Graham Jones

CONSTANTINOPLE, 1204, RENEWAL OF INTEREST IN IMPERIAL AND OTHER BYZANTINE CULTS IN THE WEST, AND THE GROWTH OF NEW TRADITIONS[1]

The sack of Constantinople in 1204 and its Latin occupation until 1261 fostered renewed interest in the West in cults popular in Byzantine lands, not least those associated with Constantine and Helena, though in many cases arising from theft and plunder. In the same period a variety of literary and other traditions renewed the imperial names as symbols of authority, legitimacy and piety. Diverse expressions of fascination with the name of Constantine's mother in particular are placed in the context of the political and military events which surrounded the city's fall, and the complex dynastic relationships linking the *dramatis personae*.

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The distress reported by the Byzantine historian Nicetas Choniates in the aftermath of the sack of the city was caused as much by religious desecration as by the destruction of homes and the suffering of innocents:

> . . . How shall I begin to tell of the deeds wrought by these nefarious men! Alas, the images, which ought to have been adored, were trodden under foot! Alas, the relics of the holy martyrs were thrown into unclean places! Then was seen what one shudders to hear, namely, the divine body and blood of Christ was spilled upon the ground or thrown about. They snatched the precious reliquaries, thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups – precursors of Anti-Christ, authors and heralds of his nefarious deeds which we momentarily expect. Manifestly, indeed, by that race
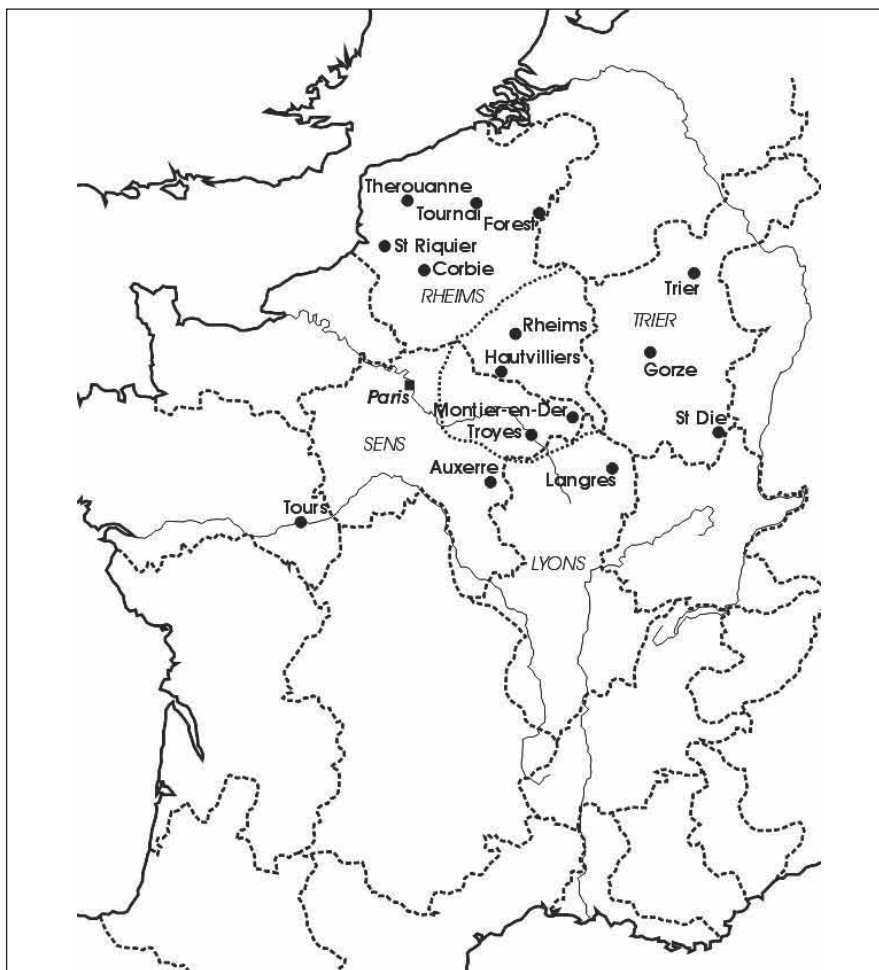
Fig. 1 Veneration of saints named Helen in western Europe
Сл. 1 Обожавање светиња са именом Света Јелена у западној Европи

The boundaries are those of medieval church provinces (archdioceses), with the County of Champagne sketched within a lighter dotted line. The associations of the places named are as follows: Troyes: shrine of St Helen of Athyra; devotion to St Hilda, 'servant of St Helena. Hautvilliers: relic of St Helena, mother of Constantine (substantial part of her body) Montier-en-Der: ditto (part of her head) Rheims: devotion to Ss Elenaria, Helenus; liturgical commemoration of St Helen of Athyra Auxerre: devotion to St Helen of Auxerre Langres: liturgical commemoration of St Helen of Auxerre St Dié: ditto Tours: ditto Tournai: ditto Therouanne: ditto St Riquier: devotion to St Elenaria Forest: burial place of St Alena Corbie: relic of St Helena, mother of Constantine Gorze: ditto Trier: devotion to St Helena, mother of Constantine, and (at Ohren) St Heliada Not shown are dedications of churches commemorating St Helen, of which there are a handful in Normandy and Britanny (north-west France) and a small number in south-east England (visible top left). Nor does the map show Elna, near the modern Mediterranean border between France and Spain, the one city in the West named by Constantine in honour of his mother Helena. Italy is also excluded: Rome was Helena's first burial place, and Venice received her arm and also, it appears, venerated Helen of Auxerre.

then, just as formerly, Christ was robbed and insulted and His garments were divided by lot; only one thing was lacking, that His side, pierced bv a spear, should pour rivers of divine blood on the ground.

Nor can the violation of the Great Church [*Hagia Sophia*] be listened to with equanimity. For the sacred altar, formed of all kinds of precious materials and admired by the whole world, was broken into bits and distributed among the soldiers, as was all the other sacred wealth of so great and infinite splendour.[2]

The Fourth Crusade had targetted Egypt, but financial difficulties and internal rivalries allowed the Venetians, hired to provide the ships, to conspire with leaders of the crusade to turn it to their mutual advantage. The creation of Latin states in Greece and the Aegean triggered the permanent end of communion between the Catholic and Orthodox patriachates. A more positive outcome was renewed interest in the West in cults popular in Byzantine lands – though often a consequence of theft and plunder. Thus an arm of James the Great arrived in the West; also the head of St Philip, and a cup purported to be the Holy Grail. Not least in significance was new enthusiasm for those cults associated with Constantine and Helena: veneration of the Holy Cross itself, of the Nails associated with Christ's Passion, and so on. Naturally the Venetians secured their share of the plunder. Relics arriving in the thirteenth century included those of Lucy (1204), Simeon the Prophet (1206), Paul the Martyr (1222), Paul I the Hermit (1240), Eustice (1246), John the Almsgiver (1249), Saba (1249), Barbara (1258), Paul the Bishop (1266), Theodore (1267), and Marina. In 1211 arrived the arm of St Helena, presumably from the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, a relic still displayed in the church which bears her name.[3]

Constantine's mother and Helen at Troyes

Among 'lesser' appropriated relics was the body of St Helen of Natura (Greek *Athyra*), a town of Thrace just outside Constantinople.[4] Some time before 1215 her remains arrived at Troyes in north-east France, where, since the beginning of the reconstruction of the cathedral under Bishop Garnier de

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[2] D. C. Munro, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, Series 1, Vol 3:1 (rev. ed., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1912), pp.15-16.

