not pleasing to King Louis, and shortly afterwards he allied himself to Emperor Otho of Germany and attacked Normandy. Otho and Louis penetrated as far as Rouen where Hugh the Great had withdrawn with Richard, Duke of Normandy, his son-in-law. Here the kings were repulsed in battle by the two princes and compelled to retreat.

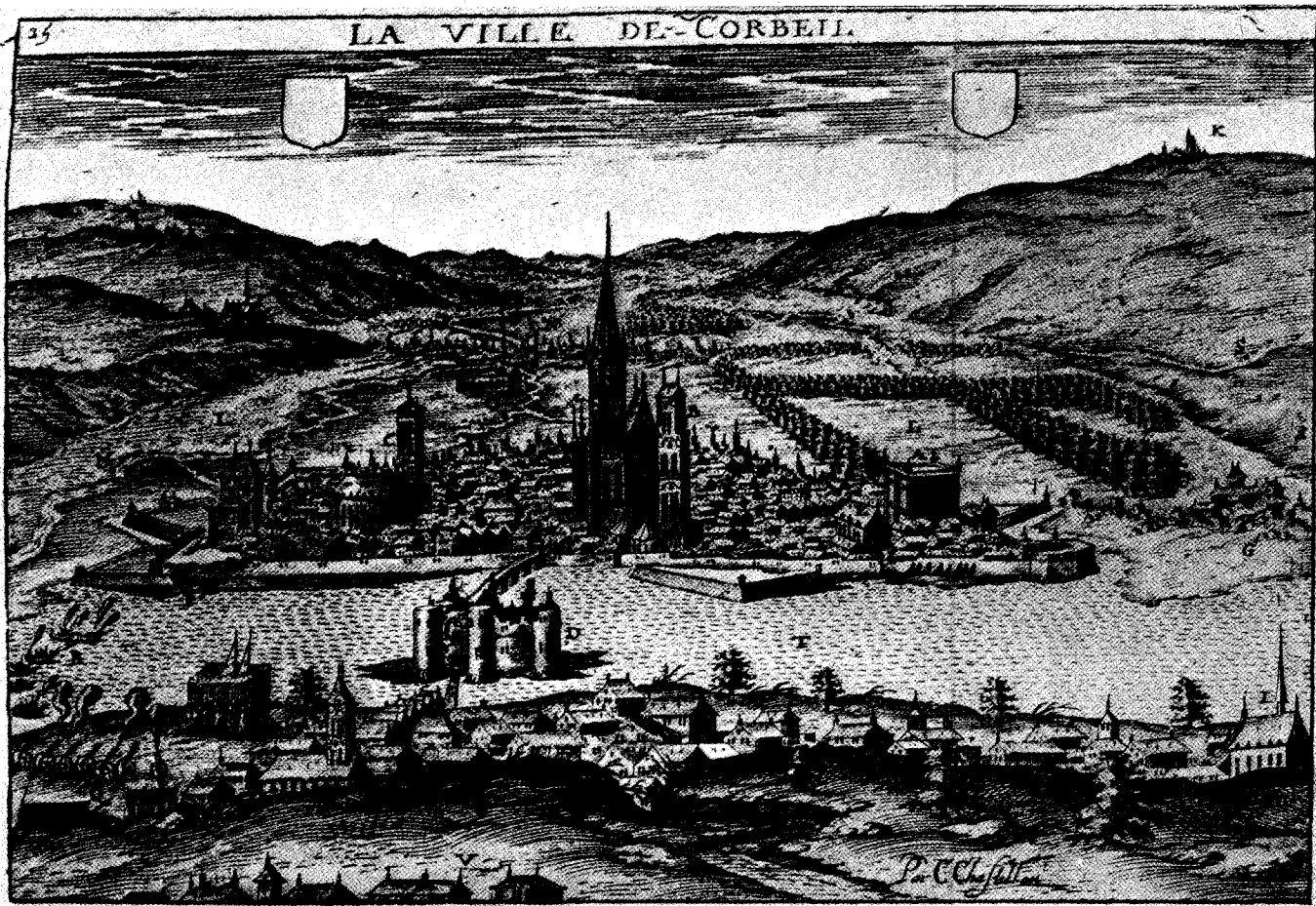
Aymon was a strong supporter of Richard, and it is recorded that he and his followers greatly distinguished themselves at this battle. After depositing his booty in his castle at Corbeil, Aymon set out to avenge himself on certain nobles who under cover of the foreign invasion had offended him. Amongst these was the Count Palluau,—Palluau being a small castle situated at the junction of the rivers Etamples and Essonne, above the bridge of Gomiers. In this castle were preserved the relics of two patron saints, St. Exupere or St. Spire and St. Lue, both bishops of Bayeux. Aymon took the castle by storm and slaughtered the defenders. The relics he retained as his own portion of the booty, and resolved to build a church at Corbeil in which to place them.

