CHAPTER 3

Families

Across western Europe between 900 and 1050, priests interacted with members of their families, from grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles to siblings, children, nieces and nephews, with cousins or otherwise unspecified relatives, as well as with those to whom they were bound through non-biological ties of godparenthood or friendship.[1] Traces of these interactions have been preserved in the vast numbers of charters issued by private individuals, either in their original form as single sheets or in later cartularies compiled by ecclesiastical institutions. These were produced in their thousands as documentary culture flourished in the tenth century and after.[2] The richness of this material and the abundance of familial connections it contains offer invaluable insight into the history of local priests and the communities and families of which they were part, complementing the study of their resources examined in Chapter 2. Like their Carolingian predecessors, tenth-century priests relied heavily on their family networks and were deeply embedded in the communities in which they and their immediate kin lived.[3]

The variety and wealth of this evidence, however, has not to date been thoroughly explored: instead, for scholars of tenth-and eleventh-century local priests, the looming shadow of the 'Gregorian reform' has resulted in

[1] Godparents and friends are not considered in what follows, since there are no cases where a kin identifier is also used of the same individuals, but of course these categories were not mutually exclusive with those of kinship. See H. J. Hummer, *Visions of Kinship in Medieval Europe*, Oxford Studies in Medieval European History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), for a thorough survey and reappraisal of the historiography of constructed kinship, and for a regional assessment, B. Cursente, 'Entre parenté et fidélité: les "amis" dans la Gascogne des XI^{e} et XII^{e} siècles' in H. Débax (ed.), *Les sociétés méridionales à l'âge féodal: Espagne, Italie et sud de la France x^{e}–xiii^{e} siècle. Hommage à Pierre Bonnassie*, Collection Méridiennes (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 1999), pp. 285–92.

[2] On the complex relationship between originals and reproductions preserved in cartularies, see p.106, n. 60.

[3] On Carolingian priests' family networks, see, for instance, Kohl, 'Presbyter in parochia sua', pp. 50–77; Davies, 'Local Priests in Northern Iberia', pp. 125–44.

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an intense focus on clerical marriage and on the offspring of such unions, as discussed in the Introduction to this book. As a consequence, other familial relationships have faded into the background.[4] Rather than restrict ourselves to this well-trodden path and its attendant voluminous historiography, this chapter instead begins with an overview of the evidence for local priests in their kinship networks, drawing on the rich evidence from French archives from the tenth and eleventh centuries (see Fig. 3.1 for a map of these archives). It then turns to specific relationships within this corpus: first looking at priests and their parents, then priests who appeared alongside their companions and offspring. From there, it considers the quite different evidence for the 'uncle–nephew' bond and the connected evidence for priests and their siblings, closing with an assessment of how this evidence aligns (or fails to) with records preserving the donation or transfer of churches and their rights. A local priest's kinship links, especially through marriage, have sometimes been seen as a force tying him into his community, and therefore separating him from the church hierarchy.[5] Yet as this chapter shows, taken more broadly, priests' kinship ties could also connect them to the world beyond the local community and link them into wider ecclesiastical circles.

Almost all of the documents considered in this chapter concern transactions of property and estates or rights associated with them. Priests and their families often held some land or estates in their own right and shared possession of other parts, resulting in complex arrangements that are often impossible to entangle or see in the round. Despite this variety, the vast majority of charters documented grants from priests' families to monasteries or cathedral churches. While we sometimes hear of leases and sales from abbots or bishops to priests and their families (around thirty documents), or transactions between priests and their neighbours,[6] these make up less

[4] Julia Barrow has recently elucidated the importance of uncles and nephews in the church, particularly in England and East Francia. See Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, esp. pp. 115–57. Barrow also discusses cathedral canons who co-operated with their sisters, while a small number of cases of priests with siblings are discussed in J. Audebrand, *Frères et sœurs dans l'Europe du haut Moyen Âge (vers 650 – vers 1000)*, Collection Haut Moyen Âge 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), for instance, at pp. 122–3, though again these tend to be cathedral canons, for whom we have better evidence.

[5] For an influential reading in this vein, see the work of R. I. Moore, e.g. *First European Revolution*; cf. Cushing, *Reform and Papacy*, p. 99: 'A married bishop or priest could be seen as bound first to the needs of his family'. For a development of these ideas, see C. Leyser, 'Custom, Truth and Gender in Eleventh-Century Reform' in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Gender and Christian Religion*, Studies in Church History 34 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1998), pp. 75–91; cf. A. Fontbonne, *Introduction à la sociologie médiévale* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2023), pp. 211–12.

[6] See, e.g., B-M. Tock, 'L'acte d'échange dans le Nord de la France (IX^{e}–XII^{e} siècles)' in I. Fees and P. Depreux (eds.), *Tauschgeschäft und Tauschurkunde vom 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert / L'acte*

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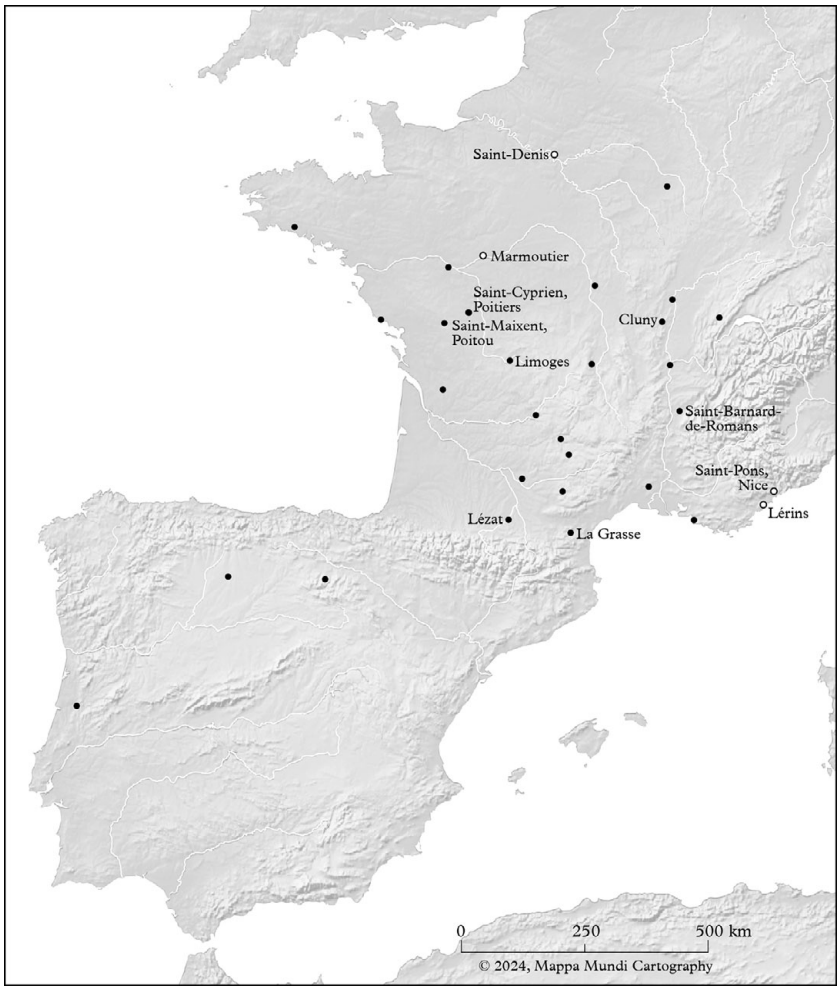


Fig. 3.1 Map of churches whose archives reference local priests and their families, 900–1100. Named locations are those discussed in this chapter. Created by Erik Goosmann.

than 10 per cent of the corpus. In other words, we typically hear of property only when priests and their families relinquished ownership of it. Consequently, most local priests and their family members appear only

d'échange, du VIII^e au XII^e siècle, Archiv für Diplomatik. Beiheft 13 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 313–24, at pp. 313–14, who notes that northern Francia has very few extant charters of exchange in comparison to those of alienation.

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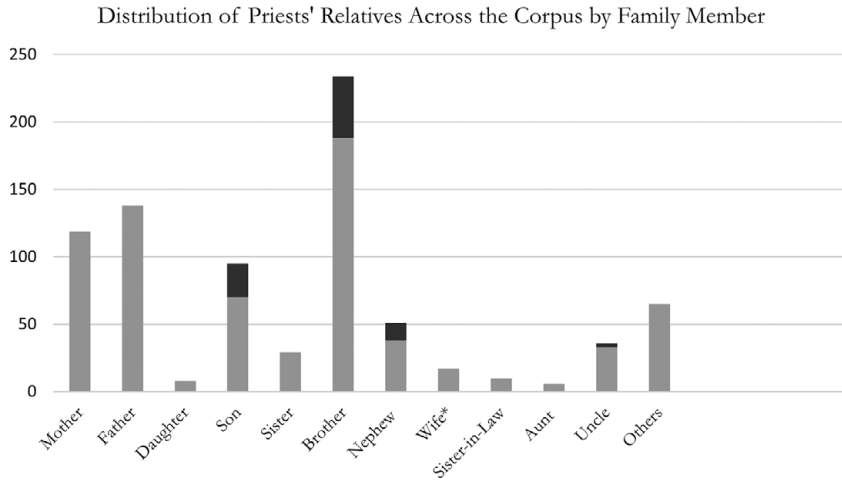


Fig. 3.2 Distribution of priests' relatives by family member. Black represents cases where the charter mentions more than one relative in the category.

once in the documentary record. Only the richest archives (namely those of Cluny and Lézat, making up around 20 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, of the corpus examined in this chapter) allow us to trace family members across generations. Consequently, while this chapter ranges widely across the western half of the former Carolingian empire, some collections are more dominant than others in the analysis that follows.

We have found more than 500 records of family units that include local priests in sources from an area approximately corresponding to modern-day France. Accounting for multiple appearances of the same individuals, this comprises roughly 425 families, chronologically ranging from 900 to 1100, and taken from around 135 published editions of charters.

Approximately 250 editions containing non-royal ('private') charters dated to before 1100 did not include any identifiable local priests with families.

Figure 3.2 shows how many of each family member appear within the corpus.[7] The final category encompasses all those who appear fewer than

[7] 'Wife*' in the above chart refers to women securely identified as priests' companions either through terminology or shared parentage of offspring. For the challenges in finding these women, see pp. 104–6. The word *nepos*, most commonly used for nephews in the medieval period (with a small number of exceptions continuing the classical meaning of 'grandson'), has been interpreted as meaning 'nephew' unless contextual cues suggest otherwise.

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ten times, such as grandparents or aunts, and also those whose relationship cannot be identified: 'heirs' or individuals referred to only as 'relatives' (*consanguinei*), for instance. Identifying priests' families is complicated by the fact that labels denoting familial relations were inconsistently applied by those writing and drafting charters (referred to here as draftsmen), dependent not only on the role relatives played within individual documents but also the preferences of those who commissioned this document, those who authored it and potentially those who transcribed it later, if it survives only as a copy. These inconsistencies are particularly apparent when family members only witnessed documents or appeared in their boundary clauses, but had no claim to the land being transacted. Since women are scarcer in the corpus overall, this tendency exacerbates the gender gap further: female family members are rarely mentioned in comparison to male kin, diminishing the women of these families who (where they did appear) evidently played an important role in local priests' lives and in the management of family-held property.

In cases where named individuals donated property together without a specified familial relationship, their co-ownership might well be explained via shared inheritance and thus kinship, whether this reflected close or more distant connections. One such case is preserved in a 918 donation to Saint-Nazaire Béziers made by one Tructildis, her son Fulcher and a priest named Ledoin of ten portions of the church of Saint-Jean d'Aureillan they owned collectively (eight portions possessed by the mother and son and two by the priest).[8] While Tructildis and Ledoin may have been related, this is not made explicit, and we cannot determine any lines of kinship. Indeed, kinship did not always go hand in hand with co-ownership, particularly in archives and cartularies from the south, such as those of the monasteries of Marseille and Lérins, where members of communities came together to donate their own shares of a collectively held property, sometimes divided between seventy or more individuals.[9] Editing processes may shape our view of co-ownership, too: we can only ponder whether, in the process of transferring grants on single-sheets into cartularies (which preserve the bulk of the documentation), scribes may have altered or compressed separate donations into composite documents that came to look like shared ownership on the page, masking more complex realities.

As discussed previously, in surviving records, priests and their families generally handled and managed their possessions like everyone else. Just as

[8] Béziers, no. 17. [9] On this tendency, see Hamilton, *Church and People*, p. 44.

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other kin groups did, pious donations were often made with stipulations for usufruct for one or more generations, produced as a way of forging important connections with larger ecclesiastical institutions without immediately losing property or its revenues. Regional terminology, as well as archival preferences and idiosyncrasies, are at their most prominent in descriptions of estates and their appurtenances, and so descriptions of what these priestly families transacted vary markedly: where one charter might include a lengthy description of the contents of an estate, another may omit boundaries and simply refer to all or part of a *villa*, or a field.[10] But despite this variety, we can say that the vast majority of goods transacted by local priests comprised vineyards or other agricultural land, whether with or without residential property, and as Chapter 2 has noted, the majority of local priests who had families and transacted land were neither subsistence farmers nor aristocratic landowners with swathes of land to grant, but were operating somewhere in between.

