

# Bellême or not Bellême

## (Taking a Deep Look at Some "Nugent" Documents)

The object of this document is precise, but the outcome of the research which results in this document is for the reader to decide. We will attempt to study the descent of the Rotrou family to clarify the origins of this illustrious House.

The Nugent family is a famous family with more than 10 centuries of history. Their ancestors were powerful lords of France as far back as the 10th century, marrying into royalty, and founding a dynasty which brings us down to the present day. The story, or rather, the stories of individual famous Nugents make fascinating reading, as they were to be found in all walks of life, from poets to gold-hunters, from Members of Parliament to Admirals of the Fleet. Putting together the history of a family even as famous as ours, is a formidable task, and raises several tantalising questions. Where did they originally come from ? Did the family descend from the House of Bellême, or were they associated with the House of Châteaudun ? How did they become of national and even international importance ? Where are their descendants today?

There have been many stories told about both famous and infamous members of the family, as they strove to live in their new-found country of Ireland where they settled towards the end of the 12th Century. It is the early years of the dynasty which are the most difficult to pierce, as they stepped out of the darkness into the limelight in France, in the middle of the 10th Century. Historians and genealogists have tried to put together their history for many hundreds of years. It is not without reason that some documents report **"The origin of this Peerage is obscure."** and that **"The descent of the barony is obscure"**<sup>1</sup>. We know how the family grew in importance to finally become true Counts of the Perche, in France, in the 12th century, but we would like to establish their roots, as they appeared on the scene in the middle of the 10th Century, more than 250 years earlier.

An awakening of interest in the origins of medieval families took place in the 19th and 20 centuries, as people became curious about their family history. Americans, Canadians, Australians and such, began asking questions about their origins, and tried to follow the trail back to Europe, where they all began, but very quickly came up against a brick wall. Their ancestors usually left their native country, Ireland or England, Italy, Germany, etc., because of poverty, famine or local war situations, and arrived in their new home with only the clothes that they wore. As usual, only the most ardent hunters of information concerning their family could find the time, the energy and the money to track down their origins, assuming, of course, that their family was well enough known to merit attention. Much valuable information, often from ecclesiastic sources, a veritable mine of information became more and more difficult to access, as valuable printed editions of such information went out of print, or were shuffled onto dusty shelves in obscure libraries. The arrival of the Internet as little as 10 years ago, has suddenly made available a wealth of information concerning family origins. More and more historical documents have become available, which were previously out of reach of the amateur genealogist. From the comfort of our home, we can now access information hitherto inaccessible. The

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<sup>1</sup> It is obvious from these declarations that they refer to the De Nogent/Nugent family in Ireland and England after the XII th Century.

recent Google Books project (to name but one) makes available many thousands of books in "pdf" format, some of which have been a precious aid in my research.

Unfortunately, the Internet, although making available all sorts of information to the public, has required that users should become very discriminating in their analysis of the data they come across. As amateur genealogists rushed to create their personal Internet sites, with the story of their family, the Internet has become rife with incomplete and even invalid data, liberally sprinkled with large doses of "wishful thinking". Names, dates and places are often false, family chains spanning hundreds of years, have been compiled willy-nilly, but can easily be rendered invalid, as they are confronted with serious data from more valid sources<sup>2</sup>. I have examined in detail one Internet site which traces the origins of a "fairy-tale" American as he follows his family roots back as far as the Egyptian Pharaohs. With tongue-in-cheek, I have also found similar, albeit not so enormous falsehoods in some of the Nugent Internet sites<sup>3</sup>. Many modern (18th or 19th Century) documents, now available on the Internet, clearly state that the family originates in the north of the Perche, in the House of Bellême, descending from Yves de Creil and Yves de Bellême in the first half of the 10th Century. Cartulary or ecclesiastical documents transcribed in Latin at the time of these events have been examined by modern historians, and can shed partial light upon the history of the families involved. Several documents, composed by reputable historians put Bellême in Normandy, and the House of Rotrou as having Norman origins, proof that they show absolutely no knowledge of medieval French history. Such information appears to have been copied on face value, from very limited document origins. However, other genealogists and historians (often French) give the family a totally different origin, that of the House of Châteaudun, closely associated with the Counts of Blois and Chartres, and with our early De Nogent family, before they eventually became Viscounts and Counts in their own right. Although geographically, the Bellême and the Nogent families have roots that are less than 50 kilometres apart, in the troubled days of the 10th century they have been shown to be declared enemies in a protracted war which lasted several centuries.

