

MARGARET

Queen of Sicily



Jacqueline Alio

Appendix 9

JOANNA'S BETROTHAL

In addition to the notes by Romuald of Salerno, we have descriptions of Joanna's betrothal and marriage written by several English chroniclers. Beyond providing the details of how Margaret and her advisors found a bride for William II, these texts, more generally, offer insight into royal betrothals of the twelfth century, including Margaret's, with special reference to the Kingdom of Sicily.

From the Chronicle of "Benedict of Peterborough"

Here the description of Joanna's betrothal from the chronicle of "Benedict of Peterborough" (written by Roger of Howden) is presented in English, with the rubrics (headings) from the surviving manuscripts, and especially the Cotton Manuscript, thus *De adventu nunciorum regis Siciliae* for the first section and *Carta regis Willelmi regis Siciliae de dote uxoris suae* for the last one.

Arrival of the Ambassadors of the King of Sicily

Meanwhile [April 1176], there landed in England the bishop elect [Elias] of Troia and the bishop [Arnolf] of Capaccio, with

count Florio of Camerota, ambassadors of King William of Sicily. Accompanying them was archbishop Rotrou of Rouen, kinsman of the King of Sicily.

They went to meet King Henry at London, petitioning the monarch to betroth his daughter, Joanna, to their sovereign, William. Before responding to this request, Henry convoked in London his bishop [Gilbert Foliot] and other high prelates and knowledgeable counsellors of the realm. Accepting his counsellors' advice, he sent William's ambassadors to Winchester to see if the girl might be acceptable.

The King of England Betroths his Daughter to King William of Sicily

The ambassadors of the King of Sicily, mentioned earlier, went to see the girl, and they very much approved of her. To conclude the agreement, they then went to see her father, and the Papal legate, cardinal Hugh Pierleoni, and the archbishop of Rouen.

With this, King Henry commanded John, bishop of Norwich, Paris, archdeacon of Rochester, Baldwin Bulot and Richard of Camville to travel on his behalf to the court of William, King of Sicily, with Elias of Troia bearing the message that he [Henry] granted to him the hand of his daughter in marriage.

At the same time, the other ambassadors [Arnolf and Florio] remained in England as King Henry's guests until Joanna's departure.

Peace Between the Archbishops at Winchester

On 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of Mary, King Henry arrived at Winchester, where he held a council. Here a reconciliation was reached between Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, and Roger, archbishop of York. The monarch also visited his daughter, Joanna, before her departure for Sicily.

The council ended with concord achieved among the prelates. Archbishop Richard of Canterbury and bishop Geoffrey of Ely readied themselves to accompany the daughter of King Henry to Saint-Gilles, where a galley sent by King William, to whom she was betrothed, would meet them.

With King Henry and King William having exchanged ambassadors, Joanna prepared for her voyage.

King Henry sent Joanna off unhurriedly, with the dignity befitting her, to meet Henry the Younger, her brother, in Normandy. The King of England made gifts to the King of Sicily of horses, clothes, gold and silver, and precious vases.

There Henry the Younger came to meet his sister, conducting her with the greatest honour to the County of Poitiers of his brother, Richard. Thenceforth, Richard escorted Joanna through the lands he held [Aquitaine]. Then the girl traveled to Saint-Gilles with Richard of Canterbury, Geoffrey of Ely, Giles of Evreux, Hugh of Beauchamp, and Hamelin of Warenne, her father's half-brother.

In December [1176] Richard of Canterbury and Geoffrey of Ely, who had conducted King Henry's daughter to Saint-Gilles, returned to their episcopal sees in England.

Likewise John of Norwich, who had been dispatched to the court of King William of Sicily, returned to England. However, upon arriving with Paris of Rochester, he reported to Henry that during his voyage from Messina to Saint-Gilles he had encountered a storm, and two fine galleys carrying various, precious gifts from William had sunk.

Henry Receives Joanna's Dower Charter

The royal ambassadors consigned to King Henry [1177] the charter of the marriage settlement of his daughter, Joanna, who was given in matrimony to King William of Sicily. Here is what it said. [See the following section.]

From Roger's Annals

This is Henry Riley's eloquent, Victorian translation of the account of the wedding and the text of the marriage charter (and dower inventory) from the *Annals of Roger de Hoveden* (volume 1, pages 413-417) published in London in 1853. (One might note the Anglice "Howden" preferred by Doris Stenton, Frank Barlow and other scholars in more recent times.) Roger's *Annals* are complementary to Romuald's succinct description, translated in the previous appendix. The chronicle of "Benedict of Peterborough" (see above) was most likely written by Roger of Howden, and the text of the dower document was compared to what is reported there (on folios 100-101 of the manuscript); minor corrections in orthography have been made to such details as the names of people and places.