Most local priests were therefore freeborn and of some social standing, but some were unfree, semi-free or freed;[11] at the opposite end of the scale, however, others were related to powerful landowners or figures in the local landscape.[12] Usually, a single priest is attested amidst the kin group; only rarely (ca. 15 per cent of family units) do we find priestly siblings or families with priests recorded in multiple generations.

While the first-person declarations that began charters operated as important replacements of status and identity, the inconsistent application of the label of priest presents another lacuna.[13] In some cases, this may

[10] On the terminology of the Lézat archive, see B. Cursente, 'Autour de Lézat: emboîtements, cospatialités, territoires (milieu X^e–milieu XIII^e siècle)' in B. Cursente and M. Mousnier (eds.), *Les territoires du médiéviste*, Collection Histoire (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), pp. 151–67.

[11] Regino of Prüm, *Sendhandbuch*, MGH CC 1.1, 1.405, p. 334, refers to the manumission of people for ordination; this text was taken up in Burchard of Worms' *Decretum,* together with further discussion of the procedure: Burchard of Worms, *Decretum*, bk. II, chs. 26–8. For the discussion of manumission (and the obligations of freed clerics) at the Council of Hohenaltheim in 916, see Chapter 2, p. 70, n. 93. The status of the children of freed clerics was discussed in several early eleventh-century councils: see B. Gallistl, 'Eine unbekannte Überlieferung der *Vita Godehardi posterior*', *Concilium medii aevi* 24 (2021), pp. 1–43, at pp. 7–9. For priests at the lower end of the social scale, see, for instance, the priest Lambert, who is described as a *collibertus* (freedman) in a charter from 1050 for Saint-Florent de Saumur, along with his sons and daughter: Giraud, *Chartes originales*, no. 3358, http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/originaux/charte3358/.

[12] This upper tranche is particularly visible in Gascony: B. Cursente, 'Le clergé rural gascon, de l'an Mil à la fin du Moyen Âge' in P. Bonnassie (ed.), *Le clergé rural dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne. Actes des XIII^èmes Journées Internationales d'Histoire de l'Abbaye de Flaran, 6–8 septembre 1991*, Flaran 13 (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 1995), pp. 29–40.

[13] M. Zimmermann, 'Affirmation et respect de l'autorité dans les chartes' in M.-J. Gasse-Grandjean and B.-M. Tock (eds.), *Les actes comme expression du pouvoir au Haut Moyen Âge: actes de la Table*

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reflect the accurate chronology of priests' lives, if they appeared in documents before and after their ordination. In 963, for instance, a couple named Ildebert and Engelberga, together with their son Raino, sold vineyards to their neighbours in *Ultra Auriziano*, located somewhere in the vicinity of Limoges. Although Raino is not identified as a priest (and does not attest alongside his parents), the same individual is probably to be identified with the priest named Raino, who purchased land from a mother and son in the same place in the mid tenth century and who in ca. 990 donated vineyards to the church of Saint-Stephen Limoges.[14]

On the other hand, nine charters from Cluny involving a pair of priestly brothers named Dodo and Raimbert reveal that in cases where only one brother donated, their sibling relationship was often omitted; in those where the pair were not protagonists but spectators or listed as neighbours in the boundary clause, their priestly identity was regularly omitted.[15] To be a priest did not necessarily mean this office would be uniformly included in the documentary record by draftsmen, and so we must often play detective, piecing together multiple texts to trace the path from cleric to priest, or to confirm the status of individuals.[16]

Yet to be a priest (or even a priest in training) undoubtedly singled men out not only from their kin but also from their communities. As Pierre Bonnassie and Jean-Pascal Illy argued, some local priests learnt their craft from older relatives, just as apprentices acquired trade skills passed down by artisans. Access to education, knowledge and the required books could create dynasties of local priests who used their position to shore up family members, but were nevertheless separated from them by this training.[17] Possession and subsequent donations of objects used for the performance of Mass may have distinguished these families and the priests themselves further, though these are very rarely attested in the hands of local priests in the documentary corpus, and may have been attached to the church rather than the individual priest.[18] Evidence of these possessions, or records of

Ronde de Nancy, 26–27 novembre 1999, Atelier de Recherches sur les Textes Médiévaux 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 215–40.

[14] Saint-Étienne de Limoges, nos. 36 and 38. [15] See p. 92.

[16] Cluny, nos. 496, 1495, 1572, 1635, 1667, 1732, 1799, 1956 and 2424. Discussed in A. Hicklin, 'Priests and Their Siblings c. 900–c. 1100. The Documentary Evidence', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 57 (2023), pp. 267–94.

[17] P. Bonnassie and J.-P. Illy, 'Le clergé paroissial aux IX^{e}–X^{e} siècles dans les Pyrénées orientales et centrales' in P. Bonnassie (ed.), *Le clergé rural dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne. Actes des XIII^{èmes} Journées Internationales d'Histoire de l'Abbaye de Flaran, 18 septembre 1991*, Flaran 13 (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 1995), pp. 153–66; Cursente, 'Le clergé rural gascon', pp. 29–40.

[18] See Lézat, no. 385, discussed on p. 110. In northern Spain, a case records the transfer of books from one priest to his relative, who was also a priest: J. M. Lacarra de Miguel (ed.), *Colección diplomática*

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the performance of pastoral and liturgical duties, is simply not visible in the charter material. But to claim that local priests and their families are invisible or lament the limitations of the sources is to ask the wrong questions of the documentary corpus. Charters, notices and similar texts show us 'the scaffolding of the church',[19] and in doing so, they reveal much about local priests and how those who wrote charters thought about them.[20]

3.1 Priests and Their Parents

The relationship between local priests and their parents has rarely (if ever) been considered in scholarship. Yet the relationship is an important and distinct one. Unlike many children that appear in the documentary record, we know the age of these men (if they were ordained canonically, i.e. at age thirty or older), and we know their careers, too, and, consequently, something of their social position. How did these adult offspring, who held a distinctive status in their communities, interact, co-operate with or even challenge their parents? And did the office of priest affect how familial co-operation with parents was represented by the churchmen who wrote and compiled these documents?

The majority of references to priests' parents are found in clauses common to many charters in which donors or benefactors listed the souls for whom they made their gift, usually using the formula *pro anima*. Such spiritual provisions were commonplace across the documentary record, and certainly not limited to any one social group. Their ubiquity and formulaic structure belie their importance: they are the building blocks for kin groups in the documentary record. Without them, we would often have no information at all about the family of donors, especially when we look beyond the lavish grants of kings and bishops to the more humble bequests, such as those considered here. The second most frequent context in which priests' parents appeared occurs when draftsmen described how

de Irache 1: 958–1222, Fuentes para la historia del Pirineo 2 (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1965), no. 121. On sales and exchanges of movable goods more generally in Asturias-León, where they are well documented, see W. Davies, 'Exchange Charters in the Kingdom of Asturias-León, 700–1000' in I. Fees and P. Depreux (eds.), *Tauschgeschäft und Tauschurkunde vom 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert / L'acte d'échange, du VIII^e au XII^e siècle*, Archiv für Diplomatik. Beiheft 13 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 471–90.

[19] M. Brett, *The English Church Under Henry I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 233, cited in Hamilton, *Church and People*, p. 52.

[20] For regional evidence that local priests acted as de facto notaries for the laypeople they lived amongst, see, for instance, Davies, 'Local Priests in Northern Iberia', p. 132.

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the donor had acquired the land they now alienated – whether they had inherited it, been given it as a gift, or purchased it, and from whom – as a way of legitimizing the present transfer and securing it for the future. Articulating generational memory using either (or both) of the above strategies reveals differences in how each situated children and their parents, which, in turn, shapes what we know about priests' families, as well as the limitations of this kind of evidence.

The most common way to refer to parents in *pro anima* clauses was to identify their relationship to the donor, for instance 'for the souls of my father and mother'; it was less usual to provide the names of these individuals. When parents appear in descriptions of the acquisition of land, inheritance 'from my parents' (*parentum meorum*) is the most commonly used phrase, though the Latin term *parentes* could encompass other family members, too. Here, we are even less likely to find named individuals. While such clauses demonstrated donors' legal rights to dispose of property and conspicuously celebrated family ties, these clauses cannot tell us much about how priests and their families lived and interacted with their communities and in most cases provide only limited prosopographical information.

As a consequence, grants where priests and their parents acted together are of particular value. A number record purchases, sales and leases between individuals; many more preserve records of donations of property made to larger religious institutions. Inter-generational interaction ranges from a base level, in which priests only witnessed their parents' grants (with the implication that they had no legal rights over the land), to texts that convey complete equity and co-operative action by all participants. At a midpoint between these two, we encounter transactions made by parents with the consent of their offspring (priestly or otherwise). One such text, an eleventh-century notice of a sale made to Angoulême by a married couple, included the detail that their two sons Rademund *sacerdos* and Constantine had stood as surety to guarantee the transaction,[21] implying a degree of co-operation that nevertheless leaves an ambiguous impression of the priest's legal rights over the property concerned.[22] Similarly, when the priest Bernard's parents, Berengar and Uldeardis, donated land to Cluny, their son not only witnessed the document but

[21] J. Nanglard (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'église d'Angoulême* (Angoulême: G. Chasseignac, 1900), no. 68.
[22] On this subject, see S. D. White, *Custom, Kinship and Gifts to Saints. The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050–1150* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 48–69.

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consented; he, nevertheless, played no active part in the dispositive section of the document, and so his status as an owner is unclear.[23] These ambiguous cases are quite rare, however, and the bulk of the evidence for interaction between priests and their parents records joint donations.

Two documents issued by one such family for Sauxillanges reveal how draftsmen might at once situate a priestly son amongst his parents and siblings and also elevate his status amongst them. The first donation (datable only to 994x1049 in the cartulary in which it survives) is presented as follows: 'I Rainald and my wife Juliana, together with my three sons, Gerald the priest and Robert and Rotlannus, laymen'.[24] Gerald is, thus, both defined by his office and distinguished from his two lay siblings, appearing before them. Although we are reliant on the cartulary scribe and so cannot press the point too far, in the list of witnesses, the participants are reordered so that the priest Gerald has been promoted ahead of his mother: 'Sig. Rainaldi qui istam cartam firmavit. Sig. Geraldi presbyteri. Sig. Juliane matris ejus. Sig. Rotberti. Sig. alii Rotberti'. Juliana is now only identified as a member of the family through the connection to her priestly son, described as 'his mother', rather than as the wife of Rainald or the mother of Robert, while Rainald and Juliana's other two sons are not described as relatives at all (indeed, one appears not to witness and is replaced by an individual 'the other' Robert, though this could be a scribal error). A roughly contemporary charter made for the same family, but perhaps by a different draftsman, has Rainald list his family as 'my wife Juliana, and Robert and Gerald and Rotlannus, my sons'.[25] Here Gerald is neither described as a priest nor singled out from his brothers, and now appears between them instead of heading the list of offspring. Once again, however, Gerald received a promotion in the witness list, appearing before both his brothers instead of between them. Since the two texts are preserved in the same cartulary, we are left to wonder if the second (per their order) is in fact an earlier grant pre-dating Gerald's ordination as a priest.

We may see similar privileging of a son prior to his priestly ordination in a document dated to 5 July 943 and preserved among the documents of La Grasse. With this charter, one Ugbert gave his son Suiniar *clericus* half of his allod in the territory of Razès, to hold for his lifetime and then pass

[23] Cluny, no. 1523.
[24] Sauxillanges, no. 118: 'Ego Rainaldus et uxor mea Juliana nec non videlicet tres filii mei Geraldus presbyter et duo laici Rotbertus et Rotlannus'.
[25] Ibid., no. 121.

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to La Grasse.[26] Although Suniar is referred to as a cleric rather than a priest, in this case, we have a man whose father made him a gift of land in his lifetime, perhaps prior to his ordination, and therefore intended as a way to support his son as he pursued a career in the church.

Joint donations between priests and their parents are nevertheless uncommon, as are appearances by priests and their fathers. More grants made by priests and their mothers survive than those made by priests and both parents or priests and their fathers combined. These mother–son grants are not only more numerous but often appear quite similar in content and tone: most of the donations made by mothers and sons consistently conveyed joint ownership and action, with no implication by draftsmen that the priest had a dominant role. The consistency in how such donations are framed across time and space suggests a well-attested and widely understood bond between a priest and his mother that tended to be represented in the same way.

Thus, in 925, Aiminild and her son Adacius *sacerdos* donated land at Malgalzes; in the witness list, Aiminild attested first, followed by her son.[27] Between 954 and 986, Ermengard and her son Joszfred *sacerdos* gave allodial land to Saint-Cyprien Poitiers, and the pair appeared again as joint donors in the witness list: 'S. Ermengardis and her son Joszfred, who made this donation'.[28] At Sauxillanges, Jocelmus the priest and his mother Adalburgis acted as joint donors in the main body of their grant, and again the draftsman emphasised their familial bond in the attestations: 'S. Jocelmus the priest and his mother Adalburgis, who requested and ordered this donation to be made'.[29] In the middle decades of the eleventh century, the priest Sancius Bernard and his mother Rangardis jointly gave allodial land, rents and portable goods to Lézat for the construction of a church,[30] while a charter from Savigny dated to the late tenth century records a priest named Arpert and his mother Dulcisma acting as executors for the estate of one Constantine *presbiter*.[31] A charter for Ainay records a large donation made by the same priest, and although his mother Dulcisma does not seem to have had any legal rights to the land, she, nevertheless, witnessed in

[26] La Grasse, no. 55.
[27] J.-B. Champeval (ed.), *Cartulaire des abbayes de Tulle et de Roc-Amadour* (Brive: Roche, 1903), no. 24.
[28] Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers, no. 186: 'S. Ermengardis et Jozsfredi filii sui, qui hanc donationem fecerunt'.
[29] Sauxillanges, no. 442: 'Sig. Jocelmi, presbiteri, et matris sue Adalburgis qui hanc donationem rogaverunt fieri et jusserunt'.
[30] Lézat, no. 1111. [31] The pair did so alongside three other named executors: Savigny, no. 458.

