The Lady of the Marshes: Place, Identity, and Coudrette's Mélusine in Late-Medieval Poitou

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In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, much of Europe was in a state of turmoil. The plague of 1348 killed at least one third of the population; peasants revolted in France, England, and Flanders, and the Great Schism undermined religious stability — with one pope in Rome and another in Avignon from 1378 to 1415. 1 Meanwhile, the French monarchy was having difficulty producing male heirs for the first time since Hugh Capet (c. 940-996). 2 In 1316, both Louis X and his infant son died, leaving only a four-year-old daughter, Joan, to succeed. 3 Only 12 years later, Charles IV died childless, ending the senior branch of the Capetian line. His closest male relative was King Edward III of England, the son of Charles’ sister, Isabella, creating a pretext for the Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453), which would ravage much of the countryside of Western France for the next 116 years. 4


3 Joan’s right to France was usurped by her uncle, but she became queen of Navarre. See Andrew W. Lewis, Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 189.

4 Christopher Allmand, The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300-1450 (Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1988), 10, suggests that it is likely, however, that Edward was not interested in ruling France, but simply wanted to retain the traditional English holdings in France without doing homage to the French king. Many authors have written about the Hundred Years War. A good primary source is Jean Froissart’s Chronicles. Other secondary sources discussing the war as a whole include Anne Curry, The
In response to this climate filled with disorder and death, there arose in France — according to Colette Beaune — a feeling of nationhood and “amour du pays” (love of country), and a corresponding national mythology to fill the vacuum of powerful ideologies, and to create a sense of stability. In particular, the French “nationalists” situated themselves as the most faithful kingdom within Latin Christendom, used symbols to represent the idea of France, such as the three lilies, the winged deer, and the Tree in the Garden of Paradise (representing French territory), and studied their origins in the laws of the Salian Franks.

It was within this early-fifteenth-century context of identity-formation and the creation of national mythology and symbolism that the poetic romance, *Mélusine or Le Roman de Parthenay*, was written by Coudrette for Guillaume l’Archevêque, lord of Parthenay. L’Archevêque traced his ancestry to the Lusignans, an aristocratic family with landholdings in western Poitou, but whose cadet branches ruled in such far-ranging places as Cyprus, Jerusalem, and Armenia. This genealogical romance purports to be a historical account and describes the founding of the Lusignan family by the titular character, Mélusine, a watery, matriarchal serpent-fairy who builds many towns and castles in the region.

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5 The use of the term “nation” is, of course, somewhat anachronistic, talk would be rather of “France” and of “country” (*pays*). For a discussion of terminology, see Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, 4-5.


9 Genealogical narratives are histories (true or fictional) that are structured around the lineage of a particular family; they became a common genre of historiography in France at about the time that agnatic succession became the norm, and represented a consciousness of the idea of one’s lineage and the importance of lineage in the creation and maintenance of power. See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative,” *History and Theory* 22, No. 1 (1983): 43-53. On the characterization of Mélusine as a genealogical
Scholars of literature have been the most prolific researchers of the Mélusine romance. They have tended to focus on the earlier prose version of the tale by Jean d’Arras (1393), and on comparative analysis between Mélusine and other analogues in literature, religion, and mythology. When viewed in its wider social context of late-medieval France and the Hundred Years’ War, Mélusine has been interpreted as a celebratory heritage of the Lusignans, constructed in order to increase the power and prestige of their l’Archevêque descendants.

While not discounting this important work, my paper will expand the line of inquiry to show that Mélusine’s social function was broader. More than propaganda speaking to the powerful, male family, it is the basic premise of my thesis that Mélusine was a tale of identity, place, and the foundational role of women in the creation of dynastic, land-based legacies. Importantly, however, I argue that Mélusine represented a metaphor for the particular physical landscape of the Poitevin marshland through her repeated association with water and the imposition of man-made order upon the land. Moreover, parallels between Coudrette’s
characterization of Mélusine with certain local historical women suggest the author’s intentional association of the fairy with these women. As such, Mélusine, as a strong female matriarch, embodied not only the history, but most particularly the physical landscape of the Vendée region of Poitou, in western France, with its predominance of marshy wetlands. This argument is supported primarily through an analysis of the visual imagery of two documents, emphasizing theoretical models arising from cultural geography, most particularly that of “landscape” and “place.”

Coudrette was commissioned to write the poetic romance in 1400, shortly before the death of his patron, Guillaume l’Archevêque; the work was completed around 1401 for the patron’s son and heir, Jean l’Archevêque. It is generally agreed that Coudrette’s poem was based on a prose version of the tale written by Jean d’Arras in 1393 for l’Archevêque’s feudal overlord, Jean de France, Duke of Berry. Both seem to have been loosely inspired by the popular Poitevin legend of “Mère Lusine,” the leader of a roving band of fairies, responsible for building the Roman edifices that dotted the countryside.

The manuscripts of Coudrette’s romance that survive today (twenty copies of the poetic version and fifteen of the prose) are known to have circulated widely in the French and Flemish courts. The legend became quite popular, and both the prose and poetic versions were

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15 Colwell, “Patronage of the Poetic Mélusine,” 216.
translated into English, German, and Spanish. It is likely — particularly in consideration of the practice of oral readings at court events in late-medieval France — that the popularity of Mélusine would have facilitated a “trickling down” of these official versions of the story to the common people of the region, making Mélusine an important and enduring figure in the popular culture of the Vendée. Indeed, as Tania Colwell notes, the narratives in both of Coudrette’s and Jean d’Arras’ versions of the romance were meant to act as “expressions of social memory,” which “sought to ‘impose their consciousness of [a] social reality’ upon contemporary audiences.” In fact, the popular, oral version may continue to have some importance in the common images of Mélusine still seen throughout the Vendée.

Today, Mélusine permeates the popular culture of this region. One can drink Mélusine-brand beer and eat Mélusine-style baguettes. There are Rues Mélusine in the towns of Maillezais and Jazeneuil. In Vouvant, kitschy paintings of the fairy and her sons decorate the “Tour Mélusine,” the ruins of a Lusignan castle guarding the banks of the River Mère, and visitors of the tower can lunch at Café Mélusine nearby. Images of serpents, sirens, and hybrid creatures, which would arguably be associated with Mélusine by viewers familiar with the story, abound on the Romanesque churches of the region, such as a the serpent-carved corbels at Saint-Martin in Esnandes, the Siren Capital at Saint-Pierre in Parthenay, and the winged, crowned, female

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17 On the oral reading of stories at courtly events, see Joyce Coleman, “Reading the Evidence in Text and Image: How History was Read in Late Medieval France,” in Imagining the Past in France: History in Manuscript Painting, 1250-1500, ed. Elizabeth Morrison and Anne D. Hedeman (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 53-68.

18 Colwell, “Reading Mélieusine,” 133; Spiegel “Genealogy,” 47, quoted in Colwell, “Reading Mélieusine,” 133.
sphinxes on a capital at the parish church at Saint-Martin-des-Fontaines. Additionally, a nineteenth-century image of the fairy can be found in the Angevin castle in Niort, which the romance gives her credit for building. Similarly, a large, broken sculpture depicting her son, Geoffroy le Grand Dent, as a giant lies on the grounds of Maillezais Abbey. Throughout this region of Poitou, the sight of Mélusine and the sound of her name have become part of the milieu of daily life.

Of the twenty surviving manuscripts of Coudrette’s work, only two French manuscripts are illustrated: MS français 12575 and MS français 24383. Created in the fifteenth century, both are now held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. These will be the focus of my analysis. It is possible that MS français 12575 was owned by Philippe de Clèves (1459-1528) at some point after its creation, based on the coat of arms painted below the table of contents, or, less likely, his aunt, Marie de Clèves, and her husband, Charles d’Orléans. Although many members of the French nobility are known to have owned copies of Mélusine, the exact details of the patronage and provenance of both of these manuscripts is unknown, seemingly making it difficult for literary scholars to determine the meaning and function of the text and imagery of these manuscripts for their original owners in their local contexts. Aspects of the decorative programs of these manuscripts do, however, facilitate a reading of the purposeful use of

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20 For an examination of the iconography of the text and images of Mélusine created in fifteenth century France, England, and Switzerland and their relation to and biblical and mythological narratives, see Françoise Cler-Colombani, La Fée Mélusine au Moyen Age: Images, Mythes et Symboles (Paris: Léopard d’Or, 1991). For an analysis of all extant manuscripts of Coudrette’s text, see Appendix D, in Colwell, Reading Mélusine, 419-447.


22 Morris argues this in “Jean d’Arras and Couldrette,” 38-39. For Colwell’s argument as to why this is unlikely, see “Reading Mélusine,” 479.
Mélusine as a representation of the Poitevin Marais, and suggest that the region and its unique topography held significance for the manuscripts’ patrons.\textsuperscript{23}

MS français 12575 was made in the 1420s or ’30s, and is the earliest surviving copy of Coudrette’s narrative.\textsuperscript{24} The text is written in gothic script with large, decorated capitals beginning certain sections, while the pages are ornamented with delicate, gold and multi-colored vegetal motifs in the margins. Sixteen images, attributed to the Master of Guillebert de Metz, illustrate the narrative. Throughout the manuscript, the illuminator employed geometric patterned backgrounds, and created highly stylized buildings and landscapes. Several of these present a confusing space that is difficult to read, appearing to be indoors and outdoors at the same time, and seeming to convey an ambiguous topography.