Let us examine the following introduction to the origins of the Nugent family. Introductions "very" similar to this can be found in many Nugent Internet sites. We will comment on each part of this introduction. Who is responsible for such data ?

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<sup>2</sup> The first question which comes to mind is "What represents a valid source ?" The answer is simple. Information concerning royalty, senior ecclesiastics, and "upper-crust" noble families usually represent valid sources. Other sources are often suspect, as they are based upon hearsay or wishful thinking. After all, everybody would like to come from a famous family !

<sup>3</sup> Many famous families find their roots in the Xth Century, when documented evidence of their existence became available. The Nugent Family was just one of many, and has merited much research over recent years.

The following extract comes from a document concerning the Nugent family, often found in various forms, on the Internet :

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### ***Nugent Surname History***

*According to family historians, the Nugent's trace their descent from Evas de Belesme, powerful Norman Baron, and Lord of the Castle, lands and tower of Belesme, Normandy, who died in the year 993AD. By his wife Godchilda, he was the father of a son named William. William, Lord of Belesme and Count of Alancon, served under Robert King of France. By his first wife Matilda, he left three sons, Fulke, Robert and William de Belesme. His second wife Adelais gave him another son Warrin de Belesme who became Lord of Damfort, Mortaign and Nogent in Normandy and Viscount of Châteaudun. Warrin died in 1026 leaving issue by his wife Millicent, the daughter and heir of Hugh, Viscount Châteaudun, of a son named Geoffry (or Geoffrey). Geoffry, Viscount Châteaudun, Lord of Montaign, Nogent and Gallardon, married Elvdic, daughter of Odo, Count of Champagne, and had at least two sons, Hugh and Rotron de Nugent, of whom the former died young. Rotron de Nugent (the first of the family so designated), Viscount Châteaudun, married Adeline, daughter of Nigen de Mowbray, of Picardy, and was the father by her of Geoffry, Hugh, Rotron and Fulquois de Nugent. Of these brothers, the first was created Count of Mortaign and Nogent. He commanded a division of the army of William the Conqueror in 1066. Hugh became Viscount of Châteaudun, and Fulquois, who was a follower of the Norman Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings. His sons were Gilbert, Richard, Christopher and John de Nugent, of whom the last three accompanied Sir Hugh de Lacie on his expedition to Ireland in the year 1172.*

### ***Pedigree of the Nugent family***

*by Sir William Betham, the Ulster King of Arms - 1853*

*Genealogy of the pedigree type, written in the form of a table of ancestors, with text in English, was made to order by the duchess Giovanna (Johanna) Riario Sforza, wife to the Austrian count and roman duke, lieutenant marshal Laval Nugent. It is in a hard-cover book, consisting mostly of a schematic outline of the 85 family branches in the male and female line. It begins with Ives de Belesme (995), the Norman founder of the family and an ancestor of Fulco (1066-1090) who had together with his brothers moved to England and was the first to call himself de Nogent (or Nugent) and goes on listing their descendants of both sexes up to the time of Laval (1777-1862).*

*The Nugent family is a branch of the great house of Belesme, being descended from Wulke de Belsame, Lord of Nogent le Rotrou, who accompanied William the Conqueror and fought in the Battle of Hastings, October 14th 1066. The root word from which the name is derived is "gent". In the course of time No-gent became the name of a number of towns ideally situated on the banks of a river, such as Nogent-sur-Seine and Nogent-sur-Marne. Gilbert and Hugh de Nugent, cousins of the Lord of Nogent is Rotrou, founded the name and family in Ireland in the time of Henry II. They settled in Westmeath and the estate remained in the family for many generations.*

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This introduction has been cut and pasted, without the slightest modification, into many Nugent Internet sites which recount the history of "Our Family". Where did this data come from ? Why did amateur genealogists take it on face value ?