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name only (i.e. without her familial signifier) straight after her son, suggesting her continued involvement in Arpert's life and the management of his property.[32]

Naturally, there are hundreds of grants from this period made by sons and their mothers, whether those sons were laymen or in the church: cases including cathedral canons, deans, deacons, clerics, bishops and abbots all survive. What characterises the mother-priest dynamic is that unless they formed a party in a dispute, most mothers and their priestly sons acted without the participation of other family members, in direct contrast to other records involving mothers and sons, which regularly included other kin. For these women, the priests were perhaps the conduit through which donations of local property were made to larger ecclesiastical institutions.

Although largely found in the vast collection of charters preserved at Cluny, a number of documents preserve transactions of land made by parents *to* their priestly sons, demonstrating a different kind of co-operation. In 940, one Teoto gave land both to his son, the priest Anshirio, and his daughter Doda to do whatever they wished with: 'I Teoto, your parent, give, entrust, and transfer to you, for the love and good will that I have towards you [. . .] everything, whole and complete, within this boundary, for you to have, possess, or do whatever you wish in all things'.[33] Thirteen years later, Teoto sold a further estate to his son Anshirio for twenty *solidi*, a relatively high price that suggests Teoto's generosity had its limits and shows us something of how land might move between parents and their priestly children through different mechanisms.[34]

When land was given to relatives as a gift, like the first grant made by Teoto, Cluniac draftsmen often used *formulae* that began with 'my beloved' (*dilecto meo*) or a variant thereof, marking out these charters from others in the collection by addressing the recipient in the second person.[35] One such individual, a draftsman named Leotard, wrote two such charters for mothers who made gifts to their priestly sons: the first for Dota to her

[32] Ibid., no. 139.

[33] Cluny, no. 630: 'Ego Teoto, genitor tuus, in amore et boenevolencia tua que circa te abeo [. . .] infra isto termino, totum at integrum tibi dono, trado atque transfundo, at abere, tenere vel facere quidquid volueris in omnibus'.

[34] Ibid., no. 855.

[35] On other methods of showing love and closeness in the Cluniac charters, see B. Rosenwein, 'Circles of Affection in Cluniac Charters' in L. Feller (ed.), *Écriture de l'espace social: mélanges d'histoire médiévale offerts à Monique Bourin*, Publications de la Sorbonne. Histoire ancienne et médiévale (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2010), pp. 397–416.

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son Girbald and the second for Agna to her son Maimbert. Leotard used a very similar formulation for each of these, in which the duties and bonds between mother and son are emphasised:

> I, Dota, for the love and goodwill that I have towards you and in return for how faithfully you have served me, and for the promises of a better hereafter you have made to me, out of that very love and goodwill, I give you a demesne farm, a house, and a vineyard together [. . .].[36]

> I, Agna, your mother, out of the love and goodwill that you have shown me and the better promises you have made in your prayers, therefore, I give you some of my own possessions.[37]

As well as the similarities in formula, both mothers address their priestly offspring using what look like affectionate diminutives or nicknames: 'Dilecto in Christo filio meo, nomine Baimber, Sacerdo [. . .]'; 'Dilecto filio meo Girboleto, sacerdote [. . .]', further emphasising the bonds between mothers and sons. Within this formulaic and relatively restrictive form of text, Leotard's representation of the mother–son relationship, as articulated through gifts of property, is unusual but chimes with the emphasis we saw earlier placed on harmony between mothers and sons across the documentary corpus and the exclusivity of the mother–son bond when it came to including other family members in such transactions. Mothers were among the few women who were allowed to live in the same household as the priest in episcopal provisions dating from the Council of Nicaea and copied in manuscripts considered in Chapter 5. While we cannot be certain of their marital status, if a number of these women were also widowed, that might explain the strong collaborative bond between priests and their mothers in the joint management of property.[38]

In contrast to this picture of co-operation, a few overt records of dispute survive between priests and their family members in the corpus; the small number that are extant tend to date to the middle and later eleventh

[36] Cluny, no. 1151: 'Ego Dota, pro amore et bona voluntate que contra vobis abeo et pro eo quot mihi servisti et inante melius promesisti, pro ipsa amore et bone voluntate, dono tibi curtilo et maso indominicato et vinea insimul tenentur [. . .]'.

[37] Ibid., no. 1166: 'Ego Agna, mater tua, pro amore et bone voluntate que tu mihi bene sustinuisti et inantea melius promisisti in oracionibus tuis, propterea dono vobis aliqui[d] de res meas proprias'.

[38] See Council of Nicaea (325), c. 3 (versio *Dionysio-Hadriana*), VD, f. 15v: 'Interdixit per omnia magna synodus non episcopo, non presbytero, non diacono nec alicui omnino, qui in clero est, licere subintroductam habere mulierem, nisi forte matrem aut sororem aut amitam uel eas tantum personas, que suspiciones effugiunt'. This permission was repeated in Carolingian episcopal statutes, see, for instance, Theodulf of Orléans 1, MGH Capit. episc. 1, c. 12, p. 111 and also Chapter 5, p. 207.

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century.[39] Most occurred after individuals had promised land or goods to an ecclesiastical institution with a period of usufruct attached to it for a specified relative; as such, this kind of record tended to show one relative refusing to accept the wishes of another who was deceased.[40] As Matthew Innes has shown in his analysis of Cluny's charters issued for laymen, these disputes rarely rumbled on beyond one or two generations, and as with other kinds of documents, the people and estates involved do not tend to reappear across multiple documents.[41] They, therefore, cannot tell us much about the lived experience of priests themselves. Consequently, glimpses of disputes or strife between living family members are of particular interest.[42]

One such case centres on vineyards at *Pugolum*, modern-day Castillon-la-Grangette, and on a single family who owned property there in the mid eleventh century. The familial tension is documented in three charters, the chronology of which is impossible to establish.[43] We can, nevertheless, see the bones of the disagreement that occurred between the priest Auriol and his brother Eicius/Escius, rendered visible by the last text concerning the brothers to appear in the cartulary. Not a charter but a short notice summarising a dispute between the brothers, it reads as follows:

> Here came Auriolus, the priest, and his son, Escius, *in plateis* against his brother, Escius, and his wife, Girberga, in the presence of God and the *boni homines* who were present there [. . .]. And Auriolus, the priest, and his son, Escius, renounced their claim [. . .] at the place called *Pugolum*. They gave up the vineyard called Volvester and the house (*casale*) there [. . .]. S[ign of]

[39] For attempts to smooth over evidence for sibling disputes by contemporary draftsmen, see Hicklin, 'Priests and Their Siblings', pp. 267–94, and on rivalry in charters more generally, see S. Shimahara, 'La rivalité entre frères: l'exemple d'Ésaü et de Jacob' in L. Jégou, S. Joye, T. Lienhard and J. Schneider (eds.), *Splendor Reginae: Passions, genre et famille: Mélanges en l'honneur de Régine Le Jan*, Collection Haut Moyen Âge 22 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 109–17.

[40] On the timing of challenges made by monasteries against lay opponents, see S. Weinberger, 'Monks, Aristocrats, and Power in Eleventh-Century Provence', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75 (1997) pp. 333–42, at p. 340.

[41] M. J. Innes, 'On the Material Culture of Legal Documents: Charters and Their Preservation in the Cluny Archive, Ninth to Eleventh Centuries' in W. C. Brown, M. J. Costambeys, M. J. Innes and A. J. Kosto (eds.), *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 283–320. According to Innes, documents made for secular parties were usually preserved in dossiers of title deeds passed on when Cluny later acquired an estate, and dossiers usually included six to twelve charters with a chronological span of at most three decades: Ibid., p. 300.

[42] On fraternal hierarchies in religious contexts, including some examples of families with one or more clerics, see A. Pieniądz, *Fraternal Bonds in the Early Middle Ages*, Beyond Medieval Europe (Leeds: ARC Humanities Press, 2023), esp. pp. 89–91.

[43] These are Lézat, nos. 821–2 and 824.

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> Auriol, the priest, and S[ign of] Escius, his son, who requested this charter to be written and confirmed it with their own hands.[44]

While this document would suggest the dispute between the brothers had been resolved, the other texts complicate the issue, as does the lack of a chronological framework for the dispute. In the first, Auriol sold land to one Eicius (a different spelling of Escius) at several locations, including a vineyard at Castillon-la-Grangette, reserving its profits for his own offspring.[45] Although this text neither mentions the vineyard at Volvester nor identifies the pair as brothers, it seems extremely likely it refers to the same siblings and property; the reservation of profits for Auriol's offspring would therefore suggest this was intended for Escius' namesake and nephew, perhaps amongst others. We also have a donation made by the lay couple 'Eicius' and Girberga, who handed over to the monks of Lézat the allodial vineyard they had acquired through parental inheritance at Castillon-la-Grangette, with its tenant family. The pair retained the use of the property donated for their lifetimes, and the text includes two unusual aspects. First, the text stipulates:

> No abbot or monk shall have the power to give, mortgage, alienate, or grant [the land] as a fief (*fevum*) through any means or artifice; if they were to do so, after being warned three or four times within a year, they must return it to the table and common possession of Saint Peter. If they fail to comply, then one of our relatives shall place twelve *denarii* on the altar of Saint Peter, and my nephew, Poncius, shall keep and hold the vineyard.[46]

While prohibition against alienation was not especially unusual, the detail and the specific penalty (returning the land to the nephew) certainly are. Second, Escius and Girberga would be received into the monastery if they no longer had enough to live on and would be buried there; when the first of the couple died, the surviving relative would give up half their movable

[44] Ibid., no. 822: 'Incipit breve conmemoratione de ipsa ratione que habuit Escius ab fratrem suum, Auriolo, presbitero, et ab Escio, filio suo. Hic venia Auriolus, presbiter, et filius suus, Escius, in plateis contra fratrem suum, Escione, et uxor sua, Girberga, coram Deo et bonis hominibus qui ibidem erant [. . .]; et guarpivit se Auriolus, presbiter et Escius, filius suus, contra Escio, fratrem suum, et uxor sua, Girberga, de ipsum alode et de ipsa vinea qui est infra pago tholosane, in ministerio Dalmadianense, in villa de Castellone, ad ipsum Pugolo; ipsa vinea que vocant Bolbester et ipsum casale [. . .]. S. Auriolo, presbitero. S. Escione filio suo, qui carta ista ambo scribere rogaverunt et manibus illorum firmaverunt. Guillelmus scripsi'.

[45] Ibid., no. 821.

[46] Ibid., no. 819: 'Nullus abbas, nec monachus dare, nec inpignorare, nec alienare, nec ad fevum donare per nullum ingenium, nec per ullam artem potestatem habeat; quod si faceret conmoniti .III. vel .IIIIor. vicibus per unum annum reddant et retornent in tabula et in comunia Sancti Petri; si non facerent veniat unus ex parentibus nostris, ponat Poncius, nepus meus, .XII. d. optimos super altare Sancti Petri et habeat et teneat ipsam vineam'.

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goods, except livestock.[47] As it survives, the charter was confirmed by just three witnesses: 'Eicius', Girberga and Poncius and was authored by a Poncius, though whether this is the same individual as the donors' homonymous nephew is unclear.

When read together, the trio of documents hint at fraternal strife that perhaps seeped into the subsequent generation. There are certainly frustrating gaps in our knowledge, perhaps most crucially where the nephew Poncius fitted into the picture: was he the son of Auriol the priest and therefore the brother of his uncle's namesake, or the offspring of another sibling? The appearance of a Poncius Auriol in two of these texts, a common naming practice in documents from this region to indicate parentage, is perhaps a hint that Poncius may have been another son of Auriol who had fared better in the eyes of his uncle and aunt, but this must remain a suspicion only. As a miniature dossier concerning a single estate, the charters nevertheless are revealing of how a priest might fall foul of their relatives: in choosing their nephew Poncius as their heir, we can see a deliberate exclusion of Auriol and his son Escius. Perhaps most significantly, the extraordinary clause threatening the forfeiture of the land by the community at Lézat if they were to give away or lease it to anyone without Eicius and Gerberga's permission may reflect a deliberate policy to buttress the grant against any attempts by the priest Auriol to regain his vineyards.