[3] S. Tramontin, A. Niero, G. Musolini, C. Candiani, *Culto dei Santi a Venezia* (Venezia, 1965), p. 123. The date depends on Andreas Dandolo's *Chronica*, ed. E. Pastorello, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores* (Bologna, 1942), p. 285; some Venetians believed the relic arrived in the previous century (Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1037, n. 29).

[4] Her translation has been discussed by Giles Constable, 'Troyes, Constantinople, and the relics of St Helen in the thirteenth century', in Pierre Gallais and Yves-Jean Riou (eds), *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet* (Poitiers, Société d'Études Médiévales, 1966), pp. 1035-42, hereafter Giles, 'Troyes'. Patrick Geary has discussed her cult at Troyes within the context of medieval relic plunder and veneration: *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994), hereafter Geary, 'Living', pp. 221-42 (Chapter 11, 'Saint Helen of Athyra and the Cathedral of Troyes in the Thirteenth Century').

Traînel, he and his chapter had been eager to acquire relics as attractions to pilgrims and their donatives.[5] Garnier accompanied the crusade as a chaplain and was named distributor of relics by its leaders.[6] For almost a year he arranged for what has been described as a rich selection of relics to be shipped home, chief among them the body of Helen.[7]

It has been said that the clergy of Troyes, 'aware of the potential financial gain to be made from the possession of a relic of great popular appeal', did their best to promote Helen's cult.[8] Her feast was kept with the same solemnity as those of the Assumption of the Virgin and All Saints.[9] Revenue was eagerly sought for the cathedral's completion over the next two centuries, and Helen was credited with numerous miracles, reported, for example, in 1257.[10] Even so, little or nothing is known of her.[11] She was described as daughter of a fourth-century king of Corinth, Agiel, and his queen, Gratulia, in the *Vita beatae Helenae*.[12] This purported to be a biography of Helen by John Chrysostom (347-407, Patriarch of Constantinople from 398), translated in 1215 by Angemer, a native of Courbetaux in Champagne and a lector of the church of Chalcedon, at the request of John of Troyes.[13] Giles Constable suggested that Angemer may have used authentic legends to compose a pious fraud and pointed out that John of Troyes was probably Garnier's chaplain, John the Englishman, a man devoted to the relic.[14] Certainly the presence of a St Helen, Virgin, was attested by Archbishop Antony of Novgorod, who visited Constantinople in 1200 and wrote an account of the city and its religious monuments. After listing the relics

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[5] The *terminus ante quem* of 1215 is based on an introductory letter stating that John of Troyes had arrived in Constantinople seeking information about the life of St Helen whose relics had been taken to Troyes (Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038). On the problems associated with this document, see Geary, 'Living', pp. 229-35. The event was dated 1211 by the *Chronicle* of Bernard Itier, though Troyes is there confused with Treves (Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1039).

[6] Ricardus de Gerboredo, 'Adventus faciei S. Johannis Bapt.', *Acta Sanctorum* [hereafter *Acta SS*], June 5, col. 640; Edouard Riant, 'Dépouilles religieuses à Constantinople', p. 32.

[7] Edouard Riant, *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1877/8), hereafter Riant, 'Exuviae Sacrae' (cited by Constable), 2, pp. 40ff.

[8] Stephen Murray, *Building Troyes Cathedral* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 16ff, cited by Geary, p. 237.

[9] Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1035.

[10] Jean Manlier, 'Helena de Troyes', in *Biblioteca Sanctorum* (Rome, IIstituto Giovanni XXIII della Pontificio Università Lateranense, 1964), hereafter *BS*, 4, cols. 997-8.

[11] *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis* (3 vols., Brussels, 1898), 1, p. 566, n. 3794.

[12] Printed by Nicolas Camusat [alias Camuzat] (ed.), *Promptuarium sacrarum antiquitatum Tricassinae dioecesis* (Troyes, 1610), hereafter Camusat, 'Promptuarium', fols. 402v-410v, probably using, in Geary's opinion ('Living', p. 231, n. 40), Bibliothèque Nationale MS Lat. 5614. A further MS version is Vatican Reg. Lat. 583. Helen's *vita* is also set out in the scenes of one of the windows of the high choir of the cathedral, discussed and illustrated by Geary, 'Living', pp. 231-4.

[13] Constables, 'Troyes', p. 1036, 1040-1. Also Geary, 'Living', p. 230.

[14] Constables, 'Troyes', p. 1040.

outside the Golden Gate, Antony added: '*Ulterius, quiescit s. Helena virgo*'.[15] Jean Ebersolt observed that the general location could well fit the resting place of Helen according to the *Vita,* Natura, that is, *Αθύρας,* Athyra, modern Buyuk Tchekmedje.[16]'

What attracted Garnier to this obscure saint when he was in a position to have his pick of the city's relics? What made Helen of Athyra worth the effort of sending her to Troyes and promoting her cult there?

Patrick Geary drew attention to her place in the devotional year for its calendrical relevance in relation to the celebration of other cults at Troyes. He noted that Helen of Athyra's feast on May 4 fitted well with those of other cults prominent there: Philip and James on May 1, and Mastidia on May 7, as well as the Invention of the Holy Cross, a piece of which Troyes possessed, on May 3. He also proposed that the date was first chosen at Troyes, and not at Natura/Athyra as asserted in the prologue to the *Vita*, and that Helen was represented to the people as 'merely' a wonder-worker, not a model of spirituality.[17]

These are important observations. The importance of Troyes as a trading city would have been well served by a week of ecclesiastical celebrations and public holidays. However, they can be taken significantly further, for attention to the date of the feast, to Helen's name, and to the location and status of Troyes, reveals intriguing patterns. Troyes lies in the same region of France, the County of Champagne, as Hautvilliers, where relics of the empress Helena lay since the monk Tetgisus (Theogisus) brought them from Rome in 841/2, and Montier-en-Der, which claimed her head.[18] P. J. Grosley sought to identify Helen of Athyra with the empress herself, based on the richness of the gold and purple wrappings of the relics and the Greek paintings on the reliquary (destroyed by vandals in 1794), and the ideal opportunity of Garnier to obtain relics of Helena.[19] It has been strongly doubted that such identification was made in the Middle Ages.[20] Thirteenth-century documents generally describe the Helen now resting

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[15] Riant, 'Exuviae Sacrae', 2, p. 230, citing P. Sawaitov, *Puteschestive novgorodskogo archiep* (Saint Petersburg, 1872), p. 171, translated for Riant by J. Martinov. See Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1040, and Geary, 'Living', p. 223, n. 8.