MS français 24383 was created in the second half of the fifteenth century using a quite different aesthetic, with little page ornamentation and fewer, but more-naturalistic illustrations. The anonymous artist worked in the modern, Renaissance style, employing linear and atmospheric perspective to create a clear sense of spatial depth, providing more detailed landscapes and architectural spaces.\textsuperscript{25} Although it has fewer total images, Mélusine herself is depicted more often in this manuscript than in the earlier MS fr. 12575. As there are thirty images between these two manuscripts, it is beyond the scope of this project to examine all of them.\textsuperscript{26} The majority of these images — nineteen — do, I will argue, clearly illustrate ideas of place, identity, and the significance of women in shaping the landscape.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{23} An explanation of this terminology (Poitevin Marais, Vendée, etc), can be found further along in this paper.
\textsuperscript{24} Coudrette, \textit{Mélusine}, Ms. français 12575, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
\textsuperscript{25} Coudrette, \textit{Mélusine}, Ms. français 24383, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
\textsuperscript{26} For a full list of images contained in these two manuscripts, see Appendix A.
\textsuperscript{27} Not all of these images, however, will relate directly to the argument that I put forth here regarding Mélusine’ role as a symbol of identity; for a brief discussion of images more tangentially related to my argument, see Appendix B.
Before continuing, a short summary of the tale will be helpful. One day, a young man named Raymondin, went out boar hunting with his father’s cousin, Aymeri, Count of Poitiers. In a tragic accident, he killed his uncle instead of the boar. In a haze of despair, he wanders through the forest, where he comes upon three beautiful ladies at The Fountain of Soif Jolie. One of them, Mélusine, calls out to him. She claims to be “an instrument of God,” as she knows his name, what has transpired, and what he has to do given the tragic situation. She persuades Raymondin to marry her, but as a condition of their marriage, he must agree never to seek her out on Saturdays.

A key to understanding this set of events is the back-story of Mélusine’s own lineage. Mélusine is a fairy princess, the daughter of King Helinas of Albany (Scotland), and the fairy, Prèsine. In a mode similar to that of Raymondin and Mélusine’s marriage, Helinas breaks a promise to his wife, causing Prèsine to flee with her daughters to Avalon. Mélusine and her sisters decide to punish their father for his transgression by locking him in a mountain, for which action Présine, in turn, punishes each of her daughters with a curse. Mélusine’s curse stipulates that she will become a serpent on Saturdays, and that in order for her to be able to live as a mortal on the other six days, her husband must not discover her serpent form or tell anyone else of it.

28 Coudrette, A Bilingual Edition, lines 262-425; all English and Middle French quotations in this paper come from this edition.
29 Literally, “pretty thirst,” this could also be translated as “pretty desire;” Coudrette A Bilingual Edition, 427-499. I was, unfortunately, unable to visit Lusignan while in France, so I am unsure whether there is a spring or fountain located there, but springs are quite common in the region, as will be discussed further below.
32 Geoffroy discovers his mother’s lineage and curse in an inscription written by Prèsine within the giant-guarded tomb of Helinas in Northumberland (Coudrette, A Bilingual Edition, 4910 – 5043)
Living within the parameters of this curse, and locking herself in her room on Saturdays to avoid Raymondin, Mélusine bears ten sons: Urien, Eudes, Guion, Antoine, Renaud, Geoffroy le Grand Dent, Fromont, Horrible, Thierry, and finally, Raymonnet. All but Thierry, from whom Guillaume l’Archevêque, the patron of the text, claimed to descend, and Raymonnet, the youngest, have some sort of physical deformity, suggesting their mother’s hybrid lineage. Significantly, Thierry is named the heir of castle Lusignan and the local, Poitevin territory, according to Mélusine’s instructions, despite being the second-youngest son. As a baby for much of the story, he is not a major figure in the narrative. There is no hint in the text as to why her youngest sons lack the deformities of their siblings, but it could suggest the patron’s interest in descending from a “normal” human as well as a fairy.

Several of these sons become knights and perform great feats of chivalry in foreign lands, with the exception of Fromont, who becomes a monk at the important, local abbey of Maillezais. Unfortunately, his brother, Geoffroy le Grand Dent, believes that the monks of Maillezais must have bewitched Fromont to make him want to join the monastery. In a fit of terrible anger, Geoffroy burns down Maillezais with all of the monks inside, including his brother, though he immediately repents his horrible crime.

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34 As this paper is focused on the Poitevin aspects of the tale and its illuminations, most of the stories of Mélusine’s sons will not be examined here; however, certain scenes from these tales which relate to the expansion of empire are discussed in Appendix A.

35 Maillezais Abbey was founded in Western France in the tenth century by Emma, Countess of Blois (950-1005), and her husband, William IV, Duke of Aquitaine (937-994); the only surviving document of its foundation is the chronicle written by Peter of Maillezais in 1067 (Petrus Malleacensis, De antiquitate et commutatione in melius Malleacensis insulae et translatione corporis sancti Rogomeri in Patrologia Latina, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 146, columns 1247-1272C). For an introduction to the monastery and its history, see the proceedings of the 2002 multidisciplinary colloquium held in Poitiers, Cécile Treffort & Matthias Tranchant, eds., L’Abbaye de Maillezais: Des moines du marais aux soldats Huguenots (Rennes, 2005).

36 Coudrette, A Bilingual Edition, 3429-3652. Geoffroy does later redeem himself by rebuilding the monastery, and is later buried there, 3543-3634, 5550-64, 5733-40, 6640-47.
After significant successes, the family’s fortunes change for the worse as a result of the visit of Raymondin’s brother, Bertrand, Count of Forez, to Castle Lusignan. He convinces Raymondin that Mélusine’s Saturday disappearances indicate a lack of fidelity. 37 Thus spurred to spy on her through the keyhole, he discovers Mélusine in the bath with the long tail of a serpent. 38 In “seeking her out on a Saturday,” Raymondin broke his promise to his wife, and set in motion a series of unfortunate events.

Significantly, one of the events that takes place not long after Raymondin’s transgressive discovery is Geoffroy’s murder of his brother, Fromont, and destruction of Maillezais Abbey. When Raymondin learns of his son’s horrible crime, he publicly blames Mélusine’s serpent-nature. Due to the stipulations of the curse that changed her into a serpent, Mélusine is then forced to leave her husband forever, but swears to watch over Castle Lusignan in perpetuity, returning secretly by night to nurse her infant sons, Thierry and Raimonnet. 39

As a genealogical romance, Coudrette’s tale employs medieval notions of time and truth, by situating the present in dialogue with the past. 40 The story traces the family tree of the Lusignans, from Mélusine through multiple generations and seeks to define the family as powerful and violent, but tied to Christian spirituality. 41 As such, the text is deeply concerned with notions of family identity. What is interesting, however, is that the author and illustrators define the identity of the family in terms of the Poitevin marshland, and moreover, define the identity of this marshland by closely intertwining its history, geography, and current rulers with the mystical builder, Mélusine.

37 Coudrette, A Bilingual Edition, 2981-2950
40 Maxwell, Medieval Urbanism, 186.
As mentioned previously, concepts coming out of the discipline of cultural geography will illuminate the ways in which the text and images functioned in tandem within the manuscripts’ historical and geographical context: their place. Place, as I am employing it, is understood as “a distinctive (and bounded) location” that is “created through acts of naming,” as opposed to space, a more general, abstracted area, lacking a name and identity from the perspective of a particular viewer.\(^42\) As Edward Casey argues, places are not just locations; they are made up of people, ideas, and memories.\(^43\) The human element is, therefore, as critical in defining place as its location and topography. “Place” figures prominently in the romance, not only in the genealogical relationships of the family, but, importantly, in how these places are imagined and illustrated. Throughout the text, we see that locations are named and ruled; structures are built and destroyed. The persistent use of place names not only creates a sense of verity in the narrative, it encourages the reader to create a mental “list map,” or “associative diagram” relating the named places, as he or she moves through the text.\(^44\) And although folktales resembling this legend existed in several parts of Europe, details added by the late-


\(^{43}\) Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in *Senses of Place*, Steven Feld & Keith Basso, eds. (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1997), 24-25. See also, Yi Fu Tuan’s writings, particularly, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). For an application of this theory to medieval architecture, literature, urban spaces, and other topics, see Barbara Hanawalt, et al., eds., *Medieval Practices of Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); and Clare A. Lees, and Gillian R. Overing, eds., *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

\(^{44}\) In the famous type of medieval map, the T-O map, the world was divided into sections: Europe, Asia, and Africa. List maps, a subgenre of the T-O map, functioned as sort of associative diagrams, listing places, such as cities, within their respective continents. For more on this, see Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World*, The British Library Studies in Map History, Vol. 1 (London: British Library Board, 1998); and J. B. Harley, and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography, Vol. I: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).
medieval authors and illuminators situate these events within the contexts of Poitou, “emplacing” them in its marshy topography.45