While few survive, joint donations made by local priests and their fathers do of course exist. Unlike the evidence for mothers and sons, however, no particular type of interaction defines this relationship in the corpus. We must reach into the later eleventh century for a representative sample. A single-sheet charter for the monastery of Saint-Victor in Marseille describes one such donation in 1079 made by a large group that included one Lauger together with his sons Isnard the priest and Aldebert,[48] while elsewhere also in the second half of the eleventh century, a Stephen the priest and his father Constantius made a joint donation to Cluny of inherited land.[49] A second, earlier, Cluniac example must be pieced together: between 942 and 954, a pair named Arembert and Sibald the priest made a joint donation at *Visandonus*; their relationship is not made explicit, but in 970 or 971, we encounter a 'Seibaldus' *sacerdos*

[47] Lézat, no. 819.
[48] P. Amargier, 'Chartes inédites du fonds Saint-Victor de Marseille: XI[e] siècle', PhD thesis, Université d'Aix-Marseille (1967), no. 62.
[49] Cluny, no. 3248.

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donating land for the souls of his parents, Arembert and Benedicta, also at *Visandonus*, likely making the pair father and son.[50]

Other documents that preserve transactions between priests and their fathers do not echo the degree of co-operation we saw between priests and their mothers, however, and show far greater diversity of interaction, with less emphasis on emotional connection. Some are little more than pieces of anecdotal information: a charter from the first decades of the eleventh century made for Lérins, for instance, notes that the donor had previously purchased land from one Rainald, father of Udalerius the priest.[51] At the other end of the scale, though no less terse, two documents from Cluny record grants made by the fathers of deceased priests who acted as executors for their sons' estates.[52] Some archives record priestly sons who served as witnesses to their fathers' transactions: at Uzerche, a very brief notice records a donation made by Stephen of Trastrada, witnessed by his son, Peter the priest.[53] A charter for Savigny made by one Leothar is more complex: Leothar reserved some property for his son Raginald and also some for his father Eldoin. Yet the grant was witnessed by the donor and his son Udalric the priest, and it is therefore striking that Leothar provided for his own father and one of his sons, but gave nothing to his priestly offspring in this transaction.[54]

A final example shows how the priest Aimeric memorialised his lay father Arnald through the alienation of property to Saint-Maixent de Poitou in the 1070s:

> At the above time, Aimeric the priest, son of Arnald of Perers, for his own soul and those of his ancestors, has given from his own allodial land to Saint-Maixent, namely the dwelling in which his father lived, enclosed by a ditch and surrounded by walls, with its orchard and well and oven, with the garden as far as the road. And if it pleases the monk who is living in that place, he may make his chapel and a threshing floor outside of this enclosure. If people live outside this enclosure, the monk will be their provost, and he will pay half of all the profits he receives to Aimeric and his successors. This donation was made by Aimeric, and witnessed by Goscelm son of Aimeric, and Girbert of Verrines.[55]

[50] Cluny, nos. 614 and 1289. Cluny, no. 1951 also records 'Sicbaldus' *presbiter* donating land at *Visandono*, though no mention of family members are made.

[51] Lérins, no. 30. [52] Cluny, nos. 126 and 2706.

[53] J.-B. Champeval, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye d'Uzerche (Corrèze) du X^e au XIV^e siècle* (Paris: A. Picard, 1901), no. 609: 'Petrus de Trastrada presbyter filius Stephani'.

[54] Savigny, no. 210.

[55] Saint-Maixent de Poitou, no. 141: 'Supradictis temporibus, Aimericus presbiter, filius Arnaldi de Perers, pro anima sua vel parentum suorum, dedit sancto Maxentio, de proprio alodo, scilicet

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From the description of the property, it sounds as if Aimeric had not inhabited the property at the time of its donation, and he may therefore have been ordained to serve a nearby local church. We are offered a glimpse into potential motivation for the donor's generous gift: if the first witness, a 'Goscelmus, son of Aimeric', refers to offspring of the donor himself, then Aimeric perhaps hoped that by granting his father's property for the creation of a monastic cell, he could secure both his own status in relation to the abbey and that of his own son.

Though many individuals with parents are visible in charter evidence, we have argued that the bond between priests and their parents and its representation on the page are distinct. Because of historiographical focus on priests as the centre of a nuclear family (that is, interest in their wives and children), and the fact that, if ordained canonically, priests were at least thirty years old, their relationship to their parents has rarely been considered. Priests' parents could and did pave the way for their offspring, giving them grants of estates and other assets. However, these grants do not look particularly different to those given to other, non-priestly members of the family. There is, however, some indication that local priests' co-operated particularly closely with their mothers, suggesting an aspect to their lived experience that was marked by the joint management of their parents' property long into adulthood.

3.2 *Pater Familias*? Priests as Husbands and Fathers

As we discussed in Chapter 1 of this book, down to the middle eleventh century, no church or secular law precluded deacons, bishops and priests from marrying and fathering children prior to their ordination, though they were then meant to separate physically from their wives (and remarkably, there is a charter from the 1040s documenting the separation of a local priest Gosfred and his wife Benedicta in precisely this way).[56] While

masnilium in quo pater suus habitavit, sicut clausura fovee et muri cingitur, cum viridario et puteo et furno, cum orto usque ad viam. Et extra hanc clausuram, si placuerit monacho habitanti ibidem, faciet capellam suam et aream. Si extra clausuram habitaverint homines, erit monachus prepositus eorum, et de omni proficuo, quod inde exierit, reddet monachus medietatem Aimerico et successoribus ejus. Hoc donum fecit Aimericus, videntibus Goscelmo filio Aimerici, et Girberto de Vetrinis'.

[56] For Gosfred and Benedicta, see C. Métais (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de la Trinité de Vendôme* 5 vols., Archives historiques de la Saintonge et de l'Aunis 22 (Paris: A. Picard, 1893–1904), no. 80: the charter declares that Benedicta, 'ab eius consortio sequestrata, in eadem parochia minime conservabitur'. For the legal backdrop, Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne*, pp. 112–16. For early moral critique of clerical as well as priestly marriage, see C. West, '"Since a Priest or Deacon Cannot Have a Lawful Wife": Rather of Verona's Struggle Against Clerical Families in Late Tenth-

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this meant that the companions[57] and offspring of tenth- and early eleventh-century priests were seldom the subject of debate or sanction in their own time, the power and momentum of the subsequent movement to delegitimise priests' marriages had such a profound impact on many sources that we know little about priests' wives in this period, who, as Fiona Griffiths puts it, were 'shadowy and even illicit figures in the historiography of reform'.[58] The erasure of priest's wives and the vilification of their offspring was so successful across many genres of writing that even modern studies of clerical celibacy often have little to say on the subject of priests' wives. This lack of evidence is even more pronounced when we restrict our view to local priests. Though it is often assumed that most rural priests were married, only a handful of cases survive in our corpus that even allude to these women.[59] The tendency in some modern scholarship to conflate those described as 'clerics' and 'priests' when examining such marriages, despite different canonical stipulations and expectations for each group, masks the issue further.

Charter evidence allows us to move away from papal directives, synodal decrees or epistolary invective and to focus instead on how local priests with female companions and children, and those who recorded their actions, negotiated their places within their own families, local communities and ecclesiastical hierarchies and networks. But the material presents its own challenges. Even those texts that survive in contemporary single sheets were not immune from scribal preferences, idiosyncrasies and external pressures. Most records survive in later collections that had been – to varying and often unknowable degrees – edited, altered and massaged to reflect needs of space, priorities or contemporary concerns: this is a particularly acute issue in texts that included references to priests' companions and children. We therefore have access to records of priests and their companions on the ground that are nevertheless snapshots

Century Northern Italy' in F. J. Griffiths and É. Kurdziel (eds.), *Clerics' Wives and Women in the Latin West (800–1200)* (in press).

[57] We have elected to use the word 'companions' in what follows, since we often have no contemporary label to define the relationship between priests and the mothers of their children, if the woman is mentioned at all.

[58] See Rosé, *Le mariage des prêtres*, on changes to the validity of these earlier marriages from 1054 onwards as part of attempts to secure power by the papal seat, esp. pp. 237–64; F. J. Griffiths, 'Froibirg Gives a Gift: The Priest's Wife in Eleventh-Century Bavaria', *Speculum* 96 (2021), pp. 1009–38, at p. 1013; L. Melve, 'The Public Debate on Clerical Marriage in the Late Eleventh Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), pp. 688–706.

[59] For the assumption, see, for instance, Frauenknecht, *Verteidigung*, p. 3.

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constrained by genre and form, often transmitted to us across decades and centuries through multiple authors, editors and copyists.[60]

There are further aspects of the evidence that must be considered. We have found no extant cases where the priests' female companion is explicitly said to be living with their husband, and only one case (Benedicta, above) where a separation is explicitly requested. Similarly, in all but one case (discussed below) we have no evidence of when priests' children had been born, and so they may have come into the world before the individual in question reached the degree of ordination where they had to separate from their wives. We can say, however, that most priests' children we encounter were of age at least to attest, consent or participate in the grants. Since almost all priests' companions appear alongside their offspring, both groups are considered together in what follows.

We have found (within the corpus of documentary material examined in this chapter) just over twenty reasonably certain references to local priests' companions and children between 900 and 1050 (app. 1). The evidence is spread geographically across much of the former Carolingian empire, though particular archives do present clusters of evidence, and the southern evidence is richer than the northern (as it is generally). Chronologically, references to priests' female companions increase in later documentation, and this increase is more marked still for the children of priests, who appear in twice as many charters and notices dated to 1060–1100 compared to the preceding 160 years (900–1060) (see Fig. 3.3). This marked uptick in the later eleventh century for both companions and children, which of course needs to be contextualised in light of the growing number of documents from the period, will be considered below.

[60] We use 'copyists' here with attendant caution: a selection of scholarship on the issue includes B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Towards an Archaeology of the Medieval Charter: Textual Production and Reproduction in Northern French "Chartriers"' in A. Kosto and A. Winroth (eds.), *Charters, Cartularies and Archives. The Preservation and Transmission of Documents in the Medieval West (Proceedings of a Colloquium of the Commission Internationale de Diplomatique, Princeton and New York, 16–18 September 1999)*, Papers in Mediaeval Studies 17 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002), pp. 43–60; P. Chastang, 'Transcription ou remploi? Composition et écriture des cartulaires en Bas-Languedoc (XII^{e}–XIV^{e} siècle)' in P. Toubert and P. Moret (eds.), *Remploi, citation, plagiat. Conduites et pratiques médiévales (X^{e}–XII^{e} siècle)*, Collection de la Casa de Velázquez 112 (Madrid: Casa de Veláquez, 2009), pp. 115–40; the collected papers in O. Guyotjeannin, L. Morelle and M. Parisse (eds.), *Les cartulaires. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École nationale des Chartes et le GDR 121 du CNRS,* Mémoires et Documents de l'École des Chartes 39 (Paris: École des chartes, 1993); D. Le Blévec (ed.), *Les cartulaires méridionaux. Actes du colloque, Béziers, 20–21 septembre 2002*, Études et Rencontres de L'École des Chartes 19 (Paris: École des chartes, 2006).

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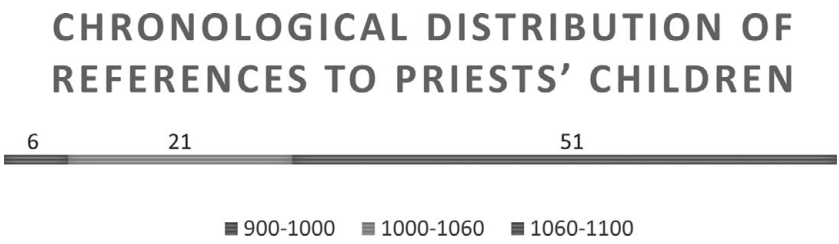


Fig. 3.3 *Chronological distribution of references to priests' children.*

In the relatively few charters and notices that do mention local priests' wives or companions, the terminology used to describe these women varies as much as it does for the wives and companions of laymen: *uxor* appears most often, but we also hear of the vendors Bernard *presbiter* and his *mulier* Gedberga at La Grasse,[61] while two eleventh-century priests' companions in the Bavarian cartulary of Ebersburg were described using the term *presbiterissa*, an earlier honorific for priests' wives that Fiona Griffiths notes was thought to have disappeared by the tenth century, but which evidently endured.[62] We have not yet found the term *concubina* used for the companion of a local priest, and indeed it is far more rare for clerics' companions in charter evidence than the vituperative writings of Peter Damian and others might suggest.[63]

More often, the status of women as priest's companions is implicit, and we are left to fill in the gaps ourselves. Thus, in the tenth century, one Belieldis made a donation to Beaulieu for her soul and for that of Bernard, her husband (referred to in the text as *vir meus*). The charter is attested by just three people: Robert, a Bernard *presbiter* and Belieldis herself. Was the Bernard *presbiter* of the very short list of attestations the same individual, and Belieldis, therefore, the wife of a priest?[64] If so, that he was described as a family member in the main body of the charter and as a priest in the witness list would not be particularly unusual, since (as discussed earlier) the inclusion of kin-identifiers by draftsmen was inconsistent at best. More certain is a document dated to between 1026 and 1031, in which the abbot and monks of Lézat leased land to a priest named Amelius in terms

[61] La Grasse, no. 102.
[62] These are Hiltigund, the *presbiterissa* of the priest Gundunus, and Liutpurc, *presbiterissa* of Perhcozus, cited in Griffiths, 'Froibirg', p. 1035; Atto of Vercelli, *The Letters of Atto*, no. 8, pp. 76–83.
[63] For instance, land given to a cathedral canon named Amatus and his 'concubine' in 1019: Béziers, no. 60.
[64] Beaulieu, no. 135.