[16] Jean Ebersolt, *Orient et Occident: Recherches sur les influences byzantines et orientales en France pendant les croisades* (Paris, 1929), 2, p. 27, cited by Geary, 'Living', p. 223, n. 8.

[17] Geary, 'Living', pp. 236-7.

[18] On Hautvilliers, Martina Stratmann (ed.), *Flodoard, Die Geschichte der Reimser Kirche* [*Historia Remensis Ecclesiae*], in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [hereafter *MGH*]*, Scriptores* 36 (Hanover, 1998), 2:8, at pp. 456-7; H. V. Sauerland, *Trierer Geschichtesquellen des XI. Jahrhunderts* (Trier, 1889) [including the life of Helen by the monk Al(t)mannus at pp. 173-84], p. 212; P. Grosjean in *Analecta Bollandiana* 58 (1940), pp. 101, 199-203. The date is given as 849 in the *Chronicle* of Sigebert of Gembloux and his continuators, for which see Joachim Wiesenbach (ed.), *MGH,* Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters (Weimar, Böhlau, 1986), Bd. 12, pp. 339, 391.

[19] P. J. Grosley, *Mémoires sur les Troyens célèbres* 1 (Paris, 1812), pp. 436-41, cited by Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1037, n. 24.

[20] Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038; Geary, 'Living', p. 223: the distinction 'established beyond doubt'.

at Troyes as a blessed or glorious virgin.[21] It strict terms this seems reasonable. What confusions may have existed among less-informed citizens can only be guessed at, however.

Also, we now enter the territory of special pleading. The seventeenth-century Bollandist brother Godefroid Henskens was convinced that the people of Troyes confused the name of Helen with that of a hermit Helynus. In the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum* entry for Helen on May 4, Henskens replaced the *Vita* with three readings on Helynus which he found in a lectionary from Troyes' diocese. He suggested that Helynus was first confused with the empress and was transformed, in view of Hautvilliers' claim to the relics of Helena, into the virgin whose relics were said to have been brought to Troyes.[22] Constable corrected this hypothesis by pointing out that the readings refer to the well-known Helenus of Rheims (Helles, Hellen), supposedly an Irish hermit monk of the sixth century with his feast day on October 7, and derive from the *Historia Monachorum* of Rufinus of Aquileia (345-410); and, furthermore, that in a list of relics at Troyes, *Helynus confessor* is listed separately from *Helena virgina*.[23]

There was in any case already at Troyes a relic associated with Helena: the body of a saint Hilda, purported to be a 'disciple' of the mother of Constantine. Hilda, a young woman, perhaps intended to be understood as a servant, is attested in the *Chronicle* of Alberic of Trois-Fontaines: '*Anno 332. Obiit sancta Helena mater Constantini huius discipula fuit sancta Hilda puella que requiescit in episcopati Trecensi*'.[24] Alberic, writing *c.* 1250, reported that her relics were moved to Troyes by Henry I, Count of Champagne (1152-81), called the Liberal on account of his generous endowment of churches. While Hilda's Germanic name (derived from that of a war-goddess) might appear suspect at such a date in a Roman context, it occurs in the next century, *inter alia* in the names of the Merovingian saint Clothilde, and Ildico, the princess married to Attila the Hun. An enamel of the empress Helena dated to about 1170 has been noted in the collections of the Musée des Beaux Arts of Troyes as evidence of the city's interest in her.[25] An attractive alternative explanation for Hilda would be to see her as a pious servant not of Constantine's mother but of that later empress, called Helen in British sources, who was married to Magnus Maximus (383-8) and was praised for attention to both the discourse of St Martin and his comfort as a guest at Trier's imperial palace.

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[21] Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038.

[22] *Acta SS* (Antwerp, 1680), May, 1, pp. 530-2. Constable, 'Troyes', pp. 1036-7

[23] Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1037, citing Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, 9, in Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae [Latinae] Cursus Completus,* Series 1, 21 (Paris, 1849), cols. 429-30; and Camusat, 'Promptuarium', fol. 121 v.

[24] Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronicon, MGH, Scriptores* 23, p. 685, s.a. 1163, cited by Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038, n. 38.

[25] Musée des beaux arts de la ville de Troyes: *El arte romano Exposición organizada por el gobierno español bajo los auspicios del consejo de Europea Catalogo* (Barcelona, 1961), no. 1127, 416, cited by Geary, 'Living', p. 229, n. 34

Helen of Auxerre, Elenaria, Alena, and Heliada

Hilda and Helen of Athyra may well have served at Troyes as a response to Hautvilliers' possession of relics of the empress: if not in competition, then attractive to pilgrims on their way to or from Helena's shrine. Constable has pointed out that Helen's feast of May 4 was occasionally included in liturgical books of the dioceses of Langres and Rheims.[26] Langres is a neighbouring diocese of Troyes, and Rheims, like Troyes, is a city of Champagne. However, it may well be that the springs of the devotion at Troyes lie in some rather more widespread bedrock of cultural understanding.

It is notable, for example, that the empress Helena at Hautvilliers and Helen of Athyra at Troyes were not the only saints of this name who attracted popular devotion in this part of Europe. A **St Elenaria** was a supposed victim of the Diocletian persecution of 304 in the district of Rheims. Her relics, together with those of a fellow-martyr Sponsaria, were venerated at Saint-Riquier in the diocese of Amiens, part of the Rheims archdiocese. Elenaria's feast day is May 2.[27]

At St Amand in Brabant, south of Brussels, a reference to a saint Helen in 1132 was probably intended to refer to **St Alena,** also known as Helen, honoured in the province with a feast on June 17. According to her *vita*, composed at the end of the twelfth century, she was born near Brussels, martyred in 640, buried at Forest, the site from 1105 of a Benedictine monastery, and translated in 1193 by the Benedictine Godescalc, abbot of Afflighem near Alost in Brabant.[28]

Three days later (June 20), the Benedictine nuns of the abbey of Ohren, near Trier in the Moselle valley, venerated their abbess **St Helen (Heliada)** who died *c.* 750.

Closer to hand, and more widely popular, was **St Helen of Auxerre**, the next cathedral city south from Troyes. Little more is known about her than about her namesake of Athyra, or these others, beyond traditions recorded in the *Vita* of St Amator, bishop of Auxerre whose successor was the more famous Germanus. According to its author, the priest Stephanus Africanus, writing around 575, Helen was among the faithful who in 418 gathered when Amator was dying and ministered to him on his deathbed.[29] She was a most holy young woman – '*sacratissima puella*' – who subsequently suffered martyrdom, and was already venerated at Auxerre at the time that Stephanus was writing.[30]

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[26] Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1036.

[27] Claude Boillon, 'Elenaria e Sponsaria', *BS* 4, cols. 998-9. *Acta SS*, May, 1 (Venice, 1737), p. 181. J. Coblet, *Hagiologie du diocèse d'Amiens*, 1 (Paris-Amiens, 1868), pp. 559-65.