Let us begin by identifying one such document, available on the Internet, and linked to from "thenugentfamily.com" site :

<http://www.thenugentfamily.com/allnugents.htm>

This document is entitled "Nugent Surname History" by Marian Keaney. I will quote the first few paragraphs of this document, which has been extensively copied into many other Internet sites, and has been taken on face value as the truth concerning the origins of the Nugent family.

Let us examine just the first few sentences .....

## **Paragraph 1 - Nugent Surname History**

### **1 - According to family historians ....**

*Who ? Probably Gilles Brie de la Clergerie (1620), followed by J.C.Lyons (1850), Sir William Betham (1853), followed by John Burke (1860)*

### **2 - the Nugent's trace their descent from Evas de Belesme ....**

*Who said so ? - Gilles Brie de la Clergerie, very pro- Bellême, would seem a likely culprit (see Site Information - Research Documentation - number 001).*

### **3 - powerful Norman Baron ....**

*Evas (Yves) was a simple crossbow archer, but known for his ability to construct attack and defence mechanisms for the Norman "Motte & Bailey" constructions <sup>4</sup> which could withstand external attack. When Rotrou (sometimes called Rotroldus), army commander of Thibault the Trickster (Count of Blois & Chartres) lost an important battle against the Normans in the northern area of the County of the Perche, in about 963, the town of Bellême was lost <sup>5</sup>. Richard, the Duke of Normandy conferred upon Yves, as a reward for his work<sup>6</sup>, the title of "Lord of Bellême" (Seigneur), to hold the town against all attacks from the Count of Blois, under pain of losing his new job, if he failed. Yves was not powerful, he apparently was not Norman (his mother was the sister of Raoul, Duke of Le Mans, and he was the brother of Sigefroy, Bishop of Le Mans), and he was not a Baron (Baronry can only be conferred by a King), and is a much higher position than a simple "Lord". At best, Yves could be given the title "Lord of the Baronry". However, the descendants of*

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<sup>4</sup> Motte and Bailey Castles and Ringworks © Jeffrey L. Thomas - 2002 <http://www.castlewailes.com/motte.html>

<sup>5</sup> Les Comtes de Perche - <http://www.francebalade.com/maine/ctperche.htm> - A translation from French to English, of part of this internet site, can be found in the Appendix, below. This is about the only truth in this document. If the town of Belleme was "lost", it must have previously "belonged" to the family of Rotrou, which can explain why Rotrou was often referred to as the Count of Perche at this time (963).

<sup>6</sup> A few years earlier, William had been captured by the King of France, and had been put under house arrest, with the object of curbing the Norman sallies over the border. Yves de Creil was instrumental in smuggling William into freedom and back to Normandy.

*Yves, lived upon the glory of the attribution of Yves to the Lordship of Bellême, for many generations. Many members of the family died sudden deaths (poisoning, decapitation, demise of every sort ), bathing this line of the Bellême family in violence, totally different from the distinct Christian style of the Rotrou family.*

#### **4 - .... tower of Belêsmes, Normandy ....**

*Bellême may be in Normandy today, as the boundaries shifted somewhat in the Middle Ages. However, at this period, Bellême certainly was not in Normandy !*

#### **5 - His (Williams) second wife Adelais gave him another son Warrin de Belêsmes who became Lord of Damfort, Mortaign and Nogent in Normandy and Viscount of Châteaudun ....**

*Warin (Guérin) de Bellême is known to have married Mélisende (Millicent) of Châteaudun. We do not know how this marriage occurred, as the two families were still in a continuous situation of war, but it was probably an effort to bring together the two families. However, Warin's titles were limited to Lord of Domfront (not Damfort) and Lord of Bellême. The titles of Viscount of Châteaudun and Lord of Nogent could not have been held by Warin, as he died in 1026. Geoffrey II (Warin's brother-in-law) was Viscount of Châteaudun (title gained in 1023 from his uncle Hugh) until his assassination in 1040, and also Lord of Nogent-le-Rotrou (title gained in 1004 from his father Geoffrey). The title of Lord of Mortagne (not Mortaign) was held by Fulquois of Mortagne who died in 1031. Finally, Domfront, Mortagne and Nogent were in the county of the Perche, and not in Normandy !*