The underlying key to this reading lies in that, in medieval Europe, possession of land bestowed equally both power and identity.46 Scholars of French history have shown that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when a sense of national identity was growing in France,47 parts of Aquitaine and Poitou repeatedly switched hands between the French and English kings as each gained and lost ground in the Hundred Years’ War (1337 – 1453); armies marched back and forth over their fields, altering both the physical and political landscapes.48 The patron of the manuscripts, Guillaume l’Archevêque, lord of Parthenay, was himself wrapped up in this change, fighting at one time as a loyal vassal of Edward, the Black Prince, and later as a loyal vassal of Jean de France, Duke of Berry.49 When the region changed hands via treaty, his allegiance was expected to change as well. As a microcosm of the whole, we can gain from l’Archevêque’s example a sense of the implications resulting from a shifting borders and lack of consistent power relationships, which caused the notions of place and identity in late-medieval Poitou to be

47 For an introduction to the beginnings of a national identity in France, see Elizabeth Morrison & Anne D. Hedeman, “Introduction,” in Imagining the Past in France, 2. For a more detailed analysis, see Beaune, The Birth of an Ideology.
48 Favreau, “De la guerre,” 203-216. Indeed, as Maxwell, Medieval Urbanism, 43-44, shows, Poitou had not maintained steady allegiance for much of its history, as its lords switched allegiance frequently between the Dukes of Aquitaine and Counts of Anjou in the eleventh century, and between the Plantagenets and Capetians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
49 Colwell, “Patronage of the poetic,” 218-220.
confused and in constant a state of flux. I would argue that one of the key issues addressed in the
text and images of *Mélusine* is the notion of defining the Poitevin marshlands and the Poitevins
themselves through reference to the region’s specific geography and history.

The historic county of Poitou, which now makes up part of the administrative region of
Poitou-Charentes, lies along the Atlantic coast of France. It was once a northern county of the
Duchy of Aquitaine, whose dukes were also the Counts of Poitou until the first half of the
thirteenth century, when Poitou became an independent county.\(^50\) The eastern part of the
province — Haut Poitou — is elevated and rocky, and within it lies the capital city of Poitiers.
The land falls off steeply towards Bas Poitou, or the Vendée, where lie many tilled fields, the
forest of Mervent, and most prominently, the Poitevin Marais (or marsh) leading to the rocky
coastline.

In this low country, springs bubble out from the rocks, and many rivers flow through the
region down to the sea. Windmills dot fields crisscrossed by canals, marking that much of the
Vendée was once submerged as part of the ancient Gulf of Picton, whose coasts extended nearly
25 miles inland from the present shore.\(^51\) Before the tenth century, most of western Poitou, where
it was not submerged under the gulf, was a sparsely populated wilderness.\(^52\) Benedictine monks
at Maillezais Abbey played a major role in draining the gulf in the tenth and eleventh centuries,
moving the coastline many miles westward through a complicated system of canals, levees,
locks, and dykes.\(^53\) Cistercian monks (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and Netherlandish

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Maillezais: Des moins du marais aux soldats Huguenots*, ed. Cécile Trefort & Matthias Tranchant (Rennes, France:
Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 381-400; and Mickey Abel, “To Sea and Be Seen: Reconstruction of the
Strategic Building Program at Maillezais Abbey,” *AVISTA Forum Journal* 20, No. 1 (2010): 12. The Abbey of
Maillezais (see map: Figure 7) was once on an island near the coast.
\(^53\) Abel, “To Sea and Be Seen,” 12, 20.
engineers (in the seventeenth century) are also well-known for their work in draining the remaining marshes and moving the coastline further west to its current location, greatly expanding the quantity of arable land. The draining of the gulf and the marshes and the related water infrastructure led to important economic gains for the region, both through the creation of farmland, resulting in increased food production, and in the development of fish ponds, water mills for grinding grain, and the production of salt. Conversely, the remaining marshes were quite valuable in times of conflict (such as the Hundred Years’ War) as they created a natural defensive barrier. Because of this history, the land in lower Poitou is uniquely intermingled with both water and the human activity involved in water’s removal.

Meanwhile, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Dukes of Aquitaine faced significant obstacles to their control of the region in the form of incursions by the Counts of Anjou, insurgency among their vassals, and Norse invasions from the coast. This led to an explosion of building throughout Poitou in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, and a related deforestation of the region, encouraged by the economic development created by the draining of the marsh. Many towns and churches were built within a relatively short period of time. Important strategic fortifications at Lusignan, Niort, and Melle, all of which were attributed to Mélusine by Coudrette, were established before 950, and towns developed around such castles

55 Abel, “To Sea and Be Seen,” 20.
57 Suire, “Les Marais,” 204 also notes the region’s continued “caractère aquatique” due to the pervasive humidity, “muddy furrows,” (my translation), natural ditches, and sinkholes.
59 Maxwell, Medieval Urbanism, 39-40. Roland Sanfaçon, Défrichements, Peuplement et Institutions Seigneuriales en Haut-Poitou du Xe au XIIIe Siècle (Quebec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1967), Appendix VI, indicates that fifty-five towns and villages were established in Haut Poitou alone between the years 988 and 1200.
60 Coudrette, A Bilingual Edition, 1305-1387 (Lusignan), 1439-1440 (Niort), 1394 (Melle).
and around rural monasteries, such as Maillezais and Saint-Maixent (the latter is also attributed to Mélusine), as settlers flocked to the region.\textsuperscript{61} In fact, the clearing of forests and construction of urban spaces came to be intertwined with, as Maxwell puts it, the “expression of personal prestige and rank in the social order” for lesser nobles, such as the lords of Parthenay and Lusignan.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, over the course of about 250 years, the people of Poitou transformed the landscape from a wild, and largely uninhabited region surrounding a large body of water to a relatively urbanized and prosperous place, dotted by many villages and churches, each within, at most, a day’s walk of each other. Mélusine’s magical building campaign, which, significantly, takes place almost entirely within Poitou, and is focused on the wet, western landscape, mimics the relatively rapid civilization of this once-wild land.\textsuperscript{63}

Importantly, the ancient gulf and the navigable rivers that drained into it (namely, the Sèvre Niortaise, and the Vendée) represented significant routes of transportation and trade in the region.\textsuperscript{64} Thus control over the water and people moving along it was key to the rulers of the region for both economic and defensive reasons,\textsuperscript{65} such that political power was defined as much by the control of water as by the control of the land. This is exemplified by the numerous defensive structures located along the major waterways in the region. For example, Lusignan castles at Vouvant and Mervent, attributed to Mélusine in the story, stand above the River

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{61} Maxwell, \textit{Medieval Urbanism}, 39; Coudrette, \textit{A Bilingual Edition}, 1396-1398.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{62} Maxwell, \textit{Medieval Urbanism}, 49.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{63} See Figure 7. Yannis Suire, “Les Marais,” 205, argues that Mélusine is also credited with the actual draining of the gulf. Unfortunately, he does not cite his source, and I have been unable to confirm this in other texts.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{64} Abel, “To Sea and Be Seen,” 12; Labande, “Essor et Déceptions des Temps Féodaux,” in \textit{Histoire du Poitou}, 116.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{65} The importance of control over the water can also be seen at the Angevin castle which guards the Sèvre and several canals in Niort — also attributed to Mélusine (Coudrette, 2830-2832) — and in the defensive relocation of Maillezais Abbey to a point which guarded the entrance to the Sèvre Niortaise and the Autise. See Abel, “To See and Be Seen,” 20; and Mickey Abel, “Emma of Blois as Arbiter of Peace and the Politics of Patronage” in \textit{Reassessing the Roles of Women as Makers of Medieval Art and Architecture}, Vol. II, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 841.}
\end{footnotes}
Vouvant is the highest point in the region, and “Mélusine Tower,” the Lusignan castle, is well situated, standing atop a hill with clear views of the river and the surrounding countryside below. (fig. 1) Similarly, Chateau Mervent (fig. 2) was built at the edge of a cliff, which towers over the Mère and the surrounding forest below. These castles provided the lords of Lusignan with significant power over their domain, overlooking the land and controlling the movement of people on the river ways.

Figure 1 View of the River Mère from “Mélusine Tower.”13th-century Lusignan stronghold in Vouvant. Photo: Owen Wilson Chavez.