[28] Albert d'Haenens, 'Alena (Elena) di Forest', *BS* 1 (1961), col. 760. *Acta SS*, June, 3 (Venice 1743), pp. 388-98; B. Bosse, Les reliques de sainte Alène', *Précis historiques* (Brussels, 1861), pp. 445-52.

[29] Jean Marilier, 'Elena di Auxerre', *BS* 4, col. 996.

[30] Stefanus Africanus, *Vita S. Amatoris*, cap. 31, in *Acta SS*, May, 5 (Antwerp, 1685), p. 152. R. Louis, 'L'église d'Auxerre et ses évêques avant saint Germain', in *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps* (Auxerre, 1950), pp. 52, 57, 59, 60.

What strikes the observer with an eye to the liturgical calendar is the date of her feast, and indeed those of Helen of Athyra and Elenaria of Rheims. Elenaria's feast falls on the vigil (May 2), and Helen of Athyra's on the morrow (May 4), of that commemorating the Invention of the Holy Cross by Helena (May 3), what in England was called 'St Helen's Day in the Spring'.[31] Helen of Auxerre's day coincides with, or is observed on the day following, the joint feast in the Eastern church of Constantine and Helena, May 21. Her cult travelled widely. She was venerated on May 21 according to a breviary from Thèrouanne and the famous psalter from Tournai, both in the northern part of the Rheims archdiocese, but also a breviary from Trier or Cologne, and two others from an Italian and Franciscan source respectively. Her day was May 22 according to three breviaries from the Auxerre diocese, but also in others from Tours, St Dié (south of Nancy), and Hungary, and in the Chester psalter from England.[32] At Auxerre itself a breviary notes the commemoration on May 22 of 'Helen, regina'. Is this Helena of the Cross, or the maiden Helen in a different guise?

Simple dismissal of these liturgical conjunctions as coincidences is discouraged by a further case, at Venice. When the canonical church which would later receive the empress's arm was built there, *c.* 1175, by Vitale Michiel, suffragan bishop of Castello, on the initiative of the confraternity of the Hospital of St Elena,[33] it appears to have been dedicated in honour of the virgin of Auxerre. After the arrival of Helena's relic, the empress's feast and patronage supplanted those of the saint of Auxerre. The Venetian calendar records the maiden's commemoration on May 19, with April 15 as the festival of her dormition (a feast of *Helena v[irgina]* is noted on that day also in a fifteenth-century Hungarian breviary), supporting suggestions that May 21/22 celebrates the deposition of Helen's remains.[34] At Auxerre itself, Helen's feast was part of a concentration of feast days already notable in its late sixth-century calendar. Absence of feasts from December 20 was followed by celebrations on April 15, and 18, and May 2, 3, 4, 5, and 13.[35]

It may also be significant that the geographical concentration reflects to a certain degree the Continental zone of influence of early Irish missionaries. This

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[31] On St Helen's Day in the Spring, see Graham Jones, 'Holy Wells and the Cult of St Helen', *Landscape History* 8 (1986), pp. 59-76, and 'Aspects of Helen: Byzantine and other influences on the reading of Constantine's mother in the West', *Niš and Byzantium. Second Symposium, Niš, 3-5 June 2003. The Collection of Scientific Works II* (Prosveta Niš, Niš, 2004), hereafter Jones, 'Aspects', pp. 13-27.

[32] *Catal. lat. Paris* 3, p. 649 for May 21, except Tournai, and p. 650 for May 22, except Auxerre, Chester. For Auxerre see V. Leroquais, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France* (Paris, 1924), 2, p. 263; for Tournai and Chester see V. Leroquais, *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France* (Paris, 1940) 1, pp. 220 and 198 respectively.

[33] Antonio Fabris, 'Esperienze di vita comunitaria: I canonici regolari', in Giorgio Cracco *et al*, *La Chiesa di Venezia nei Secoli XI-XIII* (Venice, Studium Cattolico, 1988), pp. 86-7; R. Gallo, 'La chiesa di Sant' Elena', *Revista di Venezia*, Oct.-Nov. 1926, pp. 423-520.

[34] Marilier, *BS* (see footnote 29).

[35] L. Duchesne, 'Un denier mot sur le martyrologie hiéronymien', *Analecta Bollandiana* 20 (1901), p. 244.

is worth mentioning because the Irish church has been credited with promoting observance of May 3, the day when the portion of the Cross wrested back from the Persians by Emperor Heraclius was returned to Jerusalem in 629. Mistakenly called the feast of the Invention (which in fact appears to have taken place on September 14, the feast of the Exaltation, a later introduction in the West) and disregarded by the Eastern churches, it is met with first in the Lectionary of Silos (650) and the Bobbio Missal (seventh century).[36]

Other saintly Helens and notable namesakes

Helen's name, in various forms, had long been popular for giving or taking at baptism, and as a name in religion. For example **St Helen of Ukraine** (feast day July 11), first Christian queen of Ukraine, was born Olga, or Helga, and ruled Kiev after the assassination in 945 of her husband Duke Igor I, until their son Sviatoslav reached adulthood *c.* 963.[37] Following her conversion and baptism in Constantinople in 957, when she took the name Helena, she tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce Christianity to the Ukraine on a wide scale. One senses the heavy political significance of her baptismal name and the echo of consecration rituals – 'New Constantine! New Helen!'[38] She was grandmother of Saint Vladimir, great-grandmother of Saints Boris and Gleb, and died in 969.

It is notable, however, that the popularity of Helen's name enjoyed a peak in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Well-known examples in the Balkans are the widowed Queen **Helen** of Croatia (late eleventh century), sister of king Ladislaus (Lazlo) of Hungary; **Helen** of Serbia (1109-1146), wife of Bela II the Blind, king of Hungary, and **Jelena**, wife of the Serbian king Stefan Uros I (1243-1276), who died in old age in 1314.[39] Another famous twelfth-century bearer of Helen's name, in its variant form Elenaria, was **Eleanor of Aquitaine** (1122-1204), wife of the powerful English king Henry II. It was the devolution of Eleanor's lands to the English crown which created an Angevin 'empire' stretching from the Scottish to the Spanish borders. England's third king Henry married, in 1236, **Eleanor of Provence** (1222-91), daughter of Raymond Berengar IV, Count of Provence, and Beatrice of Savoy. Her piety prompted an attempt to venerate her as a saint.

One of the most important saints of Scandinavia is the Swedish **Helen (or Elin) of Skövde** in West Gottland, reportedly born in 1104, murdered in 1140 after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and subsequently acclaimed a saint (with her feast on July 30). Her cult predates 1281, when Bishop Brynolf Algotsson recorded her mass and a feast day at Skövde. Seven years later he wrote liturgical texts for her, mentioning her spring and rock at Gothene and that Pope Alexander III had canonised her in 1164. Though no documentary proof of that

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[36] Herbert Thurston, 'The Cross and Crucifix in Liturgy', in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* [hereafter *CE*], 4 (New York, Robert Appleton, 1908).

[37] Antonio Koren, 'Olga', in *BS* 9 (1967), cols. 1149-52.

[38] Rituals discused in Jones, 'Aspects'.