#### **6 - Warrin died in 1026 leaving issue by his wife Millicent, the daughter and heir of Hugh ....**

*Millicent (Mélisende) of Châteaudun was not the daughter of Hugh, but possibly the daughter of a certain Fulquois. Was Fulquois a little known relative (cousin ?) of Hugh, or was he Lord of Mortagne, son (grandson ?) of Hervé. Whatever the affiliation, Mélisende could not be the heir to the title of Viscount, and thus pass it on to her husband, simply because she had a brother Geoffrey, who would be the natural heir to his uncle. Thus, her brother, Geoffrey II was the next male in line to become Viscount of Châteaudun. I can find no trace of any male children from the marriage of Mélisende to Warin (Guérin) of Bellême. However, this is the basis of the claims that the Belleme family have for affiliation to the Rotrou family. No information exists to show that the marriage of Mélisende to Warin of Domfront, produced a male descendant.*

#### **7 - of a son named Geoffry (or Geoffrey) ....**

*Based upon available dates, Mélisende of Châteaudun was not the mother of Geoffrey who married Helvise (Eulesie/Eloise), but his **sister**. Helvise was the daughter of Rainard de Pithiviers, not Odo de Champagne. Warin (Guérin) and Mélisende had a daughter, who became known as Adelaide de Bellême. Adelaide married her cousin (by marriage), Rotrou II (he was the son of Mélisende's brother Geoffrey).*

*Many references to Elvdic, daughter of Odo de Champagne are to be found on the Internet, all exact copies, and probably extracted from "Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronage of the British Empire" by Sir Bernard Burke, in 1865, which itself is full of incoherent data concerning the Nugent origins. No*

*historical and proven references to this information can be found. It is not known where Burke got his information from. It may be from the Betham Document (of which more below).*

**8 - and had at least two sons, Hugh and Rotron de Nugent, of whom the former died young ....**

*Geoffrey had three sons, Hugh de Châteaudun (1025-1044), Geoffrey (1026-1028, died young), and Rotrou II de Châteaudun (1026-1079). Hugh was the eldest son and became Viscount of Chateaudun. However he died before he was 20, and his brother Rotrou then became Viscount of Châteaudun.*

**9 - Rotron de Nugent ....**

*Let us get his name right - He was **Rotrou de Nogent** who became Viscount of Châteaudun (a more senior title) upon the death of his brother Hugh in 1044.*

**10 - Rotron de married Adeline, daughter of Nigen de Mowbray, of Picardy ....**

*For the same reason as (6 - above), this data is absolutely false and has been copied wholesale into many Nugent sites. Nigen (Nigel ?) de Mobray (1146-1191) lived at least a century after Rotrou. Rotrou is known to have married Adelaide de Bellême (daughter of Warin de Domfront) in about 1043<sup>7</sup>.*

**11 - and was the father by her of Geoffry, Hugh, Rotron and Fulquois de Nugent ....**

*Rotrou is known to have had many children, several of who may have been illegitimate : Geoffrey, Hugh, Rotrou, Guérin, Helvise, Fulquois, Jeremie and Robert. Only Geoffrey and Hugh inherited titles in France. Their father split his domains between the two elder brothers. All the others were left without interest. The young son Rotrou returned from the Conquest of England bathed in glory, and probably quite rich, and married into the "de Gennes" family, beginning a five generation "Rotrou de Montfort" dynasty which culminates, many generations later, into the Spencer and Churchill families (Winston Churchill, Diana Spencer, mother of the future King of England). Nothing is known about Guérin, Helvise, Jeremie and Robert. Fulquois is known to have initiated the English descendants of the Rotrou family, although little is known about the hundred years that his sons and grandsons spent in England.*

**12 - the first was created Count of Mortaign and Nogent ....**

*Geoffrey inherited the titles of Lord of Mortagne and Lord of Nogent, and later in life, self-styled himself as the first Count of Perche (although he controlled less than half of the Perche county).*

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<sup>7</sup> Although the De Nogent and Bellême families had been in a state of war for many years, the "diplomatic" marriage of Rotrou II de Chateaudun to Adelaide de Bellême did little to reduce the belligerent nature of relations between the two families. However, it is very probable that Rotrou's new cousin by marriage, Robert de Bellême, who was a close follower of William, Duke of Normandy, allowed the development of relations between the two opponents, and certainly permitted more favourable exchanges, resulting in the fact that Rotrous sons eventually accompanied William on his conquest of England in 1066, but as mercenaries, with the promise of great rewards.