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67 The name of the town and the chateau, Mervent (which could signify “sea wind”), is another indication the region’s watery history, and ties rather conveniently to Mélusine, as a watery serpent who flies through the air.
This intermingling of water, land, and power can be read in the text and imagery of these two Mélusine manuscripts. For instance, though Mélusine is described as a serpent, she is associated with water from her first introduction in Coudrette’s version of the tale, when Raymondin comes upon her at a fountain. In his illustration of this scene, the artist of MS fr. 24383 depicted the fairy as a noblewoman, sitting with her two sisters in a wide and mostly-empty landscape. Prominently displayed beside them, life-giving water springs from the face of a cliff into the fountain, spilling out to become a little stream. Such springs are quite common in the Vendée, and can still be found in places such as Saint-Martin-des-Fontaines,

**Figure 2** Castle Mervent: Late 12th or early 13th century Lusignan fortress. Photo: Owen Wilson Chavez.

L’Hermenault, and Nieul-sur-l’Autise. Notably, it is Mélusine who sits closest to both the fountain and the stream, and her dress — the only article of clothing in the picture to be rendered with deep folds — nearly touches it. The wavering pattern of creases in her skirt, bordered in foamy white ermine, mimics the ripples of water, while the golden-brown color of her dress replicates that of the hilly topography of the land, connecting Mélusine to the flowing water and the surrounding landscape of Poitou. Additionally, as Maxwell argues, there may be precedents in the artwork of the region for the depiction of the landscape and its claiming by human effort in

Figure 3 Raymondin Passes the Fountain of Thirst and is Greeted by Mélusine (MS fr. 24383 fol. 5v), Coudrette, Mélusine, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f14.image.r=melusine.
the sculptural decoration of Romanesque Poitevin churches, such as an image of a knight riding into foliage on a tomb slab from Javarzay, now located in the Musée du Donjon at Niort, and the vegetal decoration of Maillezais Abbey.

The visual relationship between Mélusine and water is reinforced in a later illustration where Raymondin spies her in her true form in the bath. (fig. 4) Here she is shown enclosed in

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69 Maxwell, Medieval Urbanism, 200-201.
70 See Laura Lee Brott’s article in this volume, “Reading Between the Lions: A Surviving Capital at Maillezais Abbey.”
a small, blue-gray room, where she bathes in a round, wooden tub. Her curling, green and yellow tail fades to a pale, watery blue before joining with her torso, making it appear almost as if her body were made of the same substance as her bath. Rather than simply being in or near the water, she appears to be a part of it.


Interestingly, this image seems to have been censored by a later owner, who scraped off the paint that illustrated her breasts and navel; in doing so he or she has — deliberately or not — removed the characteristics that make Mélusine a woman and a mother, and indicate her natural birth.
Mélusine’s association with water in the text is so strong that it seems to have inspired the illuminator of MS fr.12575 to depict her with the bifurcated tail of a fish, rather than that of a serpent, in the image of her nightly return to nurse her infant sons. (fig. 5) Here, her tender, maternal gesture is juxtaposed with her otherworldly, siren’s form, emphasizing both aspects of

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 6** Raymondin and Bertrand of Poitiers, Raymondin Defines his Territory, (MS fr. 24383 fol.7). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f17.image.r=melusine.

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her nature. In showing her as half-fish rather than half-serpent, this image links both of these concepts with the water makes up much of the Vendée’s landscape.

Mélusine is also strongly tied to the land, however, particularly to the civilization of the wilderness. For example, in the image of Raymondin’s first encounter with his fairy wife at the fountain, (fig. 3) Françoise Clier-Colombani noted that the emptiness of the landscape suggests that the wilderness is waiting to be tamed by Mélusine.74 Moreover, Coudrette’s text tells us that after this meeting, Raymondin is able to acquire land near the fountain by following her instructions, as seen in Figure 6. On the left side of the image, Raymondin adheres to Mélusine’s plan by asking his cousin, Bertrand, the new Count of Poitiers, to give him the amount of land that he could enclose within strips of the deer-hide to which he gestures with his left hand. On the right, the walls of Poitiers surround the scene of boundary marking, blurring the physical and metaphorical boundaries of the city of Poitiers and the future Lusignan holdings, while visually moving the reader forward to the time when Mélusine builds the stronghold and town of Lusignan.

The space is significantly contracted, as Lusignan is, in reality, nearly seventeen miles away from Poitiers.

Significantly, Mélusine’s help and instruction are instrumental in Raymondin’s acquisition of land and power. Not only does her advice win him the rights to his own land, which, as the youngest son, he would not have been in line to inherit, but it is she who builds their castle and the town of Lusignan, and the many landmarks and strongholds in the region (see fig. 7 and also Table 1 in Appendix C). So while Raymondin claims the power and rulership over

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this domain, it is Mélusine who takes the foundational role in shaping the Poitevin landscape, both metaphorically and topographically.

These images, especially the depiction of the fairies at the fountain, (fig. 3) are illustrative of the connection of the Mélusine legend with the Mère Lusine, or Mère Lugine (consort of the Celtic fire god, Lug) of Poitou’s ancient past, as noted by Louis Charpentier and Matthew Morris. The identification of a magical female with a particular fountain, as described in the narrative and depicted here, reflects the ancient Gaulish tradition of regional, nature goddesses, who often appeared in threes, like the three fairies in the illumination. Such

76 Walter, *Le Serpent et l’Oisea*, 184, also notes this connection to the Celtic triple goddess.
goddesses were often connected with certain rivers or springs and served as “ancestral mothers” for their people. In parts of Germany and Britain, they were often simply called “Mother.” In light of this, the name of the river that flows through the Forest of Mervent, the Mère (or mother) is significant, indicating an arguable connection between the legends from which Mélusine originated and an important place in the Poitevin landscape. Moreover, according to Pronsias MacCana, these Gaulish divinities served to represent a particular place and its sovereignty, as well as the fecundity of its land and people. While the society and religion of fifteenth-century Poitou were vastly different from those of the fifth century, when shrines to pagan goddesses were still worshipped in rural France, the belief in fairies, like Mélusine, which persisted in the late Middle Ages, originates in the mythology of that earlier age. Additionally, the connection of springs and fountains with the spiritual was maintained in Christian belief, as exemplified by the miracle of Clothilde described below. I argue, therefore, that associations of Mélusine, in her various forms, with the notions of the fecundity and sovereignty of the land and, especially, with the flowing water, would have persisted in the minds and oral traditions of its local people.

78 Bitel, Landscape with Two Saints, 27.
79 MacCana, Celtic Mythology, 49-50.
80 Bitel, Landscape with Two Saints, 53.
allowing the fairy to serve as an embodiment of place, much as the goddesses of ancient Gaul once did.

Mélusine also reflects the topography of the Vendée where the intermingling of land and water in a fuzzy borderland between the ocean to the west and the dry land to the east marked this region as “liminal.” Liminal space is a borderland, literally, a threshold, neither here nor there. The liminality of the Poitevin Marais is visualized in a seventeenth-century map of the region created by Claude Masse for Louis XIV, where bright green and yellow represent the fertile land of the drained marshes which lay between the dryer high grounds further inland (in white) and the ocean to the west. The tiny gridlines that cover this land indicate its entwinement with water, as they depict the myriad canals used to drain and irrigate the soil.

Liminal figures are described by Victor Turner as “betwixt-and-between,” they are “both this and that;” they “are often composites or monsters.” Additionally, liminal figures are often separated from their usual place in society, or “structurally invisible” to the group, and may have to undergo “humbling and submission to ordeal.” Mélusine’s spiritual nature is evidenced by her function as a liminal figure: she is neither and both human and beast; she is a magical figure in the physical realm, and she is subjected to punishment through a curse that twice separates her from her family. In constructing her as a liminal figure, the author and illustrators employ Mélusine’s character to tie the Lusignan family to the spiritual realm, raising their prestige and

84 On the accuracy of this map, see Mickey Abel’s, “Defining a New Coastline: G.I.S. Reconstruction of Maillezais Abbey’s Hydraulic Drainage Program and the Coastline it Created” in this volume. For more on Claude Masse, see Yannis Suire, et al., La Côte et les Marais du Bas-Poitou vers 1700: Cartes et Mémoires de Claude Masse, Ingénieur du Roi (La Roche-sur-Yon, France: Centre Vendéen de Recherches Historiques, 2011).
the power of the dynasty.\textsuperscript{87} I would argue, however, that her liminal status also allows her to
stand as a quasi-spiritual symbol of this marshy borderland within Poitou.

Cultural anthropologists have demonstrated that liminality is a key idea for understanding
medieval, Christian spirituality.\textsuperscript{88} As Barbara Newman noted, “enclosure, the marking and
sealing of boundaries, was… a vital symbolic practice in religious life,” making liminality a
“rich metaphor” for medieval religious practice.\textsuperscript{89} In MS fr. 12575, the Master of Guillaume de
Metz depicted Mélusine’s liminality in two images. After she transforms into a dragon, in both
text and image, she is separated from her home, her family, and the human world, and yet
continues to play a part in it. In her dragon form (fig. 8), with a green, long-necked and bat-
winged body, a bestial face, and a long, blue tail, she hovers in a sky of silver-leaf, visually
divided from the physical world of land, home, and family by the dark outlines that delineate
these worldly spaces and through the differences in color and media that convey the
transitionally liminal space separating land and sky.