[39] Discussed further below.

survives, Helen became a popular name in her family and in 1191 relics of the Helens of Auxerre and Brussels were laid into the altar of a Swedish church, at Gumlosa.[40] From three years later comes the first record of Sweden's Queen **Helena,** mother of Saints Nils and Valdemar, who died a nun at Vreta. Helen's legend tells that at the place of her death, about two kilometres from Skövde, a spring burst forth, subsequently called Elins Källa. In 1596 on the orders of the Lutheran archbishop Angermann, the spring was filled with earth – but continued to flow. Several holy wells of Helen exist in Sweden, and a notable token of Helen's wider popularity is Helens Kilde ('Helen's Spring') at the Danish spa of Tisvilde, a village of fishermen of the Kattegat.[41]

In 1207 was born **Helen Enselmini, of Arcella** in Italy. She fell under the spell of Francis of Assisi who led her to become a Poor Clare at the age of 12. Remembered for her patience with the sick and the treatment of many ailments, and credited with visions of purgatory, Helen died in 1242 and was beatified in 1695. She is venerated on November 4.

A contemporary Dominican was **St Helena (Ilona) of Hungary**, prioress and reputed stigmatist at the abbey of Veszprem. She was novice mistress to St Margaret of Hungary, daughter of King Bela IV.[42] Lilies of light grew from her hands during prayers, it was said. She died in 1270 and her feast day is November 9.

Margaret, and Bela IV's younger daughter **Helen (born Jolenta or Yolanda, Iolantha) of Hungary** (feast day 6 March), who was raised by a second devout sister, Blessed Cunegund, were nieces of St Elizabeth of Hungary.[43] When Helen, married to Duke Boleslas V of Poland, was widowed in 1279, she, one of her daughters, and Cunegund retired to the Poor Clare convent Cunegund had founded in Sandeck. Just before her death in 1298, Helen became superior of the convent she had founded in Gnesen. She was beatified in 1827.

Elaine, the Arthurian saga, and Marie of Champagne

Likely stimuli of this interest in, and adoption of, Helena's name include the eleventh- and twelfth-century Crusades and the centrality in the Christian version of Jerusalem's historical drama of her finding of the Cross. A relic of the Cross, revealed to Crusaders in 1099 by some Syrian Christians, was carried into battle from 1099 until its loss in 1187 at the Battle of Hattin, and many

[40] http://www.helenaordern.swednet.cc/html/saint_helena_part_three.html, accessed January 24, 2005. *Acta SS*, July 7 (Venice, 1759), p. 343; 'Legenda sactae Helenae schedviensis', in *Scriptores rerum suecicarum medii aevi*, 3 (Upsala, 1876); E. Elberling, 'Tisvilde', in *Nordisk familje bok* 29 (1919), p. 147; L. Oliger, in *Enciclopaedia Cattolica* 5, cols 209-10.

[41] Anna Lisa Sibilia, 'Elena (Elin) di Skövde', *BS* 4, cols 996-7.

[42] Angelo Walz, 'Elena d'Ungheria', *BS* 4, col. 997; *Année Dominicaine* (Lyons, 1896), Nov., pp. 359-72.

[43] Jaroslav Jan Sarneta, 'Iolanda (Elena, Johelet, Jolenta)', *BS* 7 (1966), col. 858; *Acta SS.*, April, 3 (Venice 1738), p. 96, and June, 5 (1748), p. 675.

chroniclers in the Crusader states wrote about its power.[44] This was also a key period for renewal of interest in chivalric legends about Arthur and his knights. By the time of Malory's edition in the fifteenth century, at least six characters in the drama bore the name **Elaine**, ultimately derived from Helena. One is wife of King Ban of Benwick, and mother of Sir Lancelot; another the Lady of Astolat, who dies of her unrequited love for that knight. It is her barge, bearing her body, which arrives at Camelot in Tennyson's poem, the *Lady of Shalott*, a favourite subject of English Pre-Raphaelite painters. A third Elaine seduces Lancelot to give birth to Sir Galahad; she is the daughter of King Pelles, guardian of the Holy Grail. A fourth is daughter of King Nentres of Garlot, and a fifth, perhaps representing the same character, is Arthur's niece, fathered by Nentres or by King Lot. There is also Elaine, daughter of Pellinore (*cf.* the name of Pelles), who kills herself after the death of her lover, Sir Miles.

The arrival of Helen of Athyra at Troyes coincided with enthusiasm for the works of one of the principal promoters of Arthurian legend, Chrétien de Troyes, who had died *c.* 1185, probably still a relatively young man, and whose work was still fresh.[45] It is possible that in using the name Elaine, Chrétien was flattering his patron Marie, Countess of Champagne (1145-98), daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine by her first husband, King Louis VII of France. Marie was the much younger wife of the scholarly Henry the Liberal (1127-81), noted earlier as moving to Troyes the relics of St Hilda. They married in 1164. Between 1160 and 1172, Chrétien lived at Troyes, perhaps as herald-at-arms, and wrote four of his romances there, including that of Lancelot. His opening lines of *Lancelot* declare his gratitude to Marie:

'Since my lady of Champagne wishes me to undertake to write a romance, I shall very gladly do so…

'I am not one to wish to flatter my lady. I will simply say: "The Countess is worth as many queens as a gem is worth of pearls and sards".'[46]

In considering why Helena and her name were important in this part of Europe, it is worth noting that Campania, 'Champagne', together with the counties of Flanders and Brabant, constituted central portions of the ancient Frankish kingdom. In the period following Charlemagne's death, Campania bordered Lotharingia, which stretched away to the North Sea via the Moselle and the Rhine, and the Burgundian lands reaching south to the Mediterranean along the Rhone. It was key to the central corridor which carried much of the wealth in trade of Charlemagne's empire and its successors and drew together

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[44] Deborah Gerish, 'The virtue of the Cross and the hand of the king: Connections between royal power and the True Cross in the twelfth-century Crusader states', Carolinas Symposium on British Studies, October 7-8, 1995, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina.

[45] A recent description of Chrétien's career is Joseph J. Duggan, *The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001), Chapter 1, 'Chrétien and his milieu'.

[46] William Wistar Comfort (trans.) and D. D. R. Owen (introduction),, *Arthurian Romances [by] Chrétien de Troyes* (London, J M Dent & Sons, 1975).

the Frankish and German lands. Troyes was its capital. (A southern troubadour visiting Troyes in 1190 praised King Philippe II Auguste of France, Marie's half-brother, as a descendant of Charlemagne.[47])

The chief Roman city of the Moselle valley was Trier, capital of the Diocletian Diocese of the Gauls – and of the West as a whole when Constantine (and previously his father Constans) occupied it as Augustus following the division of the empire by Diocletian. Trier rejoiced in its imperial palaces, including that which adjoined the Porta Negra and which Helena, Constantine's mother, was supposed to have embellished with an oratory. Some thought the empress was born there, and in 1196 an altar at Trier was dedicated in honour of the Virgin Mary and of Helena.[48]

Both Trier and Montier-en-Der laid claim to head relics of Helena, while Hautvilliers claimed her body. Other places laying claim to relics of Helena were Epternach in Luxembourg, close to Trier, Corbie (15km east of Amiens), Gorze (20km south-west of Metz in Lorraine), St Emmeran (diocese of Regensburg, north of Munich), and Freisung in Bavaria.[49] It has been said with reason that 'la storia delle reliquie di E[lena] è alquanto oscura'.[50] Rome's remaining relics were translated by Pope Innocent III to the church of Maria Ara Coeli *c*. 1140.[51] According to Nicephorus Callistos, after two years in her sepulchre at Rome, Helena's remains were transferred to Constantinople and placed in the mausoleum which Constantine prepared for her. From there, the canon Aicardus took her relics (in truth, perhaps, only part) to Venice in 1212. Helena's original sarcophagus, from her mausoleum on the Via Labicana, is today conserved in the Vatican Museum.