The booty taken during the war and the ransom of his prisoners provided funds for the building of the church, and these were supplemented by property left him by his father, Osmon. The church was built and the relics installed therein, and provision was also made for the upkeep of four priests to celebrate Holy Mass daily in the church. According to the Abbé Lebaeuf, the building was completed in the year 963.

About the same time the relics of St. Guenault, Abbé of Landevenne, were brought from Courcouronne to the Castle of Corbeil, and placed in the care of Count Aymon. It is recorded that the Count received them with great ceremony, and later placed them in a chapel situated in St. Jacques, just outside the town. This chapel with its grounds, he gave to the monks.

According to Dom Guillaume Morin, the old bridge of Corbeil was also built by Count Aymon. This bridge spanned the Seine, thus connecting Old Corbeil on the right bank with New Corbeil on the left bank, which included Count Aymon's castle and the church.

King Louis died in 956, and Hugh the Great shortly afterwards. Their sons and heirs, Lothaire and High Capet respectively, were on friendly terms, and



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Count Aymon took advantage of the peace to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. He died, however, on the road, not far from Corbeil, on the way home from Italy. The Countess Elizabeth had the body brought to Corbeil, where it was buried in the Church of St. Spire. There is no contemporary inscription giving the date of the death of Count Aymon, but La Barre estimates that he died in 967, ten years after his marriage. For a long time afterwards the anniversary of his death was solemnly observed on the 28th of May in the Church of St. Spire, but the exact date of his death is uncertain. A tomb, raised to his memory, still exists in the church, and is of great interest on account of its antiquity.

A good description of the church and of Count Aymon's tomb is given by M. Pinard, a member of the Société Française (for the preservation of historical monuments), in his Monograph on the Church of St. Spire, Corbeil. St. Spire, or St. Exupere as he should be called, was, says M. Pinard, a missionary sent from Rome to preach the faith to the Gauls. Nothing is known of his life, except that he was the first bishop of Bayeux, and that he died towards the end of the fourth century. He was buried, it is said, in the Church of St. Jean at Bayeux, and it is not known how his remains came to be transferred to Palluau. The second patron saint of Corbeil, St. Lue, commonly called St. Louis, is said to have been the third bishop of Bayeux. He died at the end of the fifth century. As related above, the relics of this saint were brought to Corbeil by Count Aymon, together with those of St. Spire. The church constructed by Aymon, however, did not exist long, for it was burned about the year 1019, and was afterwards rebuilt on the same site. This new building was also burned between the years 1137 and 1144. The Cartulary of the Church of Notre Dame in the same town preserves contemporary evidence of this disaster.

A Charter of 1029 refers to the 'Castellum Sancti Exuperii,' (Church of St. Exuperius) and one hundred and fifty years later we find it designated 'Santus Exuperius de sub castro forti,' ('St. Exuperius near to the castle'), but in recent times the name has come to be abbreviated to St. Spire.

In describing the monuments, M. Pinard points out that whereas Count Aymon's tomb is now in a side chapel, it was originally in the cenotaph. This monument is believed to have been erected to his memory at the commencement of the fourteenth century, that is, nearly 350 years after his death. The statue is in the form of an armed man lying prostrate; it is of stone of a very fine grain, while the head, neck and hands are of white marble. The veins and muscles are reproduced in a remarkably fine manner. The body is clothed in a coat of mail, over which is a cloak edged with fur. The baldrick is large and of an unusual form, and on it is represented, alternately, the head of an angel or child, and a griffin with two heads. Although coats of arms were not much worn before the Crusades, yet his shield has on it a coat of arms consisting of a lion salient on a red background. The costume, likewise, is somewhat of an anachronism. 'Gules, a lion salient,' were the arms of the later Earls of Corbeil, and it is probable that these were chosen for that reason. At the foot of the statue is a dragon with two heads, which, tradition says, represents a monster much feared in the country, and from which Aymon delivered it. In a street of Corbeil, the Trou-Patrix, there is an old covered drain entering into the river Essonne, and, according to

tradition, this place was the den of the dragon. The legend doubtless indicates that Count Aymon did much to better the health of the town and to rid it of disease. In the base of the monument was at one time a black marble panel with the following inscription beautifully inlaid in white marble mosaic; 'Cy gist le cors de hault et noble homme, le comte Hémon, jadis comte Corbeuil, qui fonda cette église et plusieurs autres. Dieu ait l'ame de luy Amen.' ('Here lies the body of the high and noble man, the Count Aymon, formerly Count of Corbeil, who built this church and many others. May God receive his soul. Amen'). [Parshall Book, page 35-36.]

The Count Aymon left to survive him, his widow and two children of tender years: 1. Thibault, who became the Abbé of St. Maur. 2. GERMAINE.