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that implied Amelius was in a conjugal relationship. The text records the terms under which they transferred the land to Amelius and also to his son Durand: 'As long as Amelius is alive, let him hold and possess [the land], and if an infant is born to Amelius, let it remain with him, and if Durand dies, let it remain with Amelius'.[65] Although in the case of Amelius, the existence of a female companion can only be logically inferred, since no woman is named nor even mentioned, the case nevertheless furnishes a unique (if obtuse) example of a local priest whom we can say with some certainty continued to cohabit with a companion, with the prospect of fathering children after his ordination.

In a number of cases, priests and women shared property, but no relationship between the pair is recorded: a 927 document for Agde, for instance, refers in its boundary clause to property jointly owned by Susanna and Flodmar the priest.[66] Between 990 and 995, the priest Durabilis and a woman named Christina donated property to Lézat that they owned together;[67] also recorded at Lézat was an allocation of usufruct of certain properties to a priest named Durand and one Gerberga.[68] These women could have been priests' wives or companions; the lack of an explicit label identifying them would therefore be interpreted as indicative of scribal reluctance to acknowledge their relationship, whether at the time or as copies were made down the decades and centuries. Yet as we have seen, familial identifiers were not routinely applied to kin of any kind. If scribes did not routinely identify co-owners or parties acting alongside each other as brothers, or mothers and sons, or cousins or any of the other myriad relationships we find, it may be problematic to assume that co-ownership of property by a priest and a woman is automatically evidence of priests with sexual partners or wives whose relationship status was discreetly omitted from the written record. For this reason, only those women who are explicitly identified as either the mother of a local priest's children or as their companion are considered below.

[65] Lézat, no. 974: 'Dum vivit Emelius teneat et possideat et si infans de Emelio aparuerit remaneat ad illum et si moritur Durandus remaneat ad Emelium'. The same phrasing for the possible birth of a child in the future is used in charters issued by the same abbot: Lézat, no. 510: 'si infans de ipsos non apparuerit' and no. 1510: 'et si infantes ex vobis apparuerint de istas mulieres'; no. 1668 has 'et si infans non apparuerit'; no. 1670 has 'filiis vel filiabus suis qui apparuerint ex eo'; and no. 973 has 'si de illos infantes non aparuit', suggesting during this abbacy it was a relatively common formula in use amongst the draftsmen of charters there.

[66] J. Rouquette (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'église d'Agde*: *Cartulaire du Languedoc-Roussillon* (Montpellier, 1925), no. 7.

[67] Lézat, no. 302. [68] Ibid., no. 47.

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Almost all surviving documents that record priests and their companions depict priests in question who retained a strong identity as the head of their family and who made grants to a religious institution (or canny transactions with its members) to secure the inheritance and prosperity of their companions and offspring. Some priests asked those benefitting from their donations to pray for their offspring in *pro anima* clauses, for instance, in the case of the priest Girbert, who gave property to Cluny for his own soul and his son Humbert's, or that of the tenth-century priest Dato, who did the same for his son Oriolus at Lézat.[69] Others made joint donations with their wives and children, but the most common strategy within the corpus was for priests to make a grant or a sale to a religious institution that included a stipulation that their offspring were to possess usufruct over the land for their lifetimes. Just as their neighbours and kin did, through pious donations and requests for the souls of their loved ones, priests positioned themselves and their children alongside and within broader networks that transcended their local communities and connected them to major ecclesiastical institutions.

It is worth considering the relatively detailed cases preserved at Lézat here in some detail, particularly in the absence of a comparable cache of evidence from elsewhere. While the cartulary shows a degree of formulaicism when describing parent–child relationships, these texts also preserve diverse contexts and familial structures. Between 997 and 1031, the priest Campester gave Lézat a *casale* at Taisoneras, reserving lifetime usufruct for Raymond, his son, who in return had to pay the monks an annual rent of twelve loaves of bread and four measures of wine.[70] Other local priests and their offspring appeared in more than one Lézatois charter to administer greater possessions or to tend to more complex arrangements. Three charters produced at the turn of the millennium involving a priest named Benedict reveal how one such *pater familias* approached the challenge. In the most important of the three (for our purposes), Benedict gave the monks of Lézat a diverse assemblage of goods in Asque. Some of this went straight to the monks, but the remainder was to be held first by one

[69] Cluny, no. 2020; Lézat, no. 201.

[70] Lézat, no. 395. On the *casale*, see Cursente, 'Autour de Lézat', paras. 28 and 32; B. Cursente, *Des maisons et des hommes. La Gascogne médiévale, XI^e–XV^e siècle*, Tempus (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 1998). We have already encountered two of these cases: When the priest Auriol sold land to his brother Eicius, he reserved for himself and his children a preferential right in the event of the resale of the property (Lézat, no. 821); the priest Amelius and his son Durand shared their property but produced a grant that allocated usufruct to any unborn children of the priest: see pp. 100–2 and 107.

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Benedicta and, after her, by Benedicta and Benedict's children Stephen and Geruncianus; as in examples we considered earlier, Benedicta's relationship to the priest is not given in detail, but they evidently were in a relationship and had children together.[71] Another of the charters records that Benedict wished to be buried within the grounds of the monastery, while the third details an agreement between the monks and Benedict to lease property to the priest that would revert to Lézat on the death of his last surviving son, suggesting Benedict put considerable care into providing for his offspring as well as his own funerary arrangements.[72]

Similar impulses perhaps lay behind a grant made by the priest Dato, who in the middle of the eleventh century gave Sainte-Marie de Peyrissas one-third of the church of Saint-Michel at *Obarcium* with its appurtenances, as well as allodial land (discussed in Chapter 1).[73] Dato allocated a *casale* from this allodial land to his daughter Garsende for her lifetime, the only surviving usufruct allocation for a priest's daughter we have found in the documents surveyed.[74] This donation is followed in the cartulary by a second, shorter grant from what must be the same Dato, now described as a monk and priest, this time appearing alongside his four sons, Arnald, Sancius, William and Raimund.[75] Dato's strategy is shaped both by the type of ownership he had over the properties and whether he appeared with his male and female offspring, perhaps explaining why the grants were made separately: the earlier grant was Dato's property alone, some of which he gave to his daughter and then the monastery, while the goods that formed the latter donation belonged to both Dato and his sons. This interpretation is reinforced by two features of the charter that benefitted Garsende. First, Dato's sons did not participate in or consent to their father's bequest to their sister and served only as witnesses, suggesting that they did not have any legal claim to this land. Second, the anathema clause of the charter for his daughter specifically warns against any such attempts by the donor's sons before proceeding to the more usual 'heirs' or other individuals, perhaps suggesting particular fear on the part of Dato that his sons would challenge the donation.[76] What of Dato's new status as both a

[71] Lézat, no. 486.
[72] Ibid., no. 485. In a third charter, Benedict secured for himself the right to be buried within the grounds of the monastery: ibid., no. 487.
[73] See p. 42. [74] Lézat, no. 385. [75] Ibid., no. 386.
[76] Ibid.: 'Si quis vero contra hanc cartam donationis nullus ex filiis meis aut ex heredibus meis aut ulla amissa personna pro inrumpendo insurgere voluerit in primis ira Dei incurrat et cum Datan et Abiran gehenne ignis conburatur et cum Juda Scarioth qui Dominum tradidit participationem habeat'.

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monk and priest? The generous grant may have been prompted by his entrance into the monastic community, which would have required him to divest himself of his possessions. In the first charter (prior to his identification as a monk), Dato gave to the church at Peyrissas goods required by a priest to perform their office: 'the tithes, first fruits, bells, books, chalice, censer, and all the ecclesiastical ornaments that belong to the church itself', perhaps suggesting he no longer required them.[77]

The Lézat cases strongly suggest that some priests in this region were co-habiting with their companions and children in the tenth and earlier eleventh centuries, or at the very least managed familial property alongside them and acted to protect their interests. The uniqueness of the archive is emphasised by the fact that some neighbouring regions have no such evidence, for instance, charters for the diocese of Urgell.[78] Although nothing in the canons precluded it prior to the latter decades of the eleventh century, it is rare to find priests and their sons in other archives; the evidence for such familial co-operation is found scattered throughout West Francia, albeit generally in documents dated towards the latter end of our period of focus. Thus, a fragmentary donation dated 980x990 describes an exchange made between the church of Saint-Pierre de la Réole (located ca. 75 km from Bordeaux) and a priest named Stephen, who received two shares of the church of Saint-Sever in exchange for a shod horse; Stephen promised the estate he received would be returned after his son Warin had held it for his lifetime.[79] At Marseille in ca. 1050, a priest named Andrew donated allodial land at *Fligtingnana* for the souls of his parents, stipulating that his son would hold lifetime usufruct over the estate prior to its transfer to the monks of Saint-Victor.[80] An undated charter benefitting Saint-Aubin d'Angers recorded a donation made by the priest Gausbert that included usufruct for his son Gaufred,[81] while the well-known case of Froibirg, her companion Richolf the priest and their son, who together made several gifts to the monastery of Benediktbeuern, provides a comparable example from the East Frankish kingdom.[82]

[77] Ibid., no. 385: 'cum decimis et primiciis et signis et libris et calice et turribulum et omne ornamentum ecclesiasticum qui ad ipsa ecclesia pertinere videtur'. This formula (of the donation of a church with goods for performing Mass) is found elsewhere in the archive: ibid., no. 217.
[78] Bonnassie, 'Le clergé paroissial', para. 15. [79] Saint-Pierre de La Réole, no. 152/4.
[80] Saint-Victor de Marseille, no. 675.
[81] B. de Broussillon (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Aubin d'Angers* 3 vols., Société d'Agriculture, Sciences et Arts d'Angers: documents historiques sur l'Anjou (Paris: A. Picard, 1903), no. 42.
[82] As at p. 105, n. 58.

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Though he may have been a cathedral canon rather than a local priest, in 1015 the monks of Saint-Cyprien Poitiers made an exchange with Eulard *presbiter*, his *femina* Adagardis and their six children.[83] Nothing precluded cathedral canons from having offspring and retaining a relationship with them, and if Eulard were a canon, he would not have been unique in having children. Eulard's uncertain status offers an opportunity to compare our evidence with that for the shared management of property by priests who were members of larger ecclesiastical institutions and managed property or attested alongside their wives and children. In this period, we might also look to Chamalières-sur-Loire and its canon William, who appeared in the historical record alongside 'all [. . .] his sons' (*omnes* [. . .] *filii ejus*).[84] The will of the deacon Seniofred included grants for diverse churches in what is now south-western France and included provision for his son Armagnus, and more examples could be cited besides.[85] Co-operative action between priests and their children was therefore attested in a variety of social contexts: neither a phenomenon confined to backwards rural churchmen nor one restricted to the wealthier landed elites.

But how does the picture change if we focus on the latter half of the eleventh century, when the discussions of clerical marriage and continence appeared to dominate papal directives and letters in increasingly misogynistic and fervent language? As mentioned earlier, over two-thirds of references to priests' children appear within the forty-year period from 1060–1100, a phenomenon that must be addressed. Does this indicate a change in conditions compared to the earlier period on which this book focuses? While naturally a result of the burgeoning archival corpus, this is not the whole story: the growing number of priests' offspring found in documentary texts is, we argue, also a consequence of changes to how individuals were described in charters and notices. Across archives, more and more draftsmen identified individuals by including the name of their parent (and sometimes the careers of one or both); inclusion of where an individual was from also became more common. The context in which we

[83] Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers, no. 140.

[84] A. Chassaing (ed.), *Cartulaire de Chamalières-sur-Loire en Velay, prieuré conventuel dépendant de l'abbaye de Saint-Chaffre* (Paris: A. Picard, 1895), no. 100.

[85] B. Alart (ed.), *Cartulaire Roussillonnais* (Perpignan: Charles Latrobe, 1880), no. 12 (dated to 967). Some further examples: A charter of 1075 for Angers is attested by Bernard *praepositus* and his son Tedelin (P. Marchegay, 'Chartes angevines des onzième et douzième siècles', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 36 (1875), pp. 381–441, there no. 5). In the same year, the son of a canon witnessed a grant made by the bishop of Maurienne to his community: A. Billiet and J. Albrieux (eds.), *Chartes du diocèse de Maurienne* (Chambéry: Puthod fils, 1861).

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find priestly offspring in these documents is therefore key: in more than half of the cases, the priest himself did not play a role in the document, and his inclusion served only as an identifier for his offspring. In 1075, for instance, a joint grant was made by the abbot of La Trinité Mont de Rouen and his monks to 'the knight Hunfred, the son of Ruedrus the priest'.[86] Hunfred's direct participation in the grant, however, makes this an atypical case, and the bulk of priests' sons do not appear in the dispositive section of the document (as donors, recipients, disputants and so on), but in boundary clauses or (more often still) as witnesses or signatories. The careers of their fathers were not of functional importance to the document, except as identifiers, nor were they singled out amongst their cohort: just as we hear of the children of blacksmiths, cellarers and soldiers, so too we hear of the sons of priests. Those behind the explosion of documents at the end of the eleventh century did not shrink from describing priests' children as such.