Similarly, “betwixt and between,” she returns as a siren to nurse her sons (fig. 5), floating
above the floor in a room within the castle that seems transformed into an otherworldly space
due to the confusing overlapping of furniture and columns, and the depiction of inner and outer
walls within the same image. Though she is returned, she does not seem to be entirely in the
rational, physical world, but rather, between the physical and spiritual realms. It is telling that
both artists chose to depict the transformed Mélusine’s nightly visits to nurse her infant sons,

\textsuperscript{87} Morris, “Sacralization,” 64. On sacral kingship and rights to the land in Celtic cultures, from which Poitevin
culture is, in part, derived, see MacCana, Celtic Mythology, 117-121, especially 120, on the marriage of the king to
the goddess who personifies the land. There are also parallels in this need to find a sacred origin in monastic
foundation myths, as described by Amy Remensnyder, Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in

\textsuperscript{88} Barbara Newman, “Liminalities: Literate Women in the Long Twelfth Century,” in European Transformations:
The Long Twelfth Century, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble & John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame

\textsuperscript{89} Newman, “Liminalities,” 355.

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reminding the viewer of her otherworldly, transitional nature, while reinforcing her role as mother, wife and protector of the Lusignans.
Thus, while her liminal status and her connection to land and water tie Mélusine to the physical geography of the Poitevin Marais, these human elements serve an equally important role in defining place according to familial origins. Mélusine exemplifies this aspect of her place through her similarity to important women in the history of the region, namely Saint Clothilde (475–545), wife of Clovis I, the first Christian king of the Franks, Saint Radegund (c. 520–586), a Merovingian queen who founded Saint-Croix, a monastery in Poitiers, and Emma of Blois (950-1105), who, as wife of Duke William IV of Aquitaine, built Maillezais Abbey. The similarities seen between the identity constructions of these four female figures by their contemporary biographers suggest the possibility that Mélusine’s character was inspired in part by or modeled after these historical women. In this sense, it could be argued that Mélusine’s identity was purposefully constructed to reflect the region’s heritage, through its history of female founders. Additionally, the notion of typology (the belief that figures and events in the Old Testament prefigured those in the New) which was popular in the Middle Ages, would have facilitated this reading for contemporary audiences, as it encouraged a mental connection or relationship between people and events that existed in different times and places.  

This is significant because, although Mélusine is understood to be a serpent, Coudrette made great efforts to Christianize and sanctify her through his portrayal of the fairy as a good wife and mother, as a religious patron, and as a pious believer through her long profession of

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faith at her first meeting with Raymondin. In this portrayal, one of the most important traits that Clothilde, Radegund, and Emma have in common with Mélusine is their sanctity, and their related ability to “see” the spiritual meaning in events and places.

When we first encounter Mélusine in the narrative, she must convince both the reader and Raymondin of her goodness. She, therefore, makes the following speech, which appears to be based on the Nicene Creed:

I am, after God, your best support;
You will be blessed with great fortune
If you believe me truly,
And do not in any way doubt
That I am an instrument of God,
And that I believe in his virtues.
I affirm to you that I believe in
The holy Catholic faith,
And know and believe each article
Of the holy Catholic faith
That God was born of the Virgin
Without blemishing her, to save us,
And that for us he endured death,
And on the third day he arose,
And then afterward, ascended into heaven
Where he is a true man and true God,
And sits at the right hand of the Father.
Raymond, now listen, my dear brother;
I believe in all of these fervently.
Without doubting them in any way.  


92 Je suys, apres Dieu, tes confors/ Tu auras du bien assez fors/ Se tu me croies vrayement/ Et ne doubte nullement/
Que de par Dieu je ne soye/ Et que ces vertuz je ne croye/ Jete [proMetz] bien que je croy/ La saincte catholique foy/ Et sçays et croy checun article/ De la sainte foy catholique/ Que Dieu naquit pour nous sauver/ De la Vierge sans l'entamer/ Et que pour nous mort endura/ Et au tiers jour resuscita/ Et puys apres monta es cieulx/ Ou il est
Despite what we later learn about her physiognomy, Coudrette uses this speech to convince the reader that Mélusine is a good Christian and that she has a special connection to God. This makes it clear that her ties to the spiritual realm, as a liminal figure, are ties to the *heavenly* realm, and not to Hell. Later, when Raymondin proceeds to follow Mélusine’s advice, he becomes a successful lord, and, tellingly, remains so only until he breaks his vow; thus illustrating the notion introduced in the beginning that she is trustworthy and a good counselor. This inherent sanctity described in the text is emphasized in the decorative program of MS fr. 24383 through the depiction of Mélusine in prayer. Looking at Figure 9, in the scene to the left, she receives a message stating that five of her sons have achieved high rank: four as kings and dukes of foreign lands, and one — Fromont — as a monk of Maillezais.93 We can see that the Poitevin landscape in the background is no longer as empty as it was when first we met the fairy at the fountain (in Figure 4), but rather, populated with small towns, showing evidence of Mélusine’s civilization of the land through her magical building program. Having received this good news, on the right side of the image, she kneels before an altar to thank Christ, the Virgin, and another saint for her sons’ successes. That the patron or illustrator of this manuscript chose to depict a scene that demonstrates her piety and orthodoxy, rather than a more exciting subject, such as the other battles, weddings, and far-off places depicted in the earlier manuscript,94 and rather than the feasting described in the text,95 emphasizes the social

vray homs et vray Dieulx,/ Et siet a la destre du Pere./ Raymond, or enten, mon cher frere;/ Je les croy toutes ferrrement./ Sans y doubter aucunement (Coudrette, 615-629).
93 Coudrette, *A Bilingual Edition*, 2933-2955. Mélusine and Raymondin received the letter while visiting Vouvant, where the real Lusignans had a castle, which will be discussed further below.
94 See Appendix A for a list of the images contained in the two manuscripts.
95 Coudrette, *A Bilingual Edition*, 2949-2974. Mélusine is not described as kneeling in prayer in the text; she simply states that “For all of this I thank our Lord,” ("J'en regracie nostre Seigneur") and describes her son, Fromont, praying daily for his family’s good fortune, and puts forth her hopes that her other four sons will also gain high stature “[s]hould God and Saint Mary will it thus” (“Dieu le veille et Saincte Marie!”). The narrative then goes on to say that the couple shared their good news and feasted with their friends for 15 days in celebration.
significance of this aspect of her character for the medieval patron, and the viewing audience.96

Additionally, there are some similarities between this depiction of Mélusine kneeling before an altar draped in fabric of red, white, blue, and gold. The same colors border a depiction of Clothilde kneeling in prayer at the tomb of St. Martin in the *Grandes Chroniques de France*

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96 While the specific patrons and audience of this manuscript are not known, Mélusine manuscripts were known to have circulated widely among the French and Flemish nobility, and made their way to England, Germany, and Spain, as described in the text and footnotes above.
possibly suggesting that the artist was familiar with the imagery of this famous manuscript.  
Moreover, the altar is draped in red, white, and blue fabric, and decorated with gold arabesques topped by tiny fleur-de-lis. As the gold fleur-de-lis on a blue field was a long-standing symbol of the French monarchy, this could arguably signify the French character of Mélanusine’s household.

Mélusine’s abilities as a visionary and advisor due to her ties to the heavenly realm seem to mirror her predecessors in that all share a connection to God, and therefore, have certain abilities to know his plan and to provide good counsel. As saints, Clothilde and Radegund are both endowed with these qualities in their hagiographic narratives. The clearest example of this similarity is found in Peter of Mallezais’ depiction of Emma of Blois when describing the discovery of the site where Maillezais Abbey was to be founded. A knight in the hunting party that she and her husband William were leading on the island of Maillezais was struck blind after he saw a wild boar run into an abandoned church. As a woman, Emma is depicted as having special spiritual abilities that allowed her to read this event as a message from God to build an abbey on the site of the old church. Notably, her biographer described her as a “wise woman” who had “intuition” and “managed by God’s mercy to reveal [the sign] to us.” Her visionary

97 *Grandes Chroniques de France* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 2606, fol.23r). There are also similarities between certain images within this manuscript and several Northern Renaissance paintings, suggesting the illuminator’s visual literacy, a subject which warrants research in a subsequent project.  
100 Peter of Maillezais, *De antiquitate* 1 [fol. 247 b], as quoted in Abel, “Emma of Blois,” 836-837.
ability, or “feminine intuition,” allowed her to advise her husband of God’s plan, just as Mélusine does in the later tale.\textsuperscript{101}

In addition to their roles as intercessors, there are specific details in the ways that Clothilde, Radegund, and Emma perform their spirituality in course of their secular lives that are later paralleled in certain aspects of Mélusine’s story. For example, all three women act as good counselors: Clothilde when she, through active and concerted effort, converts her husband, King Clovis, to Christianity and convinces him to build many churches,\textsuperscript{102} Radegund when she acts as a “peace-weaver” on behalf of her husband,\textsuperscript{103} and Emma when she negotiates a peace settlement between her husband and her father and brothers that facilitates the development of the monasteries of Maillezais and Bourgueil.\textsuperscript{104}

Another shared theme between the stories of these women is seen in their marital strife; like Mélusine, these women, barring Clothilde,\textsuperscript{105} also had to separate from their husbands to enhance their spiritual nature. Radegund, Emma, and Mélusine all leave their husbands. Radegund’s marriage was unhappy from the beginning; she was kidnapped by Clothar after the destruction of her family, and was raised in his court to be one of his wives.\textsuperscript{106} After ten years of

\textsuperscript{101} For a discussion on commemoration and the construction of a common past in monastic foundation legends, which are in many ways similar in function to Mélusine, see Remensnyder, \textit{Remembering Kings Past}.