**13 - Hugh became Viscount Châteaudun, and Fulquois, who was a follower of the Norman Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings ....**

*This sentence, to be found in most of the "Nugent Origins" Internet sites shows the irresponsibility of the creators of such sites. The sentence contains a major grammatical error, and thus is totally incoherent. And yet it is found on many Nugent sites, proof that the site developers did not even read the data that they copied. I would suggest that in copying the data from the 1865 Burke document (or a similar such document written at about this time <sup>8</sup>), somebody jumped a few lines, and so the error was compounded. The sentence which follows is the ridiculous result of this error.*

**14 - His sons were Gilbert, Richard, Christopher and John de Nugent, of whom the last three accompanied Sir Hugh de Lacie on his expedition to Ireland in the year 1172 ....**

*His (Fulquois') sons were probably Gilbert, John and Hugh, and their dates of birth are unknown, although estimated about 1060-1080. They are obviously confused with Gilberts GRANDCHILDREN, who were part of the military expedition to Ireland. They accompanied Hugh de Lacie (Lacy) who was a Baron <sup>9</sup>, not a "Sir". The expedition to Ireland was in October, 1171, not 1172.*

*So much for the first paragraph !*

**Paragraph 2 - Pedigree of the Nugent Family**

**1 - by Sir William Betham, the Ulster King of Arms - 1853 ....**

*Giovanna (Johanna) Riario Sforza, an Austrian Countess ordered a complete chart of the descendancy of Field-Marshal Laval Nugent, as a wedding gift to her future husband (although it was probably a check to ensure that she was marrying into nobility !). As they were married in 1815, the date of **1853** for the document would appear to be incorrect, although it may have been published at a later date.*

*There appear to be at least three documents which contain imprecise, erroneous and especially unsupported data concerning the origins of the Nugent family :*

*1815 - Sir William Betham - Pedigree of the Nugent Family,  
1853 - Charles Lyons - Historical Sketch of the Nugent Family,  
1865 - Sir Bernard Burke - Peerage and Barontage of the British Empire (P 1168-1171).*

**2 - wife to the Austrian count and roman duke, lieutenant marshal Laval Nugent ....**

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<sup>8</sup> The error appears to have originated in the document by William Skey in 1849.

<sup>9</sup> Barons, a level of peerage just below that of Viscount, imply creation by the sovereign, associated with certain privileges, but including the obligation of certain services to the crown. Barons must pledge loyalty to their sovereign. The term baron in England is restricted to the above rules, whereas the title in France was more a title of courtesy, sometimes self attributed, but nevertheless restricted to noble families.

*Laval Nugent was Irish, born in Ballynacor (near Dublin) in Ireland, on November 3, 1777. His family moved to Austria, because his father joined the Imperial Austrian Army (How ? - Why ?), and found his way into a troubled Europe, towards the end of the 18th century. He joined the Austrian Army in 1793, and quickly rose through the ranks. He spent the winter of 1812-1813 with (his distant cousin) the Duke of Wellington, and from there moved on to Vienna. Laval married Giovanna Riario-Sforza, an Austrian Countess <sup>10</sup>, in Naples, 1815. After the Napoleonic Wars, Laval began to conduct archaeological studies and excavation in his adopted country. He was nominated Field-Marshal in 1849 after a glorious career in the Austrian Army. The life of Laval Nugent is too flamboyant to be defined here as only one paragraph.*

### **3 - Fulke (1066-1090) who had together with his brothers, moved to England ....**

*Let's call him Fulke (or Fulquois). If Fulke was born in 1066, there is little chance that he fought at Hastings in 1066. He was probably born in 1049. There is no proof that Fulke or his brothers settled in England. Fulke was last referenced in 1078 in France. However his sons settled in England, although little information concerning them is available.*