Elizabeth, widow of Count Aymon, married a second time Bouchard surnamed le Vieil, Count of Vendome, de Melun, and de Paris, who became jure uxoris de Corbeil and guardian of his wife's minor children. By her second marriage she had two children: 3. Renaud, Comte le Vendome and de Melun, Bishop in partibus of Paris, who died January 18, 1020. 4. Elizabeth or Adele, Comtesse de Vendome, who married Fonques III., Comte d'Anjou, surnamed Nerra, son of Geoffrey I., surnamed Grisegonnelle, Comte de Anjou, de Vermandois, who died in 1040. [Anselme History Genealogique, vol. 8, page 722.]

The Count Bouchard, during the later years of his life, lost interest in worldly things and retired from the world to the Monastery of Saint Maur. In 1005, in the month of August, he came out for the last time and visited Robert the Pious during the siege of Sens and d'Avallon. The first of May, 1006, he made known his last wishes in a will which was an occasion of grand solemnity. This will was signed by the chamberlain Josselin, the cupbearer Gaudri, and the constable Hugues de Avon (Fontainebleu) all of the house of the Count, The Archdeacon Aubri, Ansoud le Rich de Paris, one of the counsellors of King Robert II., Ferri, The Vicomte Robert de Corbeil and his two sons Nantier and Josselin, and finally by another Josselin, Vicomte de Melun, of whom we have no other account except a deed of his in 998. None of these appear to have been related to Mauger. Vicomte Robert de Corbeil, together with his sons, during the reign of Robert of Paris, made a gift to the Abbé of Des Fosses of some land which had come to them by inheritance, which was called by the name of Villarie, and which is situated above the village called Nogent. It is the Villiers-sur-Marne situate very close to Nogent. It is actually within the limits of Nogent, and therefore the Vicecomte Robert would be designated as de Nogent. It is remarkable that this land of Villari had already been given to the monastery by M. Bégon Count of Paris during the reign of Charlemagne. The Viscount Robert became a monk at the end of his life, which occurred sometime before 1043. [Society Historie & Archeologique de Corbeil de Etamps et du Huipoix, bulletin 10, page 106; bulletin 5.]

Having made his will, Bouchard returned to Saint Maur where his step-son Thibault was Abbé, and died according to the chronology of Saint Denis, four days before the beginning of March, about February 24, 1007. Elizabeth followed her husband to the tomb the following eighteenth of January.

The obsequies were magnificently carried out in the presence of all his family and he was buried in one of the chapels of the Abbey. On his tomb, the following epitaph was engraved:—

His vir magus quondam, dom Corpore vivit,
 Nomine Bucardus, per mundi climata notus,
 Celsus erat meritis distisfactisque modestus.
 Pauperibus largus viduis per cuneta benignus,
 Ipsius en corpus tumulo requescit in illo,
 Martius ostendit obiisse Kalendus.

Translation: (Here, in this tomb, lies the body of a man great during his life, named Bouchard, renowned throughout the whole world, of a high merit, kindly in his speech, and in his actions, generous towards the poor, liberal in his charities. He died four days before the first of March.) [The Parshall Book, p. 38-39.]

According to Gaignieres, the tomb represented the statue of a knight lying prone on a pedestal which was let into the wall.

Elizabeth, the widow of Count Bouchard, and formerly wife of Count Aymon, was buried in the same chapel, her tomb, according to Gaignieres, was that of a lady lying likewise on a pedestal. The epitaph inscribed on the tomb was as follows:—

Hoc placuit Domino conjungere vivis,
 Et poliendrarum simul sic voluit,
 Hoc qui cunque legis persolve carmina Psalmi,
 Spiritus ut valeant sexudere regna poli.

Translation: ('Just as it pleased God to unite them during their life; so in the same way it has pleased Him to reunite them in death. Whoever ye be that read this, remember the verse of the Psalmist, "Souls such as these transcend the Kingdoms of the Earth."'). Both these epitaphs were transcribed by the Monk Oddes in 1508, and at the time of writing he said that the epitaphs were already half destroyed.

Before he died, Count Bouchard confirmed in writing all the pious gifts of his predecessor Count Aymon, and it is stated by the old historians, that he also completed the Church of St. Pierre at Melun.

The remains of Count Bouchard and his wife were discovered in excavating a ditch in the embankment of the ancient Abbey in 1860.

Bouchard seems to have held the Countship of Corbeil after his step-daughter came of age, possibly until the death of his step-son Thibault, the Abbé of Saint Maur, as it does not appear that Mauger became Count of Corbeil until 1012, while his marriage with Germaine took place about 984. This indicates that Thibault was Count of Corbeil from 1007 to 1012 and that at his death the honor fell to his sister, wife of Mauger and that prior to this Bouchard was only Count of Corbeil by courtesy. Mauger's wife, Germaine, was celebrated for her beauty and grace, and the marriage is said to have been strongly advised by Bishop Regnaud, Chancellor of France, who wished to maintain the alliance between the Dukes of Normandy and the Counts of Corbeil. Mauger rendered great services to King Henry of France in the struggle for the crown against the King's mother, Constance, and became one of his greatest friends.