\textsuperscript{104} Abel, “Emma of Blois,” 842-846.

\textsuperscript{105} Unlike Radegund’s and Emma of Blois’ marriages, the description of Clothilde’s marriage in her biography (Anonymous, “The Life of Saint Chrothildis,” 40-50) implies that it was reasonably successful. Whether this reflects reality or is the result of a desire by the author to preserve the reputation of Clovis as the first Christian king of the Franks remains to be said. For a discussion of Clothilde’s agency in her marriage and influence over her husband, see Tibbetts Schulenburg, \textit{Forgetful of Their Sex}, 181-186.

marriage, in which she is said to have slept on the floor, she finally snuck away from her husband, at first to pray in the privy in the middle of the night. 107 This secretive spirituality is seen in Mélusine when she sequesters herself in the bath for her weekly transformation. While Radegund eventually left for good to live a cloistered life, she continued to play an active role in politics, attempting to make peace among the constantly warring Frankish royalty. 108

Following the model of Radegund, Mélusine continues to protect her family members after being permanently transformed and separated from courtly life. 109 Similarly, Emma’s husband, Duke William IV of Aquitaine betrayed his wife when he had an illicit affair with the wife of the Viscount of Thouars, causing her to separate from him, leaving Emma free to continue her worldly patronage work. 110 His penance for this act was his retirement to a monastery. 111 Raymondin’s betrayal and his penance, joining Montserrat Abbey, seem to mirror this pattern. 112

Most revealing in terms of modeling, all three literary women were described as having performed spiritual acts linked to water. When the builders of the monastery of Notre-Dame des Andelys near Rouen asked their queen and founder, Clothilde, for wine, a spring appeared next to the partially-built abbey, providing them with water instead. 113 She is also connected to water through her role in convincing her husband to be baptized. 114 St. Radegund is even more closely tied to the water, to bathing specifically, having performed miracles involving healing baths and

114 For a discussion of Mélusine’s bath imagery as a metaphor for baptism, see Clier-Colombani, La Fée Mélusine au Moyen Age, 160-161.
saving sailors from being shipwrecked.\textsuperscript{115} She is also said to have emulated Christ by bathing the heads and faces of the poor and leprous.\textsuperscript{116} Finally, tying the notions of place and water, Emma of Blois was the only woman on an island surrounded by water when she read the sign from God to build Maillezais Abbey. This spiritual association with water, and particularly with bath imagery, would arguably facilitate a connection in the mind of the medieval reader, viewer, or listener between Mélusine’s tale and these female figures.

Importantly, these traits also link the four women to the foundation of important sites within Aquitaine and Poitou. With her husband, St. Clothilde founded the Church of the Holy Apostles in Paris (later known as St. Genevieve), she also founded many monasteries, particularly St. Peter’s in Tours, with which she became closely associated.\textsuperscript{117} Slightly more conniving, Radegund convinced her estranged husband, Clothar, to fund the building of the monastery where she would live the rest of her life, St. Croix in Poitiers. With this foundation, she was able to shape the “spiritual and emotional” space of the community through her works, such as the acquisition of holy relics.\textsuperscript{118} Likewise, Emma of Blois was described as playing an active, integral role in the foundation of both the powerful abbey of Maillezais in the marshlands of the Vendée and that of Bourgueil in her homeland of the Touraine.\textsuperscript{119} As such, each of these women helped to shape the architectural landscape of this region of Western France, a role taken up by the mythical, fairy builder.

The ideas of dynasty and blood, key in the genealogical romance of \textit{Mélusine}, also play a part in the similarities between these real women and the fictional Mélusine, who founded the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Baudonivia, “Life of Radegund,” 82-84.
\item Baudonivia, “Life of Radegund,” 77-78.
\item See Abel’s article, “Emma of Blois” for a thorough explanation of Emma’s role in the foundation of Maillezais.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Lusignan dynasty (named for her rather than her husband) and who bore a bevy of sons from whom contemporary rulers of the Vendée — both the l’Archevêques of Parthenay and their feudal overlord, Jean de France, duke of Berry — claimed to descend. Many today, as I suspect was the case in the fifteenth century, see Mélusine as the mother of the Vendée, as evidenced by her ubiquity within both tourist and popular culture, and, significantly, in that people from the town of Lusignan call themselves Mélusins and Mélusines. This follows the role of Clothilde, who, as the wife of the first King of the all Franks, is the mother of the French monarchy, described by the Carolingian author of her vita as the mother of Roman Emperors and the Kings of the Franks. It also mimics Emma, whose descendants were the Dukes of Aquitaine for at least five generations.

Among these correlated stories is the inherent problem of family violence. Mélusine’s tale mirrors the family histories in the hagiographies of Saints Radegund and Clothilde, which depict both women as daughters of foreign kings whose fathers were killed violently by family members. Clothilde’s father, king Chilperic of Burgundy, was assassinated by his brother, Gundobad, while Radegund’s father was a Thuringian king who, like Chilperic, was murdered by his brother. Similarly, we have already seen that fratricide was a prominent part of Mélusine’s family story. Likewise, in Clothilde’s hagiography, two of her younger sons (Kings Childebert and Clothar) conspired to kill the sons of her eldest, King Chlodomir, in order to gain

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121 See footnote 19.
122 Commune de Lusignan tourist office brochure, 2.
124 See the genealogical tree of the Dukes of Aquitaine in Abel, “Emma of Blois,” 859.
Chlodomir’s kingdom.\textsuperscript{126} This sort of brutality also appears in Radegund’s story, when her husband, Clothar, burned his son, Chramn, “alive in a cottage with his wife and children after an unsuccessful rebellion,” and had to do penance for his crime.\textsuperscript{127} Additionally, when Emma’s son, William V died in 1030, his third wife, Agnes of Burgundy, married Geoffroy Martel, count of Anjou. Hostilities soon arose in 1033 between Martel and William VI, Emma’s grandson.\textsuperscript{128} William VI was captured by his step-father and imprisoned in several monasteries near Saint-

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{Figure 10} Geoffroy Burns Maillezais, Mélusine is Insulted by Raymondin, (MS fr. 24383 fol. 24v). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f52.image.r=melusine.
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{126} Anonymous, “Saint Chrothildis,” 47.
\textsuperscript{127} McNamara & Halborg, Sainted Women, 62. Additionally, Radegund herself burns a pagan shrine. See Baudonivia, “Life of Radegund,” 87.
\textsuperscript{128} The son of William V and his first wife, Aumode of Gauvedon. Labande, “Temps Féodaux,” 111.
Jouin-de-Marnes, dying in 1038 unable to summon a ransom. \(^{129}\) Coudrette and Jean d’Arras used fratricide and the burning of Maillezais Abbey, pictured in \textbf{Figure 10}, not only to tell the tale of the real Geoffroy le Grand Dent’s raids on the monastery, but also to reference the region’s history of arson and family violence. \(^{130}\)

Two images, one from each of the two illustrated manuscripts, demonstrate this idea. Folio 58 of MS 12575 (\textit{fig. 11}) depicts a man, richly robed in blue and ermine, enthroned before a group of young men or boys. To the right of his throne, a monk enters the elongated doorway of a church. Inscriptions label the enthroned man as Raymon (for Raymondin), and the monk, Fromont, one of his sons. The image seems to depict two related scenes from the legend, almost as if they were happening simultaneously. On the left, Fromont, in laymen’s clothes, takes his father’s hand and begs for permission to become a monk: “I wish to be/ a Monk of Maillezais, I say truly;/ I want to have nothing else/ Ever during my lifetime.”\(^{131}\) Just to the right of Raimondin’s throne, Fromont, having received his parents’ permission, bears the habit and tonsure of a monk as he enters the Abbey of Maillezais (here spelled Mailleres). Through his choice to collapse narrative time and space, the medieval illuminator has placed the family, including the enthroned lord of Lusignan, in close proximity with Maillezais, visually associating the important, Poitevin monastery with Mélusine’s family.