### **4 - The Nugent family is a branch of the great house of Belesme ....**

*We have already covered this unsupported statement !*

### **5 - The root word from which the name is derived is "gent" ....**

*The name Nogent is derived from the Latin "Novogentium" which means "New Settlement". There were many new settlements in France during the 10th and 11th centuries. The new settlement in question was Nogent-ès-Château (or Nogent-le Châtel?), which became known as Nogent-le-Rotrou several generations after the initial installation of the Rotrou family in this town (probably after the stone construction of the Chateau St. Denis, around 1055).*

### **6 - Gilbert and Hugh de Nugent, cousins of the Lord of Nogent is Rotrou, founded the name and family in Ireland ....**

*We will ignore the grammatical error in this sentence which reduces it to the level of rubbish. As there appeared to have been three successive generations of Gilberts, it is not clear here to which Gilbert the author is referring. The Gilbert of the first generation had a brother called Hugh, but here we obviously refer to the sons of Fulquois, who died in England well before the expedition to Ireland in 1171. The Gilbert of the De Nogent family who went to Ireland was of the third generation, great-grandsons of Fulquois. The Rotrou family were certainly not known as "de Nogent" in France. It is likely that the name was associated with them when Fulquois's sons settled in England. The descendants in Ireland were probably known as "de Nogent" until about 1415, when Sir William Nugent (1370-1415), the 9th Baron of Delvin, anglicized the family name to Nugent.*

That is all I have to say about only the first two paragraphs of this introduction to

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<sup>10</sup> It was she who ordered the Pedigree of the Nugent Family from Sir William Betham, as a wedding present to her husband, Laval Nugent.



Nugent origins that we can find, nearly word for word, in many Internet sites.

However, as my Internet site has offered certain valid suggestions concerning the origins of the Rotrou Family, I see that later paragraphs of the "Keaney" document now have been modified to contain several paragraphs copied "in texto" from my Internet site (i.e. references to Kathleen Thompson and her book). This document is a patchwork of segments of text copied from various, often false sources, with absolutely no effort made to verify the information, or maintain coherence in its contents.

And so, the non-documented claims that the Rotrou Family descended from the Bellême Family seem unfounded. The suggestion that Warin (Guérin) de Domfront, married to Mélisende de Châteaudun, was the father of Geoffrey, Viscount of Châteaudun has no foundation, as the only child from this union was shown to be a girl. Although Geoffrey, in subsequent charters, refers to a Mélisende as his mother, he makes no reference to his father at all. Moreover, the time-line of the persons involved seem to indicate that Warin married a Mélisende, whose mother, also a Mélisende and daughter of Rotrou, had married into the Châteaudun family <sup>11</sup>. At most, Warin would then have been the brother-in-law of Geoffrey, Viscount of Châteaudun

My reference documentation, built over more than ten years, and scrutinized in great detail, in Latin, in French and of course in English, is not to be found here. Whenever possible, I examined the original documents. Under certain circumstances, I was obliged to quote from references to now unobtainable books, which were made in more recent works <sup>12</sup>.

I understand that my perception and my findings, concerning the origins of the Nugent family, may run against the writings of some rather illustrious authors. However, I do not insist, but just present my findings, for you to make your own choice.

Examine my list of referenced documents at my Internet link :

<http://www.nugent.fr/P0304.htm>

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<sup>11</sup> See the chapter concerning Foulquoi de Mortagne.

<sup>12</sup> Several works in French, of which I have copies, were written in the 18th and 19th centuries, and which quote from books written several centuries before, and which exist only in rare book collections, and which to me, are often unobtainable.

## Appendix

Some French documents and Internet sites clarify the situation in the County of the Perche in the middle of the Xth Century.

Extract from the Internet site :

<http://www.francebalade.com/maine/ctperche.htm>

### "Les Comtes de Perche"

#### Rebuilding the County of the Perche at the end of the Xth Century

*A new Count of Perche, **Rotrou**, appears in 960 when Thibault the Trickster, Count of Blois and Chartres, attacks Richard, Duke of Normandy. Thibault has the backing of Lothaire, King of France. However, Thibault's direct sovereign, Hughes Capet, Duke of France, maintains a benevolent neutrality towards Richard.*

*Rotrou was one of the chiefs of Thibault's army, and had been charged with the task of capturing the town of Sees. The Count of Blois captured the town of Evreux, and went on to lay siege to the town of Rouen. The Counts of Maine and Anjou, also allies of Thibault, advanced towards Passais.*