What of those priests, their companions and children who played a more important role in documents from the later eleventh century? Although we do not find as many allocations of usufruct for the children of priests as in preceding decades, charters and notices issued by and for priests nevertheless continued to include provisions for their children. A number of texts from this period record joint donations made by both priests and their sons, such as the donation by Airad the priest of *Petraleve* with his sons Peter and William as part of a large group who together founded the priory of Rosier en Gévaudan, or a grant that included Bernard the priest of *Auriacho* and his sons Airald, Poncius and Rostagnus at the very end of the century, made to the same abbey.[87] Further east, a separate group donated the church of Sainte-Marie Garda-Camona to Lérins: a portion was given by Guy *presbiter*, with his wife and sons (*cum uxore sua et cum filiis*) to both the residents of the monastery and to the priest Isnard and his son Josfred, who would hold it for their lifetimes.[88] This case, with priests and their sons visible at both ends of the transaction, gives a brief glimpse into the different social levels these men continued to occupy. The donor priest Guy may have attested one other text as a witness but otherwise made no further mark

[86] A. Deville (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Sainte-Trinité du Mont de Rouen,* Collection des cartulaires de France 3 (Paris: Impériale, 1841), no. 63: 'Hunfredo militi, filio Ruedri presbiteri'.
[87] C. De Vic and J. Vaissete (eds.), *Histoire générale du Languedoc* 3 (Toulouse: J.-B. Paya, 1841), no. 218; Saint-Victor de Marseille, no. 690.
[88] Lérins, no. 63.

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on the corpus at Lérins. The recipients, in contrast, occupied an influential position in the social circle of the archbishop and were probably not local priests. That they did so suggests that even in the later eleventh century, priests and their offspring could feature prominently in the documentary record.

Priests' wives and companions continued to appear alongside their offspring too, albeit as sporadically as in the earlier period. In 1080, Walter, priest of Séguinière, gave property to Marmoutier with the consent of his wife (*uxor*) Mainsindis, as well as that of 'the sons of both of them' (*filiis amborum*) and their daughter.[89] That Walter sought the consent of his offspring and wife suggests that the children had reached adulthood prior to the grant; this would mean they had been born in the 1050s or 1060s, when the debate over priestly marriage was growing in fervency. If we broaden our chronological and geographical parameters, we see that Walter's family was by no means an isolated example: as Julia Barrow has argued, the evidence for the impact of reforms on local clergy is limited and suggests a slow adoption of the new status quo by local priests and their families: 'References to married clerics serving parish churches are fairly frequent, though patchy, across many parts of western Christian Europe down to the twelfth century (often deep into the twelfth century)'.[90]

That there is better evidence for the sons of priests following their fathers into the church from this period serves as a corollary to this view, though it must be noted that we have no evidence for the inheritance of a particular church or service there transmitting from father to son. In 1076, Abbot Benedict of Saint-Maixent Poitou sold (or perhaps leased) land to the priest Arbert, son of Arnald *sacerdos*, with Arbert, his siblings and nephews enjoying use of the land for their lifetimes.[91] In 1093, Mainburgis and Peter, wife (*uxor*) and son, respectively, of the priest Frodobert, made a donation to the priory of Marmoutier. In return, they received food, clothing, the prayers and alms of the monastery, and for Peter to be received as a monk if he wished.[92] We might place the case of Mainburgis and Peter alongside a marginal annotation in the twelfth-century cartulary of Saint-Cyprien Poitiers, which referred to a priest identified only as 'R', whose son 'W' was to become a monk with the

[89] Giraud, *Chartes originales*, no. 3263, http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/originaux/charte3263/.
[90] Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, p. 139. [91] Saint-Maixent de Poitou, no. 134.
[92] Giraud, *Chartes originales*, no. 4672, http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/originaux/charte4672/.

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approval of the abbot.[93] The placement of the annotation alongside a series of grants from the 1060s concerning the village of Dampierre, most of which were attested by a 'Rotbertus presbiter', make him a likely candidate to be the father of 'W', although there the trail goes cold.[94] At the very end of the century (1080x1100), at Saint-Denis at Nogent-le-Rotrou, we hear of one Robert the cleric, son of the priest Hubert, perhaps suggesting lines of inheritance or an intention for the son to follow in his father's footsteps, though the church itself did not belong to either of the pair and was held in benefice by them, before being transferred by its owner to the abbey.[95]

Even when priests and their sons challenged larger ecclesiastical institutions over property, rights or incomes, surviving documentation presents these sons without opprobrium, as in the record of a dispute between the sons of the priest Airard and the abbey of Saint-Aubin d'Angers. Dated to the 1060s or 1070s and concerning land their father had granted, the draftsman notes only that Airard's sons challenged the donation.[96] Similarly, some time after the priest Fulbert gave land to Saint-Père Chartres, his son Girald attempted to reclaim a part of the aforementioned land for himself. Though the record of proceedings suggests Girald was bought off by the local nobility, once again no mention or criticism is made of Girald's status as the son of a priest.[97]

While the companions of priests remain shadowy figures in charter evidence, we have seen that a number of documents do include these women and show them to be important figures within priests' families, who took on (or continued to have) a full and visible role in managing estates and securing lines of inheritance after the ordination of their spouse. Their phantasmal presence in the documentary record is in line with canonical expectations that priests separate from their spouses and the diminished role of women in these texts generally; their offspring, often adults themselves with holdings and interests in familial property, are more visible. Far better evidence for priests' sons survives across archives and

[93] Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers, no. 475: 'Constan. abbas placitavit cum R. presbitero, W. filium ejus monachizans'.

[94] See K. Matsuo, 'Pratiques de l'écrit et gestion patrimoniale monastique aux XI[e] et XII[e] siècles, d'après le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Cyprien de Poitiers', unpublished PhD thesis, Université Montaigne-Bordeaux (2012), who discusses the Dampierre charters briefly but does not mention this marginal annotation, at pp. 160–2.

[95] J.-H.-H.-J. Guillier de Souancé and C. Métais (eds.), *Cartulaire de Saint-Denis de Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1031–1789*, Archives du Diocèse de Chartres 1 (Vannes: Librairie Lafolye, 1895), no. 43.

[96] Broussilon, *Saint-Aubin d'Angers*, no. 134.

[97] B. Guérard (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père de Chartres* 2 vols., Collection des cartulaires de France 1–2 (Paris: Crapelet, 1840), no. 35.

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diverse contexts, and priests evidently continued to manage property with their children, or to support them through allocations of usufruct or requests for prayers, through their lifetimes. The variety of lived experiences represented in the above cases shows that the children of priests continued to participate in their fathers' lives in different contexts and at different levels of the social scale with little to no indication of diminished status to the end of the eleventh century.[98] Father–son pairings of local priests are nevertheless very rare in the written record, particularly when compared to uncles and nephews, as we will see. To be a priest's child or companion in the eleventh century was by no means to be rendered powerless, but the enhanced status of the local priest at the centre of these documents suggests it was the priests themselves who leveraged their position in communities to secure inheritances and status for their families via grants to major ecclesiastical institutions.

3.3 Family Values: Priests, Their Siblings, Uncles and Nephews

How does the evidence for priests, their uncles and their nephews compare? At first glance and in broad strokes, the picture is quite similar. For priests and their uncles, commemoration in *pro anima* clauses or references to land inherited, received or purchased from uncles dominate the record, and the relationship is framed similarly to that of priests and their parents. For priests with nephews, numerous records survive in which priests made donations to larger ecclesiastical institutions, but reserved usufruct over the property for their nephews, just as we saw local priests with children do. As Julia Barrow writes, 'clerical uncles [. . .] had an important and clearly marked role to play in the life of their nephews and nieces'.[99]

Yet investigating bonds between priestly uncles and their nephews (or vice versa) presents unique methodological challenges. First, the evidence can only be understood fully when viewed alongside the evidence for priests' siblings, the dominant familial relationship visible within the corpus. The prominence (and profundity) of this connection varied enormously and must have in some cases required the selection of particular

[98] On whom, see app. 1, pp. 226–7.

[99] Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, pp. 117–18. Barrow also stresses that 'references to nephews in the earlier and high Middle Ages are not, or not usually, as sometimes suspected, euphemisms for priests' sons', a scribal sleight of hand historians sometimes allege, for which we have found no evidence in the present study.

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nephews as heirs or conduits for familial interests. While almost half the relevant cases in the corpus include references to multiple nephews (and occasionally to nieces), we are often given no inkling of how they were related to their uncle: even if the priests' siblings were recorded, the relationship of each participant to the others is not made explicit.

Second, there is a striking tendency for uncles and nephews to both have pursued careers within the Church and for the privileging of the bond between an individual uncle-nephew pair. All but two cases of priests with uncles refer to just one uncle; more than half of uncle–nephew cases within the corpus mention one nephew only. Emanating from diverse contexts and regions, all of these latter cases share a particular feature: where only one nephew appeared alongside their uncle, they were always named. This is a significant pattern; it is not true where uncles appear with multiple nephews, nor did any other familial relationship involving priests consistently name individual relatives in this way. The simplest explanation for this is that naming an individual nephew ensured that there was no room for later ambiguity or dispute if the priest in question had (or would go on to have) more than one nephew.

As with priests and their parents or priests and their offspring, there is a sliding scale of interaction visible within the evidence, from cases that reveal profound and long-lasting sibling co-operation to records that privilege the uncle–nephew bond at the expense of any reference to siblings at all. In between these extremes, some priests provided for their siblings and nephews simultaneously, while others singled out particular nephews for inheritance or provided for multiple siblings via specific allocations to named family members. As with other familial relationships, many uncles and nephews appear in the context of provisions for usufruct, which might include allocations both for the siblings of the donor and for their nephews and nieces, as, for instance, when the priest Durannus gave property to Cluny with the permission of his sisters Teogarde and Girelde, for the souls of himself, his mother and father and his uncle Girard. This was to be held for his lifetime in usufruct and also for that of his nephew Bertard, whose relationship to Teogarde and Girelde was not made explicit.[100] Similarly, the priest Ebroin donated a chapel at *Chauci* and four ecclesiastical farmsteads to the monks of Beaulieu in 936, allocating usufruct to his family for the lifetimes of his brother Amalric and his nephews John and Girbert.[101] A donation to Sainte-Foy Conques by

[100] Cluny, no. 1184, dated to 964 or 965. [101] Beaulieu, no. 178.

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Girard *sacerdos* included a provision for usufruct first for himself, then for his brother John, and finally for his nephew Teubert.[102]

The strength of the bond between priests, siblings and nephews is framed strikingly in a charter for Saint-Barnard de Romans, issued by the priest Otrannus.[103] While Otrannus lived, he and his brother Arbert would possess usufruct over the estates donated, alongside 'our children' Otrannus and Eldrad (*infantes nostri*). No other charter from this archive contains a similar formulation, and the fact that it was framed as a collective usufruct (i.e. to be held by the brothers and the younger generation simultaneously), rather than a right that would pass consecutive or sequentially from one family member to another, suggests that the bond was particularly strong within this family unit. The witness list included the consent of Otrannus, Arbert, the younger Otrannus and his brother Eldrad, further supporting the conclusion that the property was legally shared between both pairs of brothers.[104]

Elsewhere, favour demonstrated to nephews is more subtle, as in a donation made by the layman Heldrad de Neiros to Saint-Étienne de Baigne. Although Heldrad made the grant alongside his brothers, sisters and nephews, Heldrad (or the document's draftsman) named only the nephews (Iterius *presbiter* and Gauffred), at once removing any possibility for ambiguity and highlighting their importance.[105] Similarly, in a case we have already encountered, the brothers Arbert the priest, Andrew and Bernard purchased land from the abbot of Saint-Maixent in Poitou just outside the gates of that city: 'It was agreed that we would sell, and so we sold to a man named Arbert, a priest, son of Arnald the priest [. . .] We, indeed, transfer this vineyard to the aforementioned Arbert from the present day for all the days of his life and to his two brothers, namely Andrew and Bernard'.[106] Despite its brevity, the author of the document clearly perceived Arbert to be the leader amongst his siblings: the priest is more prominent than his brothers throughout; he alone is described as the son of Arnald the priest (reminiscent of some of the first charters considered in this chapter). On the page, his siblings are thus relegated in

[102] G. Desjardins (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques en Rouergue* 2 vols., Documents historiques publiés par la Société de l'École des chartes (Paris: A. Picard, 1879), no. 198.
[103] Saint-Barnard de Romans, no. 32/79.
[104] That the charter was authored by one Eldrad perhaps suggests one of the nephews had already entered the church.
[105] Saint-Étienne de Baigne, no. 197.
[106] Saint-Maixent de Poitou, no. 134: 'Constat nos vendere ita et vendimus alicui viro nomine Arberto presbitero, filio Arnaldi sacerdotis [. . .] Nos vero isti predicto Arberto hanc vineam tradimus a die presente omnibus diebus vite sue vel duobus fratribus ejus, scilicet Andrea et Bernardo'.

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importance: they are only related to their father through their brother Arbert. This emphasis does not just impact the way the lay siblings are presented in relation to their priestly father but also how their relationship with their own children is framed, since the lease was valid for the lifetimes of Arbert's brothers and 'all his nephews' (*omnibus nepotibus ejus*). As in several cases we have encountered already, here is a familial relationship that is framed and channelled on the page through the priest, who acts as a conduit for other kin-connections: Arbert's brothers (and perhaps sisters) are only related to their children and nephews through their priestly sibling. A member of this younger generation was perhaps intended to succeed their grandfather and uncle as priest of a family church, since the phrasing of this particular clause may have been intended to accommodate possible future offspring yet to be born.