\(^{129}\) Labande, “Temps Féodaux,” 111.
\(^{130}\) I would argue that another important way that the historical women have influenced the text and imagery of the tale is in the growth and development of empire as it is linked to the female sex. In all three cases, Clothilde, Radegund, and Emma can be shown to have been the means to acquiring land. This influence can be seen in MS fr. 12575, as the Master of Guillebert de Metz illustrated three scenes related to the marriages of Mélusine’s sons to foreign heiresses (see Appendix B), growing the Lusignan empire by way of the accumulation of wealth, power, and fecundity provided by bringing these women into the family and the replication of Mélusine’s pattern of patronage. This is particularly clear in the depiction of Guyon’s arrival at Korykos (fol. 39v), where his wife-to-be, Florie, is identified in the \textit{titulus} by the name of her realm rather than by her given name, as Guyon is, conceptually linking the ideas of “woman” and “land” (Appendix B, Figure 16).
\(^{131}\) Coudrette, \textit{A Bilingual Edition}, 2890-2893, “[J]e veil estre moine/ De Maillezais; je vous dy bien;/ Je ne veil avoir aultre rien/ Jamais a nul jour de ma vie.”
Like his predecessor earlier in the century, the anonymous Renaissance artist, in his
depiction of Maillezais’ destruction, (fig. 10), has visually associated the monastery with the
family through proximity. On the left side of the frame, Geoffroy le Grand Dent thrusts a burning

Figure 11  Fromont Enters Maillezais (MS fr.12575, fol. 58). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale,
http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f121.image.r=melusine.
brand through the window of one of the towers protecting the abbey’s walls. Yellow tongues of flame lick up the sides of the fortifications as the monks inside cry out. An interior wall of Castle Lusignan divides the frame. To the right, Mélusine wilts under the insults of her husband. The composition places Raymondin and his fairy wife in close proximity with the abbey, while reminding the viewer of the parents’ innocence in its destruction. At the same time, the walls of the monastery stand strong, despite the flames, arguably also reminding the viewer that Geoffroy, in penance, would rebuild the abbey to be even stronger and better than it had been. Further linking the romance with the history and aristocracy of the region, this episode in the tale seems to be based loosely on the historical figure Geoffroy “le Grand Dent,” lord of Vouvant and Mervent, who raided Maillezais Abbey several times in the mid-thirteenth century.132 Given Maillezais’ geographical and topographical setting on an island in the marshy land of the Gulf of Picton, the image creates a strong connection between the line of Mélusine and the important Poitevin institution, further enmeshing the family into the history of the marshy landscape.

The numerous and distinct similarities between the stories of the parentage, marital relations, and family violence in Mélusine and those in the histories of the local nobility, as described here, would likely facilitate the creation of an association between the fairy and the noblewomen in the minds of the story’s late-medieval audience. Like the authors’ use of local place-names, this association would serve two functions: it would both create a sense of verity in the narrative, through the audience’s familiarity with and (likely) belief in the history and

hagiographies of these women, and emplace Mélusine within Poitou’s history of female founders.

In summary, the images and text of the two surviving French illuminated manuscripts of the poetic Mélusine epic illustrate that the figure of Mélusine, as a female founder with ties to the spiritual realm, as well as to the realities of the physical landscape with its predominance of water, serves to represent a particular place: a country of mountains, forests, rivers, ocean, and drained marshland. Within the manuscripts created by Coudrette, the Master of Guillebert de Metz, and the anonymous fifteenth-century artist, Mélusine embodies both the history and physical landscape of the Vendée. Because land and lineage together endowed their possessor with both power and a particular identity, a figure that personified both the land and the protective, watery marsh, while creating a sense of continuity with the past would serve as an especially effective symbol, and would be particularly relevant to the wider populace who inhabited this geography. As such a figure, Mélusine functioned as a symbol of identity and stability in a war-torn land whose place in the international landscape was in flux. ♾️
Appendix A: List of Images in the Manuscripts

MS français 12575

Fol. 5r: Coudrette Presents the Manuscript to Guillaume l’Archevêque.
Fol. 8r: Aymeri of Poitiers Consulting Astronomical Charts.
Fol. 13r: Death of Aymeri of Poitiers.
Fol. 26v: Marriage of Mélusine and Raymondin.
Fol. 36r: Urien Inherits Cyprus.
Fol. 39v: Guion Disembarks at Korykos.
Fol. 42v: The King of Alsace Surrenders to Antoine at Luxembourg.
Fol. 49r: Antoine and Christienne.
Fol. 53r: The Death of the King of Cracow, leader of the “Saracens” at Prague.
Fol. 58r: Fromont Enters Maillezais.
Fol. 69r: Geoffroy Fights the Giant Guedon in Guerandais.
Fol. 79r: Raymondin Insults Mélusine.
Fol. 86r: Mélusine Leaves Lusignan.
Fol. 89r: Mélusine Nurses Thierry.
Fol. 116v: Armenian King Approaches Château de l’épervier, the castle in Armenia where Mélusine’s sister, Mélior, is locked away.
Fol. 123v: A Knight Approaches Mount Canigou in Aragon, where Mélusine’s other sister, Palestine, guards treasure.

MS français 24383

Fol. 2r: Coudrette Presents the Manuscript to Guillaume l’Archevêque.
Fol. 4r: Raymondin and Aymeri Hunting, Death of Aymeri of Poitiers.
Fol. 5v: Raymondin Passes the Fountain of Thirst and is Greeted by Mélusine.
Fol. 7r: Raymondin and Bertrand of Poitiers, Raimondin Defines his Territory.
Fol. 10r: Marriage of Mélusine and Raymondin.
Fol. 13r: Battle of Famagousta in Cyprus.
Fol. 14r: Marriage of Urien and Hermine.
Fol. 16r: Mélusine Receives News of Fromont, Mélusine Thanks God.
Fol. 19r: Raymondin Discovers Mélusine’s Secret.
Fol. 23r: Raymondin Attacks his Brother, Mélusine Comforts Raymondin.
Fol. 24v: Geoffroy le Grand Dent Burns Maillezais, Raymondin Insults Mélusine.
Fol. 30r: Mélusine Leaves Lusignan, Mélusine Nurses Thierry
Fol. 33v: Geoffroy follows the Giant Grimault into a Mountain in Northumberland.
Fol. 36r: Geoffroy Slays Grimault and Transports his Corpse.
Appendix B: Other Illuminations Depicting Place, Identity and the Role of Women in the Creation & Expansion of Domain within the Manuscripts

While the following images do not relate directly to the discussion of Mélusine’s function within Poitou, they demonstrate the predominance of the themes of place and identity, and the significance of women in shaping the landscape in the decorative programs of MS Fr. 12575 and MS Fr. 24383. Thus, they help to shape the audience’s experience of text and image in ways that facilitate the reading of Mélusine as a symbol of regional identity.

![Figure 12 Marriage of Mélusine and Raymondin (MS fr.12575, fol. 26v). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f58.image.r=melusine,](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f58.image.r=melusine)

The first marriage scene in the text depicts Mélusine and Raymondin’s wedding before a bishop in front of the church door, which ensures the legitimacy of their heirs. This legitimacy was, of course, important for Coudrette’s patron, Guillaume l’Archevêque, who claimed to be descended from Mélusine’s second youngest son, Thierry. The fruit tree just behind the bride suggests her fecundity.

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133 In English law, this is described in the Statutes of Salisbury, c. 1217-1219, #85: marriages “shall be made in public in front of the church, in the presence of a priest who has been called for this purpose.” Conor McCarthy, ed., *Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Middle Ages: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), 75.
In the later depiction of this scene, the wedding has moved inside, showing changes in marriage ceremonies in the later Middle Ages as described George Homans. Like the earlier image of the marriage, this illumination demonstrates the legitimacy of the couple’s heirs. The town in the background that is relatively close to the church could represent Poitiers — reflecting the connection between Poitiers and Lusignan emphasized in the scene of Raymondin marking off his territory (fig. 6) — or the various towns shown could prefigure Mélusine’s building campaign.

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The image of Guion’s arrival at Korykos in Armenia supports the narrative’s conceptual linking of women with land through the artist’s use of *tituli*, or labels. While Guion is identified by his name, which is written next to his feet, his bride-to-be, Florie, whose large, blonde head gazes out above the castle walls across the landscape, is identified by her realm, “Armenie.” Her identity is defined by her geographical place.
In this image, the dying King of Cyprus holds out both of his hands to Mélusine’s eldest son, Urien: with his right hand, he offers the young knight his daughter, Hermine, and with his left, he offers a crown. The artist, again, creates a visual association between a woman and a

135 This may illustrate the primacy of the bride’s father in officiating marriages in earlier medieval marriages as described by Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jane Dunnett, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19. If so, it would arguably reflect the artist’s intent to convey the historical setting to the viewer.
realm. Although Urien’s prowess in battle, saving the besieged city of Famagusta from “Saracens,” placed him in the King’s favor, creating this opportunity, it is specifically through his marriage to Hermine that he is able to acquire his kingdom.

![Figure 16 Marriage of Urien & Hermine (MS fr. 24383, fol. 14). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f31.image.r=melusine.](image-url)

As in the scenes of Mélusine’s marriage, the presence of the bishop and witnesses in this depiction of the marriage of Urien and Hermine emphasize the legitimacy of their marriage rather than the father’s role in passing on his land, privileged by the Master of Guillaume de Metz in the earlier depiction of this scene. Interestingly, the arabesques on Urien’s robe are strikingly similar to those on the altar cloth in the image of Mélusine praying (fig. 6), while Hermine wears the gold fleur-de-lys on blue of the French monarchy, reinforcing the French character of this foreign territory (Cyprus), and thus, the power of both the French nation and the Lusignans who ruled there.
This illustration depicts Mélusine’s fourth son, Antoine, and his bride, Christienne of Luxembourg, standing together on what appears to be a balcony before a field of gold, blue, and red lozenges. He raises his hand in a gesture of speech, or perhaps oath-taking, and both figures gesture towards the blank shields that lay at their feet. It appears that this image was unfinished, as the shields bear neither paint nor evidence of its removal. It is reasonable, however, to assume that the shields would have borne the arms of the Lusignans and the Dukes of Luxembourg, visualizing the joining of the families and their respective lands through the juxtaposition of their heraldry, reemphasizing the importance of marriage, and of women, since Antoine gains the
ducal title of Luxembourg through marrying the heiress, Christienne, in the growth of empire and domain.