*Richard of Normandy is supported by Yves de Creil (who is the brother of Sigefroy, Bishop of Le Mans). Richards position becomes more and more difficult, until he decides to call for the help of his Danish compatriots. They raise the siege of Rouen, and then continue on through the valley of the River Eure, pillaging and destroying everything in their path. They lay waste to the County of the Perche (especially the town of Corbon, which will never be rebuilt), and then the city of Chartres, and even progress into the territories of Blenois and Dunois.*

*As a result of this war, Thibault must rebuild a buffer territory between his territories and those of the Normans. Some years later, he confides the territory around Nogent [es-Château], together with La Ferrière, Montigny, Monvilliers, Rivray and Montlondon, to Rotrou. Thus, in this manner, the Lordship of Nogent (the centre of the future County of the Perche), and subservient to the Count of Blois and Chartres, is created. These areas had previously belonged to the St. Père Abbey of Chartres, and were a donation to them by Queen Clothilde, the wife of Clovis, King of France.*

*On the opposing side, Yves de Creil receives from Hughes Capet, with the benediction of Richard of Normandy, the region of Bellême, which is thus amputated from the County of the Perche. He also gains control of the area called the Saonois, once part of the County of Maine, and which will in future be the cause of a long conflict. Finally, he recovers Alençon and Domfront, thus building the Lordship of Bellême, which will serve as an equivalent buffer for Normandy, with respect to the Count of Blois.*

*While Yves de Creil builds his castle at Bellême, Rotrou builds his at Nogent.*

This episode in history illustrates the development of feudal developments in this part of France. Firstly, we see the creation of Lordships, in order to defend against enemies, and the expansion of such Lordships to the detriment of others, and which will result in numerous protracted local wars.

## Extract from the book :

### "Histoire des Comtes de Perche de la Famille des Rotrous"

#### (A History of the Counts of Perche and of the Rotrou Family)

by M.O. Des Murs (1856).

This excerpt (Pages 098-102) explains how Rotrou 1<sup>er</sup> lost the town of Bellême in battle, and how Yves de Creil gained it.

#### ..... In French .....

*"Comme Rotrou était le bras droit du Comte de Chartres, il dut subir ses bonnes et ses mauvaises fortunes. Or, le résultat le plus net de cette dernière et désastreuse campagne, pour le Comte de Perche, fut la perte de son Comté du Bellémois, qui tomba au pouvoir de Richard".*

*"On peut donc dire avec certitude que dès 963, date de la ligue de Thibauld avec la Cour de France contre Richard 1<sup>er</sup>, Rotrou était en pleine possession du Comte du Perche, dont, quoique fief séparé, faisait alors partie Bellême".*

*"Mais il [le Duc Richard] conserva la Seigneurie de Bellême dont il avait dépouillé Rotrou, dans cette guerre d'extermination, et en revêtit Yves de Creil, Grand Arbalétrier de France, passé à son service, qui en prit dès lors, pour lui et ses descendants, le titre ou surnom de Bellême, qu'il substitua à celui de Creil".*

#### ..... And in English .....

*"As Rotrou was the right-hand man of the Count of Chartres, he was obliged to support the good and the bad times. As such, the net result of this latest and disastrous campaign, for the Count of Perche, was the loss of the County of Bellême, which fell into the hands of Richard".*

*"We can thus say with confidence that as of 963, date at which Thibauld joined an alliance with the King of France against Richard 1<sup>st</sup>, Rotrou was in full possession of the County of the Perche, of which, although in a separate domain, Bellême was an integral part".*

*"But he [Duke Richard] kept the Lordship of Bellême that he had divested from Rotrou, in this war of extermination, and gave it to Yves de Creil, master crossbow-archer <sup>13</sup> of France, who had come into his service, and who thus accepted, for himself and his descendants, the title or sobriquet of Bellême, which he substituted in place of Creil".*

Translation FND

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<sup>13</sup> Orderic Vitalis uses the term "*Ivo de Credolio regis balistarius*" more likely to mean an officer in charge of the royal siege train of catapults, ballista, and trebuchet, a much more senior position.