A particularly detailed charter from Nîmes epitomizes some of the methodological challenges presented by the uncle–nephew relationship in our corpus.[107] In 925, the priest Milo had a testamentary document produced that transferred an array of his estates both to his family and to the cathedral, in the latter case, either directly or after periods of usufructuary control by family members. The document's length, detail and inscrutable organisation are all characteristic of the Nîmois archive, as is its overall character as a testamentary document distributing all of Milo's assets in a single text. Because of this, we have to build a picture of the family's structure gradually, taking each provision in turn. First, Milo allotted property at *Veriotum* to his (unnamed) brother 'with good spirit, from good will' (*cum bono animo, ex bona voluntate*), which would then go to his brother's son Riculf. Other land given to the cathedral was first to be held in usufruct by this same nephew, Riculf, then by Riculf's brother Ardrad, then by Milo, their brother (his uncle's namesake), before finally going to a Teubert, probably also part of the kin group, although not identified as such. Property that Milo had inherited from his father went to his brother 'Orzateus/Oriateus', who is described as having two sons, named Ardrad and Milo. Orzateus must therefore also have been the father of Riculf, who had received the lion's share of the usufruct allocation. Ardrad and Milo were then both allocated further land; a final estate was to be given to another nephew, Autger, and would in turn go to Milo's homonymous nephew (see Fig. 3.4 for a family tree).

We therefore know that Milo the priest had at least one brother, Orzateus, who had three children: Riculf, Ardrad and Milo. Milo appears to have given

[107] Nîmes, no. 25.

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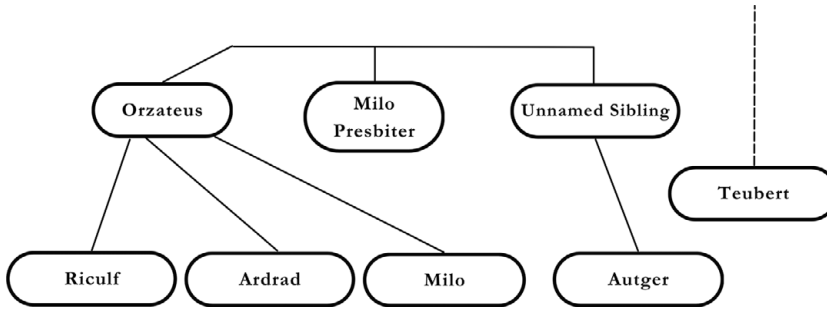


Fig. 3.4 Proposed family tree for Milo.

most of his estate, either directly or via a chain of usufructuary arrangements, to Riculf. A fourth nephew, Autger, is not connected specifically to the other family members mentioned in the document, perhaps suggesting different parentage. Although the framing and organisation of Milo's donation do not appear especially logical to the modern reader, this should not blind us to the fact that it must have nevertheless been carefully thought out, with his possessions divided between his sibling and his nephews.

When particular nephews like Riculf were selected to inherit first or to receive more property than their brothers or cousins, the reasons must have varied: were they the eldest, from a particular line, or selected as heirs at the time of their birth? Very rarely we hear of a particular rationale, as when in 971, Achinus the priest gave hereditary property in *Paliolus* to his nephews Issenbald and Hildegrin, also both priests, because they were his favourite relatives:

> To the lords and brothers in Christ, I, namely Achinus, an unworthy priest, also wish to make known and keep in writing for the future, the manner in which I desire to dispose of my inheritance, so that my close relatives of consanguinity do not engage in disputes after my death. Therefore, I grant my inheritance, with all its integrity, for the salvation of my soul, after my death to two priests, namely my nephews, Issenbald and Hildegrin, whom I hold dearer than other relatives.[108]

[108] Cluny, no. 1296: 'Dominis et in Christo fratribus, volo etiam vobis insinuare scriptisque in futuro tempore conservare, qua racione videlicet hereditatem meam cupio disponere, ego Achinus, sacerdos indignus, ne forte propinqui mee consanguinitatis, post discessum mee mortis inde abeant inter se altercationem litis. Quapropter duobus sacerdotibus, scilicet meis nepotibus,

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But Achinus' helpful explanation of his nepotism is (in evidentiary terms) the exception, not the rule. In the face of such laconic sources, one indicator of the selection of nephews may have been shared names. While in Milo's charter above the donor's namesake was a relatively minor beneficiary, elsewhere such homonymy could function not just an indicator of kinship in local communities, but as a very particular affirmation of filiation that further strengthened the uncle–nephew bond.[109] In 1003x4, Abbot Odilo of Cluny, for instance, granted precarial land to Aldebald the priest, his brother Gerald and to Aldebald's nephew and namesake, Aldebald, to be held for the lifetime of the three.[110] An uncle and nephew, both named Stephen and both of whom were priests, appear in the resolution of a dispute recorded at Beaulieu,[111] while when the priest Hiadbert granted land to Saint-Barnard de Romans in 1040, his donation was witnessed by his nephew, the priest Hiadbert.[112]

A different picture emerges from documents that record priests whose uncles or nephews were their neighbours, revealing multi-generational networks of familial property centred on particular locations, often only visible through this particular relationship. An eleventh-century sale by one Ingelbert recorded that his property ended at the boundary between his land and that formerly owned by his uncle, the priest Maginerius.[113] When the priest Girbald donated part of a vineyard to Cluny in the earlier eleventh century, he excluded the portion owned by his nephews, suggesting a blend of shared and independent ownership of family land, but another vineyard Girbald donated was bounded by land owned by his (unnamed) nephews, reflecting a different arrangement that may have been with the same nephews or another group.[114] Similarly, we learn from an 882 charter made for the abbey of Beaulieu that the priest Godinus jointly held some land with his brother Ragamfred, but had also purchased property with his nephew Donadeus that the pair shared; this estate abutted land owned by Donadeus alone.[115] While it is not clear whether Donadeus was the son of Ragamfred or had descended from another

ceteris consanguineis mihi carioribus, Issenbaldo atque Hildegrino, hereditatem enim meam cum omni integritate, pro salute anime mee, post obitum meum concedo'.

[109] On homonymy and filiation, see L. Ripart, 'Filius equivocus eius. Homonymie et parenté dans les sources des IX^e–XI^e siècle' in L. Jégou, S. Joye, T. Lienhard and J. Schneider (eds.), *Splendor Reginae: Passions, genre et famille: Mélanges en l'honneur de Régine Le Jan*, Collection Haut Moyen Âge 22 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 101–8 and Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World,* pp. 119–28, with tenth-century examples drawn from the episcopate at nn. 72–4.

[110] Cluny, no. 2581. [111] Beaulieu, no. 76. [112] Saint-Barnard de Romans, no. 84/103.

[113] Saint-Cyr en Nevers, no. 63. [114] Beaulieu, no. 127. [115] Ibid.

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sibling, the brief glimpse into the family property reveals a complex patchwork of independent and shared ownership.

As we have seen, there is a striking tendency for both uncles and their nephews to serve as clerics and priests or to have had some association with larger ecclesiastical institutions: around a third of priests with an uncle or nephew shared their career paths. If we restrict our view to priests with only a single nephew in the written record, this tendency is even more pronounced: of the twenty-one cases from Francia, 13/21 (61 per cent) record both an uncle and nephew in the church. Some of these strongly suggest that the priesthood of a local church had passed, or was intended to pass, from uncle to nephew, for instance, the now familiar case of the priest Dato of Lézat. When Dato gave up possession of a third of the church at *Obarcium*, the charter's author wrote that Dato had 'possessed and held' the church just as his uncle Anerius had (*quantum Anerius, avunculus meus, habuit et tenuit*). Although the document's author does not label Anerius as a priest in this text, an earlier charter includes an Anerius who held part of the church at *Obarcium* around the year 1000 and was therefore likely Dato's uncle.[116] The pairing of *habuit* and *tenuit* may thus allude to what is often left unsaid in such documents, that is, the pair fulfilled their office as priests at that particular church. Other cases demonstrate possession moving from uncle to nephew, though it is unclear where either served as priests: the priest Peter, nephew of the priest Richard de Crusatis, donated property he had inherited from his uncle to Saint-Barnard de Romans next to (*juxta*) a church dedicated to St. Alban.[117]

Some documents record the inheritance of churches by nephews from their uncles, but generally, this transmission appears in the written record only when the church was removed from the family's holdings and transferred into the hands of a larger church. As with other aspects of family donations, this is particularly evident at Lézat. In the late tenth century, the priest Gaston made a donation for his soul and those of his father, mother and uncle Saiula *presbiter*, 'who gave this church to me and to my brothers and my parents'.[118] Around the same time that Dato relinquished possession of *Obarcium*, Bergonius *presbyter* and his nephews Sancius, Arsias Auriolus, Fortus and Garsias *presbyter* gave their church in

[116] Lézat, no. 371. This case is discussed from a different perspective in Chapter 1, pp. 40–2.
[117] Saint-Barnard de Romans, no. 39/258.
[118] Lézat, no. 371: 'Qui mihi dedit ecclesiam ipsam et fratres meos et parentum meorum'. Cf., e.g., the churches in Brittany in the ninth century, usually served by groups of clergy: Davies, *Small Worlds*, p. 100; W. Davies, 'Priests and Rural Communities in East Brittany in the Ninth Century', *Études celtiques* 20 (1983), pp. 177–97, at p. 190.

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Monvila (probably Saint-Martin-le-Vieil) to Sainte-Foy Conques.[119] No usufruct was allocated for any of the nephews, and so we are left to wonder whether Bergonius' priestly nephew Garsias served at the church that was now out of the hands of the family or at a church elsewhere. We might even wonder whether Garsias had entered (or hoped to enter) a cathedral community or monastery.

If so, he would be in good company, since there are a number of pairs of uncles and nephews attested in the historical record in which the nephew had joined a larger ecclesiastical institution, with no evidence that in doing so they followed in the footsteps of their uncle. We argue that these individuals should not be dismissed from a survey of local priests because of these institutional connections; rather, they are central to our understanding of how uncles and nephews interacted, a window into how social mobility might occur in the families of priests serving at churches in the countryside or towns. It is important to note that in such cases there is no evidence that the priestly uncle in question served anywhere other than a church: they are not given any titles that would imply participation in cathedral communities or similar, nor do they witness grants repeatedly, an action that might suggest residence or regular participation in the life of a monastery or cathedral.

Some examples illustrate this kind of family dynamic. In ca. 971, Rotbald, described as a deacon (*levita*) of Saint-Barnard de Romans, made a donation to that place for his own soul, as well as for the souls of his parents and for his uncle, Islenus the priest.[120] As the lengthy surviving witness list does not include Islenus, he may have been resident elsewhere or perhaps had died; in any case, he does not appear to have ever been a member of the cathedral chapter, unlike his nephew. Between 943 and 993, the priest Durannus and his nephew Bertard the deacon received precarial land from Cluny,[121] while another text from Cluny records two men named Eychard, one a priest and the other a subdeacon, made a donation for the soul of their uncle, the priest Ragenerius. In 995, the *clericus* Rodulf made a donation to Saint-Cyr en Nevers for the souls of his uncle Ingelon the priest and a relative named Goffrid, also a priest.[122] Thirty years later (in 1029), we almost certainly find the same Rodulf and his relative Goffrid, now elevated to 'dean and treasurer/secretary'

[119] Desjardins, *Conques en Rouergue*, no. 402, location identified at p. cii. The document cannot be more securely dated than between 1031x1065.
[120] Saint-Barnard de Romans, no. 166/177. [121] Cluny, no. 652, dated to 943x993.
[122] Saint-Cyr en Nevers, no. 63.

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(*decan[us] sive secretari[us]*) and key holder (*claviger*) of Saint-Cyr, respectively, suggesting advancement by the members of the younger generation.[123] As with Islenus, there is no indication that Rodulf's uncle Ingelon had ever been anything other than a local priest.

Several priests had an uncle who had entered a monastery, such as the monk Fulcaud and his nephew John the priest, who witnessed a grant at Saint-Étienne de Baigne, or at Noyers, where we learn that one entrant to the monastery, Hubert, had a priestly nephew named Ademar.[124] It is not possible to state whether these men had been priests before taking monastic orders, but their actions appear similar to a number of priests found in charters from the Iberian peninsula who divested themselves of their churches at the same time as they gave themselves body and soul to the monastery in question and were perhaps therefore joining the community of monks.[125]

How might we interpret the evidence for priests, their uncles and nephews? As Julia Barrow has shown in a broader context, there is clear evidence for chains of learning or inheritance that passed from uncles to nephews amongst the clergy, and the situation is no different for local priests. Although uncles or nephews are more rarely mentioned than parents, siblings or even children, there is far better evidence for continuity of career than survives for brothers or fathers and sons. This is not all we can say, however, since the uncle–nephew dynamic destabilises the notion of a 'local priest' as someone by the later eleventh century isolated both socially from their family and politically from the dealings of larger ecclesiastical centres. However, these families were structured, and we must be careful not to assume a 'glass ceiling' for local priests; as we have seen, the same group may have had links both to a family-owned church (or one which they had served for several generations) and a larger institution, perhaps even moving from one to the other in their lifetimes, or have lived in different villages of the same region.[126]

[123] Ibid., no. 59.