The sack of Constantinople and the royal king of Champagne

As the popularity of Helen's name in sainthood, baptism and literature maps closely to the corridor of trade and politics of which Troyes was the fulcrum, what links the Helens, Eleanors and Jelenas of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is their familial ties to royal and noble dynasties involved in the sack of Constantinople in 1204.

In his summary of the themes surrounding that event, Siméon Vailhé noted that when Constantinople saw Crusaders for the first time in 1096, the contact was not cordial. 'The Greeks gave [them] generally… an unkindly re-

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[47] K. F. Werner, cited by June Hall Martin McCash, 'Marie de Champagne and Eleanor of Aquitaine: a relationship reexamined', *Speculum, A Journal of Medieval Studies*, 54, no. 4 (October, 1979).

[48] *MGH, Scriptores* 30, 2, p. 783, cited by Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038, n. 32.

[49] On the claims of Gorze, see *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 15, 2, pp. 975-6, cited by Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1038, n. 33.

[50] Agostino Amore, 'Elena (Flavia Guilia Elena Augusta)', *BS* 4, col. 992.

[51] On Rome's claim to her head and part of her body, see P. Lucot, *Sainte Hélène… d'aprés des documents inédits: sa vie, son culte en Champagne, son suaire à Châlons, son corps à Paris* (Paris, 1876), pp. 34-7; A.-M. Rouillon, *Sainte Hélène* ('Les Saints') (Paris, 1908), pp. 128; R. Couzard, *Sainte Hélène d'aprés l'histoire et la tradition* (Paris, 1911), pp. 207-37. (All cited by Constable, 'Troyes', p. 1037, nn. 26 and 28.)

ception. They looked on them as enemies no less than the Turks, except that the crusaders, marching in the name of Christ and backed by all the strength of the West, appeared much more dangerous than the Mussulman Turks. On the other hand the Franks were only too ready to treat the Greeks as mere unbelievers, and, but for the opposition of the popes, would have begun the Crusades with the capture of Constantinople.

'These sad quarrels and the fratricidal conflicts of Christian nations lasted nearly a century, until in 1182 Emperor Andronicus Comnenus… ordered a general massacre of the Latins in his capital. In 1190 the Greek patriarch, Dositheus, solemnly promised indulgences to any Greek who would murder a Latin. These facts, together with the selfish views of the Venetians and the domestic divisions of the Greeks, were enough to provoke a conflict.'[52]

In the event, it was Marie and Henry the Liberal's son Count Thibaud of Champagne, born at Troyes in 1179, who instigated the Fourth Crusade. During a tournament near Rheims, at Ecry-sur-Aisne in November 1199, he and a great many knights took the Cross. This was no event out of the blue, however. In 1192 Marie had become the mother of the king of Jerusalem. In that year her elder son, Count Henry II, in Palestine on crusade like his father who died shortly after returning from fighting the Saracens between 1179 and 1181, married Isabella, daughter of Amalric I of Jerusalem, becoming King of Jerusalem in right of his wife in 1192.[53] Henry the Younger himself died five years later, under mysterious circumstances, falling from a tower. The marriage exemplifies the close-knit marriage alliances of the western European nobility: Amalric's father, Fulk V, had been Count of Anjou, while Henry's wife Isabella was a cousin of his mother's stepfather, Henry II of Anjou, king of England.

Thibaud and his followers decided to attack Egypt and in March, 1201, concluded a contract with the Republic of Venice for shipping troops. Thibaud died only a few weeks later and the crusaders chose as his successor Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, cousin of the Holy Roman Emperor Philip of Swabia, and uncle of Baldwin V, King of Jerusalem. His brother, William of Montferrat, had married Sybilla, daughter of Amalric I and half-sister of Marie of Champagne's daughter-in-law Isabella. Just at this time Isaac II Angelus, the Byzantine Emperor who some years earlier had been deposed and succeeded by his brother Alexius III, sought refuge in the West and asked Pope Innocent III and his own brother-in-law, the Emperor Philip, husband of his sister Irene, to reinstate him. The crusaders assembled at Venice could not meet the bill agreed in their contract, so, by way of exchange, the Venetians suggested that they help recover the city of Zara in Dalmatia. The knights accepted, and, after a short siege, the city surrendered in November, 1202. They then decided to march on Constantinople, which was carried by storm after a second siege on April 12, 1204.[54]

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[52] S[iméon] Vailhé, 'Constantinople', *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 4 (New York, Robert Appleton, 1908), hereafter Vailhé, 'Constantinople'.

[53] Anthime Fourrier, *Le courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen-Age* (Paris, A.G. Nizet, 1960), p. 81.

[54] Louis Bréhier, 'Crusades', in *CE*, 4 (New York, Robert Appleton, 1908), hereafter Bréhier, 'Crusades'.

Vailhé's account takes up the story:

'The city was taken amid scenes of great cruelty; the slaughter was followed by an unbridled plunder of the countless treasures heaped up during so many centuries by the Byzantine emperors. The holy relics especially excited the covetousness of the Latin clerics; Villehardouin asserts that there were but few cities in the West that received no sacred booty from this pillage. The official booty alone, according to the same historian, amounted to about eleven millions of dollars whose purchasing power was then of course much greater than at this day.'[55]

On May 9 a college formed of prominent crusaders and Venetians elected Dandolo, Doge of Venice, as Emperor of 'Romania' (the Byzantine imperial capital having moved to Nicaea) but he refused. The man chosen in his place and solemnly crowned in St Sophia has been described as 'young, gallant, pious and virtuous, one of the few who interpreted and observed his crusading vows strictly; the most popular leader in the host'. He was Marie and Henry's son-in-law, Baldwin, Count of Flanders.[56] When he died in 1205 he was succeeded by his younger brother Henry, who ruled until 1216. On his death, the Latin empire was ruled for two years by their sister Yolanda, who had married a younger son of the king of France, Peter of Courtenay. Peter was named emperor but never reached Constantinople. Of Yolanda and Peter's ten children, Robert (died 1228) and Baldwin II (died 1273) both ruled as emperor, Margaret succeeded to the Marquisate of of Namur, Marie was married to the Byzantine emperor Theodore, and Yolanda married Andrew II of Hungary, becoming the stepmother of St Elizabeth.