![Figure 18](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f15.image.r=melusine)

The presentation scene in this manuscript shows an interest in the patron’s identity. The image glorifies Guillaume l’Archevêque through his depiction in ornate robes painted with expensive lapis blue, and through the creation of the most ornate margins found in the entire
Figure 19 Coudrette Presents the Manuscript to Guillaume l’Archevêque (MS fr. 24383, fol. 2). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f7.image.r=melusine.

manuscript. Additionally, this image shows the Lord of Parthenay’s role in the creation of the text (in lending sources to Coudrette) in the form of the book that he trades with the author in
exchange for the manuscript. In this image, place and identity both come into focus. Parthenay is depicted as a grand city with soaring towers, while Guillaume l’Archevêque is depicted as a noble and a scholar through the artist’s addition of a blue canopy above the patron’s chair and the multiple books lying on the shelf to his right.

![Image of Death of Aymeri of Poitiers](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f31.image.r=melusine)

**Figure 20** *Death of Aymeri of Poitiers*, (MS fr. 12575, fol. 13). Photo: After Bibliothèque Nationale, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10525469d/f31.image.r=melusine.
Place is also visible in the image of Aymeri’s accidental death at the hands of Raymondin. This image features the wild, untamed landscape of Poitou near the future town of Lusignan. The empty forest and wild beast are reminiscent of the boar in the forest on Maillezais Island described by Peter of Maillezais in the story of the abbey’s foundation by Emma of Blois.

![Figure 21](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105258709/f11.image.r=melusine)

The wilderness of the forest is similarly emphasized in this image by the densely drawn trees, and the savage-looking boar running through the forest at the right. The cut trees in the scene to the right arguably prefigure the civilization of this area in the near future through the process of deforestation and building described above.
Though it is not immediately visible, this image deals with notions of identity and genealogy through its depiction of a key event within the text. Here, Geoffroy-le-Grand-Dent slays the giant, Grimault, who has been ravaging the countryside in Northumberland. Significantly, the giant-guarded the tomb of Elinas, Geoffroy’s grandfather. Within the tomb, Geoffroy discovers the story of his mother’s birth and subsequent curse, and therefore, the secret to Mélusine’s identity and lineage.

**Appendix C: Places in Mélusine Legend**

The different uses of place names used throughout the narrative serve multiple functions, reflecting the multivalent nature of the text. While the sites of Mélusine’s building projects help to emplace the major narrative within Poitou, the broad range of places mentioned in the text serve to contextualize the Lusignan’s Poitevin domain, first within France, and — especially through the brothers’ crusading — within the larger Eurasian region. They, therefore, demonstrate the family’s power and vast domain. Additionally, the long list of French wines served at Mélusine and Raymondin’s wedding not only illustrates her magical wealth, but also the social significance of this agricultural product for the fifteenth-century audience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardennes (in Luxembourg)</td>
<td>Antoine’s son builds castles here (2710-2728)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Guy marries the crown princess (1812-1855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Conquered by Antoine’s son (2732)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemia</td>
<td>Brothers free capital from siege, &amp; Renaud marries the crown princess (2168-2680)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>Conquered by Raymondin (2757-2759), Thierry marries here (5531)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Châtelaillon</td>
<td>Ruled by Thierry (5438)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Urien marries the crown princess (1670-1765)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Conquered by Renaud (2696)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forez</td>
<td>Raymondin’s father, then elder brother—who convinces him Mélusine is unfaithful—are counts here (205-234, 2982-); taken by Geoffroy when he kills his uncle (3121-3130, 5278-5367)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famagusta</td>
<td>Besieged capital of Cyprus (1497-1499)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fribourg</td>
<td>Conquered by Antoine’s son (2729-2731)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guérande (in Brittany)</td>
<td>Geoffroy wages war here (2763), then defeats a giant &amp; is made the lord (3219-3412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffa, Port of (Israel)</td>
<td>Conquered by Urien’s son (1793)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Marche</td>
<td>Eudes marries the count’s daughter (1902-1904)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Rochelle</td>
<td>Founded by Mélusine (1412); Ruled by Thierry (5441)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusignan</td>
<td>Castle and town of House Lusignan, built by Mélusine (1305-1387)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Brothers free city from siege, and Antoine marries duchess Chrétienne (1912-2155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathelfelon</td>
<td>Jean de Parthenay-’Archeveque is also lord of Mathelfelon (6801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melle</td>
<td>Town and castle built by Mélusine (1394)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mervent</td>
<td>Built by Mélusine (1395); Ruled by Thierry (5438)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezieres (in Ardennes)</td>
<td>Antoine’s son builds a bridge here (2725-2726)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morea (Principality of Peloponnesus)</td>
<td>Conquered by Urien’s son (1791-1792)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>All kings of Norway descend from Mélusine (6844-6846)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niort</td>
<td>Mélusine builds a castle here (2830-2832).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parthenay</td>
<td>City and castle built by Mélusine (1439-1440).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>Count of Pembroke descends from Mélusine (5819-5822).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pons</td>
<td>Built by Mélusine (1413).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Saint-Cyr-en-]Talmondais</td>
<td>Mélusine “did works” here (1417).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saintes</td>
<td>Mélusine built a bridge here (1415).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Maixent</td>
<td>Tower, town, and abbey built by Mélusine (1396-1398).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Conquered by Urien’s son (1795-1799).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vouvant</td>
<td>Built by Mélusine (1395); Ruled by Thierry (5437).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 2 - Other Important Places in the Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avalon</td>
<td>Mélusine’s mother flees here with her three daughters when their father breaks his oath (4925-4937).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canigou (in Aragon)</td>
<td>Mountain on which Mélusine’s sister guards treasure, “Promised Land” (5015-5031, 6215-6608).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forez</td>
<td>County where Raymondin’s father and (later) elder brother rule (205-242; 2982-2984).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maillezais Abbey</td>
<td>Fromont becomes a monk here (2792-2908), Geoffroy burns it down, then rebuilds it and is buried there (3543-3634, 5550-5564, 5733-5740, 6640-6647).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat Abbey (in Catalonia)</td>
<td>Raymondin becomes a hermit and later is buried here, &amp; Geoffroy endows it (5596-5605, 5755-5759).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>Geoffroy defeats a giant here &amp; discovers the treasure &amp; story of his grandparents (33660-3676 4399-5120).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poitiers</td>
<td>Raymondin’s uncle—who adopts him, and whom he accidentally kills—and cousin are Counts of Poitou (147-423).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Raymondin (5383-5385, 5510) &amp; Geoffroy (5657-5705) make pilgrimage to Rome in Penance &amp; confess to Pope Leo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3 - Other Places Mentioned in the Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany (Scotland)</td>
<td>Home of Mélusine’s father (4762).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alsace</td>
<td>Brothers fight and then befriend king of Alsace (1915-2130).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anjou</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1168).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arras</td>
<td>Fromont could be bishop here (2888).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunis</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1161).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>Brothers travel through this region (2293).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaujeu</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1163).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauvais</td>
<td>Fromont could be bishop here (2888).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordeaux</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1175).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourg-Dieu</td>
<td>Fromont could become a monk here (2870).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chartres (Notre-Dame de Chartres)</td>
<td>Fromont could become a canon here (2880).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colchis (in Georgia)</td>
<td>Urien’s brother frees passage to this country (1771).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbiers</td>
<td>Forest between Poitiers and Lusignan (179-180, 1293).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuq</td>
<td>Port in Armenia (6175).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracow</td>
<td>King of Cracow besieges Prague with “Slavs” &amp; “Saracens” (2295-2520).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>Uriens defeats the Sultan of Damascus (1691-1692).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dijon</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1167).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estables</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1171).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisia</td>
<td>Renaud wages war here (2694).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Brothers travel through (2293).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyenne</td>
<td>Conquered by Charlemagne (6931-6933).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>A knight from that country tries to get Helinas’ treasure (6527-6528).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberia</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1172).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liart</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1171).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmoutier</td>
<td>Fromont could become a monk here (2867-2868).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris (Notre-Dame de Paris)</td>
<td>Fromont could be a canon or bishop here (2881, 2888).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perigord</td>
<td>Jean de Parthenay-l’Archeveque’s wife is daughter of the count of Perigord (6920-6925).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>Urien assists Rhodes (5781).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ris</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1173).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Jargon</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1168).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Jean d’Angely</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1169).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Pourçaint</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1173).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thouars</td>
<td>Wine from here was had at Mélusine &amp; Raymondin’s wedding (1167).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo, Spain</td>
<td>Seer who knew about the treasure on Canigou was here (6507-6525).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>Raymondin’s men arrive disembark here from Rome (5649-5650).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours (Saint-Martin) in Touraine</td>
<td>Fromont could become a monk here (2876-2877).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>