[124] C. Chevalier (ed.), 'Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Noyers, d'après la copie de D. Fonteneau du manuscrit original de D. Nicolas Prévost', *Mémoires de la Société archéologique de Touraine* 22 (1872), no. 113. The document is dated to 1085.

[125] Davies, *Acts of Giving*, p. 53, suggests this interpretation but is uncertain; cf. also her *Small Worlds*, p. 191 on priests' retirement to monasteries in ninth-century Redon. For an example from Fleury of 'quidam Aymo officio clericus, noster effectus monachus', who may have acted as a local priest before becoming a monk in the early eleventh century, see *Miracula sancti Benedicti*, Davril, pp. 326–30.

[126] See the case of the priest John in Chapter 1, pp. 38–40.

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3.4 Priests, Families and Church Ownership

The inheritance of priestly offices and familial churches between uncles and nephews leads us naturally to the issue of where these families were located and what we can say about their relationship to local churches. It is often very difficult to connect priests to a particular church, and therefore to a particular village or area, even before we think about the question of whether they or their family possessed the church. In the corpus of charters assembled for this study, we can connect a priest and a local church in two key contexts. The first is if a priest is said to be from a particular church or location and thus potentially was the priest ordained to serve the church in that location. This kind of reference becomes more and more common in the later eleventh century and grows in frequency, particularly in witness lists: unfortunately, such references do not give us an insight into ownership or service, even as they allow us to tie more priests to specific localities. Second, and more clearly, sometimes a church is revealed to be owned by a specific priest and/or their family by its transfer or, conversely, is revealed to be served by a particular priest but sold or given away by others to whom he was not (at least explicitly) related.

We have found twenty-five records that describe the transfer of churches, parts of churches or the income attached to them from or to priestly families dating to the period before 1050. Around forty records survive for the subsequent fifty years (1050–1100). This relatively small number of family-owned churches being given by the hands of priests agrees with the scholarly consensus that – when compared with Iberia or northern Italy – ownership of churches in the West Frankish kingdom was less common, or perhaps that they let go of these churches more rarely.[127] Although grants of churches are few and far between in the written record for the families of local priests, then, they receive no special treatment in the hands of scribes: there is no distinction between the manner in which such grants were framed and those that included less sacred ground (as Michel Aubrun puts it in his somewhat pessimistic consideration of rural priests: 'records were made of many donations of churches to abbeys and chapters: they were presented as if they were estates or mills').[128] The churches of our charters swim into view as

[127] Hamilton, *Church and People*, p. 41.

[128] Aubrun, 'Le clergé rural', pp. 15–27, para. 18 (online edition): 'Dans une première période qu'il est difficile de limiter, on enregistre de nombreuses donations d'églises aux abbayes et aux chapitres: elles sont offertes comme s'il s'agissait de domaines ou de moulins, parfois en même temps qu'eux'.

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rights, incomes and privileges, whether kept whole or divided, with no reference to the pastoral care provided within them.[129] Nor were priests treated or described any differently when they donated churches than lay individuals or those in ecclesiastical communities, suggesting that though it was unusual for local priests to donate churches to larger institutions, they occupied a similar role in the property market to their neighbours otherwise. Very rarely the impulses that lay behind the alienation of a church bob to the surface, as when Robert, priest of Mortemart, donated his church and property to Saint-Stephen's Limoges before he departed on pilgrimage to Spain between 1052 and 1060; the charter that records the grant states explicitly that he did so as an act of penance for an unspecified sin.[130] Yet the evidence is so scant that it is hard to draw conclusions about patterns of inheritance based on these isolated examples, particularly before 1050.

Looking south, to Christian Iberia, provides an instructive point of comparison. As Wendy Davies has shown, in charter evidence for this region, most property was shared between family members, with texts revealing patterns of transfer and inheritance amongst the kin group. This extended to churches and small monasteries, which could be split, reassembled and redivided between family members so that each could dispose of their portion freely. Sharing and splitting churches in this way, Davies argues, allowed largesse while preserving family interests in such properties, in contrast to regions where the preservation of an estate as a whole item and the donation of usufruct over property created a rapidly burgeoning dependence on larger ecclesiastical institutions. No wonder, then, that at Cluny, as Barbara Rosenwein has noted, we see landowners making modest donations of alms and portions of property to secure the rights and status of their heirs.[131]

The clustering of cases in particular archives and cartularies enhances the picture and suggests that regional practices had significant impact on the transfer of churches. In particular, the dominance of records within the archive of Lézat is significant: located very near the border of what is now Spain, in this region shared ownership of churches was quite common, and a number of churches had more than one priest in this period, who could each dispose of their own portion as they chose (if they owned it). This

[129] Ibid. [130] Saint-Étienne de Limoges, no. 60.

[131] Davies, *Acts of Giving*, esp. pp. 65–87; Rosenwein, B. H., To *Be the Neighbor of St. Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 78–143.

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area is also well evidenced for the construction of churches by landholding families, some of which included priests, such as the priest Sancius Bernard and his mother Rangardis who gave allodial land, rents and portable goods to Lézat for the construction of a church.[132]

We find isolated cases outside this area, too, though it can be difficult to discern whether the priests were the local sort or part of larger communities, as, for instance, when the priest John assisted the canons of Saint-Julien's Brioude in building a church on their land (*fundus*) in 906, of which he was the first rector. Eighteen years later, John built a second church for the canons in a different location, where he was also the first rector and was followed in the post by his nephew.[133]

As with other familial relationships, evidence for ownership (or non-ownership) is heavily skewed towards the later eleventh century, for which we are better furnished, when more and more lay owners were encouraged to give up their churches in return for confraternity with monasteries in line with reforming efforts. These changes sometimes allow us to piece together documents to reveal that priests did *not* own a church, or else establish how they had come to possess parts of a particular church. A short and oblique case occurred in the 1070s, when the monks of Saint-Vincent du Mans recorded their acquisition of a church at *Mosteriolo*.[134] The document states that Hubert, son of the priest Gausbert, had sold half of the church to the monks; after his death, another part was sold to them by his wife Odoline and their children, though they retained usufruct over this part for the lifetimes of Odoline's mother and brother-in-law, a clause that suggests the church may have been originally owned by Odoline's family rather than an inheritance from Hubert's priestly father. The greater importance of her side of the family is perhaps reflected in their child being referred to as *filius de Odolina* in later charters.[135]

Other cases are clearer: between 1075 and 1080, Arnald Ermefredi, his unnamed wife and her brother Iterius the priest donated three-quarters of their lands near the church of St. Lawrence in *Novo Vico* (Neuvicq) for their souls and those of their parents.[136] Unusually, we can tie the priest

[132] Lézat, no. 1111.

[133] *Brioude: Cartulaire de Saint-Julien de Brioude,* H. Doniol (ed.) (Paris: Thibaud, 1863), no. 330.

[134] R. Charles and M. d'Elbenne (eds.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Vincent du Mans, 572–1188* 1 (Le Mans: A. de Saint-Denis, 1886–1913), no. 396: 'Hujus ergo ecclesie medietatem vendidit idem Hubertus in vita sua, et post mortem ejus, vendiderunt aliam partem uxor illius, nomine Odolina, et infantes ipsius; et acceperunt a monachis xv s. Hoc autem tali ratione, ut monachi habeant semper illam partem quam emerunt ab Huberto, et aliam tenebunt Adeladis, mater Odoline uxoris Huberti, et Robertus filius Adeladis in vita sua'.

[135] Saint-Vincent du Mans, nos. 422 and 425.

[136] Saint-Étienne de Baigne, no. 188.

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Iterius to this locality: in another charter found in the cartulary and dated to 1076, Iterius, *presbyter de Novo Vico*, witnessed a transaction.[137] However, Iterius and his family do not seem to have owned the church, since in ca. 1066, a woman named Nonia and her sons had donated it to Saint-Étienne de Baigne, and while it cannot be ruled out that Nonia and Iterius were related, there is no indication of any connection between the individuals in the documents.[138] The donation Iterius made with his sister and brother-in-law might suggest his status as the priest of Neuvicq predated the transfer of the church into the hands of the bishop. Interpreted this way, the trio used almost all of their familial land around the church in Neuvicq to shore up their position in the local community and bolster their relationship with its new owners.

In showing generosity to their nearest major ecclesiastical institution, priests and their families who did not own churches might have hoped to ensure chosen relatives could take over a local church from an uncle, father or other family member when the moment came, securing for themselves as best they could an intra-generational claim on the office of a particular church.

3.5 Conclusion

If we view the medieval cartulary as a mosaic, with the holistic impression as important as individual documents, we might do the same for representations of the priest and his family. Each expressed form of kinship in the charter evidence shows us something different, shaped by the unique circumstances that led to each transaction and the personal stories we can uncover. When we look at the material as a corpus, interrogating particular relationships allows us to see archival preferences and regional practices and explore how priests' different familial relationships were represented on the page.

The agencies who drafted documents in this period, described by one scholar of charters from modern-day Catalonia as operating in a 'theatre of experimentation', with greater freedom in the words they chose, their lexicography, grammar and style,[139] worked with considerable flexibility

[137] Saint-Étienne de Baigne, no. 197. [138] Saint-Étienne de Baigne, no. 193.

[139] An idea borrowed from M. Zimmermann, 'Vie et mort d'un formulaire: l'écriture des actes catalans (X^{e}–XII^{e} siècle)' in M. Zimmermann (ed.), *Auctor et auctoritas: invention et conformisme dans l'écriture médiévale, actes du colloque de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (14–16 juin 1999)*, Mémoires et documents de l'École des Chartes 59 (Paris: École des chartes, 2001), pp. 337–58, at p. 337.

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in how they identified their protagonists' position in the church and their familial relationships. Nevertheless, the type of grant and the role each family member took within the transaction affected what information made it into the written record. In a number of cases, priests dominated records of the sale or grant, acting as the voice of their family. But to be a priest did not automatically accord prominence within their family, despite the survival of the vast majority of our records in the archives of major ecclesiastical institutions, whose authors and later compilers may have been more interested in priests (or accorded them greater status) than in their lay relatives.

Taking into account regional tendencies and changes in the volume and nature of the documents produced, the evidence shows that local priests who interacted with their families in the property market were firmly enmeshed in kinship networks throughout the two centuries examined in this chapter. Historiographically, the overwhelming focus has been on priests and their wives, as part of debates about the imposition of full clerical celibacy from the late eleventh century.

These relationships are sometimes visible in the charters, though more seldom than one might imagine. This, and the moderate uptick in reference to priests' wives from the late eleventh century, could be an effect of the documentation, as discussed already.[140] Yet outside of the single case discussed above from Lézat, in which a formula referred to children who may be born to the priest,[141] there is no direct evidence that priests breached the canonical rules that applied to them at the time, according to which priests could be married men and fathers, provided that they ceased a sexual relationship and co-habitation with their spouse on their ordination. The limited visibility of priests' companions and, in contrast, the notable visibility of priests' sons (and occasionally daughters) suggests that despite growing concern over the status of priests' children and the 'purity' of the priestly status itself in contemporary debate, this did not impact the way most scribes and draftsmen recorded land transactions involving these families.

When compared with the dynamic change in the economic circumstances outlined in Chapter 2, it is striking that priests' most visible kinship relationships – with their parents and siblings, with their children, or with uncles and nephews – did not discernibly alter in character or importance

[140] See Freestone, 'Evidence of the Ordinary', for examination of eleventh- and twelfth-century English records for clerics with wives and children, pp. 473–567.

[141] See Lézat no. 974, discussed at p. 108, n. 65.

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over time, once we take account of the changing nature of how and why such transactions were recorded and preserved. In other words, there is no discernible shift in how priests related to their families over the tenth century that is visible from the documentary record. In a changing world, kinship relations remained relatively stable. That said, the bonds between priests and their families, reflected and transmitted to us in diverse records emanating from equally diverse contexts, were not static from the perspective of the priest himself, since they changed during his lifetime. As they grew older, we can see that some priests moved from co-operation and interaction with parents to managing estates and rights with their siblings, and from these horizontal bonds to questions of inheritance and lineage.

Moreover, these kinship ties, stable though they were in themselves, could act as vectors for social mobility for the individuals concerned. We have seen how mothers relied on their priestly sons as gateways to connections with large ecclesiastical institutions and how priests could be connected to cathedral chapters and powerful monasteries through their nephews. Kinship networks were a key resource for everyone in tenth- and eleventh-century Europe, and they did not necessarily cement people in a locality. This is an important point for local priests. Their embedding in kinship, viewed chiefly through marriage, can be read as showing them as locked into a local world, cut off from the bishops at the diocesan centre. This is a view with some support in the contemporary and near-contemporary evidence (such as Bishop Rather of Verona's tenth-century tirades against the married cathedral canons of Verona, whose wives he saw as obstructions to his reforming designs).[142] Yet when we expand our view of local priests' kinship ties beyond their marriages, we see how these networks tended to broaden their horizons rather than narrow them, and by no means did so at the expense of their ties to the institutional church; often, indeed, to the contrary. Local priests were always figures with one foot in their locality and another in the overarching ecclesiastical apparatus; their kinship networks seem to have reflected this.

[142] West, 'Since a Priest or Deacon Cannot Have a Lawful Wife'.

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