After Byzantium's sack, its lands were parcelled out. Boniface of Montferrat became King of Thessalonica and Macedonia; Henry of Flanders, Lord of Adramyttion; Louis of Blois, Duke of Nicæa; and fiefs were bestowed upon six hundred knights. Venice reserved for itself the ports of Thrace, the Peloponnesus, and the islands. Thomas Morosini, a Venetian priest, was elected patriarch.[57] It is in this milieu that it is possible to recognise the fictional fourth-century Kingdom of Corinth in which her *Vita* placed Helen of Athyra, supposed daughter of Agiel and his queen Gratulia. The florid form of the latter name, presumably from Latin *gratia*, 'grace', is typical of the inventive personal naming culture in the West in the twelth and thirteenth centuries.

'This new Latin Empire,' wrote Vailhé, 'organized according to feudal law, never took deep root. It was unable to hold its own against the Greeks (who had immediately created two empires in Asia, at Nicæa and at Trebizond, a despotate in Epirus and other small States) nor against the Bulgarians, Comans, and Serbs. After a much-disturbed existence it disappeared in 1261, and Constantinople became again the centre of Greek power with Michael Palæologus as emperor.'[58]

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55 Vailhé, 'Constantinople'.

56 Robert Lee Wolff, 'Baldwin of Flanders and Hainault, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172-1255', *Speculum*, volume 27, issue 3 (July, 1952), pp. 281-322.

57 Bréhier, 'Crusades'

58 Vailhé, 'Constantinople'.

It is difficult not to sense that this episode played to the ruling family of Champagne's awareness of their history, identity, and status. Between Henry the Liberal's death and the majority of their son Henry in 1187, Marie as regent was one of the ten or so most powerful nobles in the French-speaking lands. In 1182 Chrétien de Troyes' other principal patron, Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders, newly-widowed like Marie, proposed marriage to her, but withdrew the proposal the following year. Nevertheless, Champagne and Flanders were united in 1186 by the marriage of Marie's daughter, herself named Marie, and Baldwin of Hainault. (Philip himself took part in the Third Crusade in 1190 and died at the siege of Acre in 1191.) The appointment of Bishop Garnier as chaplain to the Fourth Crusade and then as chief commissioner for the distribution of relics, may well have represented a rich gesture to Champagne as the land of the Crusade's initial leader. When Garnier picked for his own cathedral and diocese the remains of Helen of Athyra, was it against a knowledge that the name and meanings of Helena had particular significance in Champagne and its neighbouring lands? Was there more to his choice than has met the eye of the episode's commentators?

Helen, Queen of Troyes

While acknowledging the effect of the plundering of fallen Constantinople in furnishing new relics in the West and thereby exciting fresh interest in imperial cults, it is necessary to ask to what extent the ground was already fertile for these new implantations. Chrétien picked up some of his Arthurian themes from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, 'The History of the Kings of Britain', in which the myth of King Arthur rubs shoulders with traditions about Helena, mother of Constantine, portrayed by Geoffrey as the daughter of a British king, Coel of Colchester.[59] As Chrétien dedicated his work to his patron, Marie de Champagne, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine, so Geoffrey, writing in or around 1136, appears to have been anxious to please Robert of Gloucester, eldest bastard of Henry I of England. In fact there are two Helens in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*: one the mother of Constantine, and the other a niece of a ficticious Hoel, King of Brittany, abducted and killed by the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel and buried there, so that its peak became known as the Tomb of Helena.[60] Chrétien's Arthurian reworking is also a reminder that central to the so-called 'Matter of Britain' was the notion of a national origin myth for the *Brit*ons which involved *Bru*tus, grand-grandson of Aeneas, and his departure with his followers from Troy. It occupies a major early portion of Geoffrey's

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[59] The most accessible translation and introduction is Lewis Thorpe, *Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966), hereafter HRB.

[60] HRB, pp. 237-41. For the British Helena traditions see Jones, 'Aspects'. For a discussion of Geoffrey's sources and the later fortunes of this characterisation of the empress, see Antonina Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend* (Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2002).

History.[61] We might conclude that Geoffrey would not have included it unless it was capable to striking a chord with his readers. Likewise, we may reasonably wonder with what folk-etymological significance the citizens of Troyes (actually named from the Gaulish tribe, the Tricassii), regarded the name of Troy, city of the Helen who in Goethe's phrase, placed on the lips of Dr Faustus, 'launched a thousand ships'.

Indeed, there is one further link between Helen and Troyes which arises from just such an association. Troubadour verse credited 'Helen, Queen of Troyes', with the discovery of the Volto Santo ('Holy Face'), a wooden crucifix said to be an image of Christ carved by Nicodemus at the Crucifixion. Every year on the evening of September 13, vigil of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the effigy is removed from St Martin's Cathedral of Lucca in Tuscany and processed through the streets via places historically connected with political power such as the Palazzo Ducal. [62] It is generally said that the cult of the 'Volto Santo' emerged at Lucca during the fourteenth century, with religious and civil celebrations continuing over two days. In the troubadour song, Helen is married to 'King David of Troyes'. Of course, classical Troy is meant, but it is difficult to conclude that in Champagne at least, those hearing the troubadour song made no mental connection between the city of the Spartan War and the city named Troyes.

La Belle Helene de Constantinople

The sack of Constantinople in 1204 was not its final pillage. In 1453 it fell to the Ottoman Turks, and the following year the then Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, assembled plans for a new crusade to recapture the city. Philip was already full of zeal for his idealised dream of a unified Christian world in opposition to the 'Saracens'. It was against the background of this aspiration that a new version was made for him of an established romance known as *La Belle Helene de Constantinople*, what Nancy Black has called 'a long fictional narrative set in the early period of Christianisation in France and Burgundy', and known in two versions.[63]

The first version is a verse *chanson de geste* of more than 15,000 lines written in the fourteenth century, which places the action in the first century between the Crucifixion and the reign of Pope Clement, 88-97. The second version, that made for Philip in 1448, is a prose translation of the *chanson* by Jean Waugelin. It glorifies Burgundy and promotes Philip's vision of unified Christian action against the Ottoman Turks, the campaign on behalf of which also included his foundation of the Order of the Golden Fleece.[64] Consequently

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[61] HRB, pp. 55-75.

[62] *La Santa Croce di Lucca: il Volto Santo: storia, tradizioni, immagini: atti del convegno, Villa Bottini, 1-3 marzo 2001* (Lucca, Dell'Acero, *c.* 2003).

[63] Nancy B. Black, '*La Belle Helene de Constantinople* and Crusade propaganda in the court of Philip the Good', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 26 (2001), pp. 42-51, at p. 42. I am indebted to Professor Black's article for the information in the rest of this paragraph.

[64] The exemplar MS is Brussels, Bibliothètheque Royale 9967, of 1460-7, with what Black calls 'magnificent' illustrations by Leyot Liédot.

much of the story is about the reconquest of France – though the plot, 'filled with anachronisms and[with] little correspondence to actual historical fact', sets the action in late antiquity, conflating the times of St Martin (c. 316-97) with those of Clovis (465-511).[65]

As Black has pointed out, *La Belle Helene* is 'often mentioned in footnotes, never studied in depth'. She has given a list of references, two in the 1840s, one each in 1897 and 1937, and then nothing until two acticles in the 1990s.[66] Helen is portrayed as mother of twins, St Martin, and Brise (named Bras, 'arm', before his baptism), father of St Brice, Martin's successor as Bishop of Tours. Their father is the King of England and their grandfather is King of Scotland. The basic plot closely relates to stories of the 'Constance' type,[67] and to the type of folk-ale known as 'The Maiden without Hands'.[68] The closest analogue is Phillipe de Remi's *La Manekine*. Following familiar outline of Constance-type stories, the plot involves mutilation (Helen has her arm amputated – the limb being restored eventually by Martin), flight from incest, marriage to a king, birth of a son (in this case twins), an evil mother-in-law, falsified letters, and exiles (followed by rescue or reconciliation). However, here the heroine's sufferings play secondary role to those of members of her family.

This fictional Helene, queen of England, is a long way from Helena, dowager empress of Rome. Nevertheless, she is one more aspect of a complex interrelationship between historical meanings of 'Helen' and ideas of legitimacy, sovereignty, and Christian piety. British aspects of this have been explored by the present writer.[69] Waugelin's reworking therefore links Britain, Burgundy, and Byzantium. By a coincidence full of resonance, Philip the Good leased four vessels for the campaign he planned in 1443 from Venice, place of devotion of both Helen of Athyra and Helen of the Cross.

Jelena of Serbia

It is appropriate for a contribution to this volume to end with a note about Jelena, Queen of Serbia. Her identity has long been a matter of scholarly dispute. Gordon McDaniel has argued she was the eldest daughter of a Hungarian nobleman, John Angelos, ruler of Srem. John's parents were the deposed Emperor of Byzantium, Isaac II Angelos, and Margaret, sister of King Andrew II of Hungary. (After Isaac's death in 1205, Margaret of Hungary married Boniface of Montferrat, thereby providing some sort of legal succession between the

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[65] Black, p. 43.

[66] Alexander H. Krappe, '*La Belle Helene de Constantinople*', *Romania* 63 (1937), pp. 324-53; Jelle Koopmans, and Paul Verhuyek, in Marie-Madeleine Castellani and Jean-Pierre Martin (eds), *Arras au Moyen Âge: Histoire et Littérature* (Arras, Artois Presses Université, 1994), pp. 125-36 and 111-24, respectively.

[67] Margaret Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (1927, reprinted New York, AMS, 1973); Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (eds), 'Emaré', *The Middle English Breton Lays* (Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), Introduction.

[68] Type 706 in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*, FF Communications 184 (Helsinki, Academia Scientarium Fenica, 1964 OR 84), pp. 240-1.

[69] Jones, 'Aspects'.

Byzantine and Latin imperial rulers.) John Angelos married Matilda, daughter of Margaret of Namur – mentioned above as one of the ten children of Yolanda and Peter of Courtenay. McDaniel identified John and Matilda's daughter Maria with Maria de Chau, Jelena's documented sister.[70] If McDaniel was correct, Jelena was second cousin to Andrew II's beatified grand-daughter Jolanda, who, as mentioned earlier, took the name Helen as a Poor Clare, perhaps in honour of her sister Margaret's venerated novice-mistress Ilona (Helen). Through her mother, Jelena was a great-great-grand-daughter of Louis VI of France. Her great-grandfather Peter was youngest brother of Louis VII, first husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine and father of Marie of Champagne, and later married to Adèle of Champagne, half-sister of Marie's husband Henry.

This complex web of relationships goes some way towards explaining the fascination for the nobility of twelfth and thirteenth-century Europe of Helena, mother of Constantine. Behind her, of course, lies a deeper fascination with her namesake Helen of Troy.

Conclusion

Interest in saints called Helen in western continental Europe is concentrated in an area corresponding to the Counties of Champagne, Flanders and Brabant – central portions of the ancient Frankish kingdom. Their feast days are also concentrated – apparently taking account of two 'anchor days' in May associated with Helena, the Mother of Constantine. These are May 3, the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, and May 22, the joint feast of Constantine and Helen as observed within Eastern Christianity. Acknowledgement of the latter by inference in Western dioceses is intrinsically interesting, as it suggests either cultural contacts with the East, or that observance of the feast was once common to East and West. Such contacts were dense in the period of the Crusades, when the name of the discoverer of the 'True Cross' became popular as a baptismal name in the West, particularly among the nobility. The ruling family of Champagne was deeply implicated in the Third and Fourth Crusades, and its notions of chivalric valour and romance were fed by the poet Chrétien of Troyes, the county's capital. He popularised the Arthurian legends in which Elaine is the name of several characters.

At Troyes a week of religious celebrations marked the beginning of May, traditionally a time of garlanding and lovers' trysts. May 3 was known in Britain as 'St Helen's Day in the Spring', when summer pasturing began. Springs or wells of St Helen were a feature of southern Scandinavia, as in northern Britain. Taking the evidence together, it is tempting to see a reflection in western interest in Helen as an imperial, saintly, and baptismal name, of some connection made at a folk-cultural level between 'Helen' and the season of renewal and fecundity, and that this reflection was strongest in the central Frankish lands. Why that should be is a matter for another occasion, but may involve an exploration of Helena's older namesakes, including Helen of Troy.

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[70] Gordon McDaniel, 'On Hungarian-Serbian Relations in the Thirteenth Century: John Angelos and Queen Jelena', *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* 12 (1982/1983), pp. 43-50

Грахам Џонс

КОНСТАНТИНОПОЉ 1204. ГОДИНЕ, ОБНОВА ИНТЕРЕСОВАЊА НА ЗАПАДУ ЗА ЦАРСКЕ И ДРУГЕ ВИЗАНТИЈСКЕ КУЛТОВЕ И СТВАРАЊЕ НОВИХ ТРАДИЦИЈА

Константинопољ је 1204. године био опустошен и, након тога, под окупацијом све до 1261. године, што је на западу проузроковало поновни раст интересовања за култове који су били популарни на просторима Византије: међу њима и оне везане за Константина и Јелену, а у многим случајевима је то интересовање настало као последица пљачке. У том истом периоду, а вероватно стимулисане истим политичким силама, настале су бројне књижевне и друге традиције у којима су царска имена постала симбол ауторитета, законитости и пијетета. Овај рад усмерен је на Јелену и повезује различите симболе, текстове и артефакте, као што су рука свете Јелене која се чува у Венецији у њој посвећеној цркви; трубадурски стихови који повезују „Јелену, краљицу Троје“ и Свето лице у Луки; увођење дана посвећених Јелени Атирској у граду Троа (4. мај) и Јелени од Озера (22. мај); и балада о Лепој Јелени од Константинопоља. Направљено је поређење са сличним распростирањем идеје о Константину и Јелени које се среће на истоку: на пример, са приказима Јелене од Едесе и Јелене од Адијабене.