In the year 1176 there came to England, from William, King of Sicily, [Elias] the bishop of Troia, the archbishop elect of Capaccio, and count Florio, as envoys to Henry, King of England, the father, and asked of him his daughter Joanna in marriage for William, King of Sicily, their lord.

A council upon the matter being accordingly held in London, the King, the father, with the consent of all the bishops, earls, and barons of the Kingdom, gave his daughter to the King of Sicily. And with this assent, the King [of England] first sent to the King of Sicily the bishop of Troia, John, bishop of Norwich, Paris, archdeacon of Rochester, Baldwin Bulot, and Richard de Camville, and in the meantime prepared for his daughter, Joanna, the things necessary for her equipment and journey. After these were all completed in a becoming manner, the King sent his daughter, Joanna, to be wed to William, the King of Sicily.

When she had arrived at Palermo, in Sicily, together with Giles, bishop of Evreux, and the other envoys of our lord, the

King, the whole city welcomed them, and lamps, so many and so large, were lighted up, that the city almost seemed to be on fire, and the rays of the stars could in no way bear comparison with the brilliancy of such a light: for it was by night that they entered the city of Palermo. The said daughter of the King of England was then escorted, mounted on one of the King's horses, and resplendent with regal garments, to a certain palace, that there she might in becoming state await the day of her marriage and coronation.

After the expiration of a few days from this time, the before-named daughter of the King of England was married to William, King of Sicily, and solemnly crowned at Palermo, in the royal chapel there, in the presence of Giles, bishop of Evreux, and the envoys of the King of England, who had been sent for that purpose. She was married and crowned on the Lord's day before the beginning of Septuagesima, being the ides of February; and was with due honour endowed with the county of Mount Saint Angelo, the city of Siponto, the city of Vesta, and many other castles and places. Whereupon, the King of Sicily executed in her favour his charter, as follows:

***The Charter of William, King of Sicily,
which he executed in favour of Joanna,
daughter of Henry, King of England,
as to her dower***

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. Amid the other blessings of peace, the nuptial tie binds and fastens most strongly the unison and the concord of human affairs; a rite, both venerable from the weightiness of its obligations, remarkable in the circumstances of its institution, and sanctioned by universal usage, from the beginning of the world and of time; of which the virtues and

the comeliness, inasmuch as it has derived its origin from Divine institution, have neither contracted blemish from sin, nor have been sensible of any diminution by desuetude, through the lengthened ages of past time.

“Moreover, to this venerable and mysterious institution this honour is added, that the consent of the man and of the woman to enter matrimony typifies the sacramental bond of Christ and His Church. Being therefore led by the nature of this great and mysterious institution, and by veneration for the same, we, William, by the favour of the Divine grace King of Sicily, Duke of Apulia and Prince of Capua, do unite unto ourselves by the laws of matrimony and the bond of wedlock, with the Divine sanction and under happy auspices, the maiden Joanna, of royal blood, and the most illustrious daughter of Henry, the mighty King of the English; to the end, that her fidelity and chaste affection may produce the blessings of the married state, and that by her a royal offspring may, by the gift of God, hereafter succeed us in the Kingdom, which, both by reason of its endowment with all virtues, and of its title by birth, by the Divine grace, both may and ought to be raised to the Throne of this Realm.

“But, inasmuch as it is befitting our exalted position that so noble and illustrious an alliance should be honored with a becoming dower, by this present writing we do give, and as a dower, do grant to the before-named queen, our most dearly beloved wife, the county of Mount Saint Angelo, the city of Siponto, and the city of Vesta, with all the rightful manors and appurtenances thereof. We do also grant for her service, out of the manors of count Godfrey, Alesina, Peschiza, Bicum, Caprile, Barano, and Filizi, and all other places which the said count is known to possess as of the honour of the said county of Mount Saint Angelo. In like manner, we do also grant for her service, Candelari, Saint Clair, Castel Pagano, Bersenza, and Cagnano.

"We do also grant, that there shall be as of the honour of the said dower, the monastery of Saint Mary de Pulsano, and the monastery of Saint John de Lama, with all the manors which those monasteries hold of the honour of the aforesaid county of Saint Angelo — upon condition that the Queen, our aforesaid wife, shall always recognize all the rights of our heirs, who by our ordinance shall succeed us in the Kingdom, and shall do unto our said heirs, fully and unreservedly, all services for the aforesaid manors, according as the tenure in fee thereof shall require, and shall always observe her fealty to them.

"Wherefore, in remembrance of the said gift and grant, and for the inviolable establishment thereof, we have commanded this present charter to be written by the hand of Alexander, our notary, and, the golden bulla, our seal, being impressed thereon, to be confirmed with our said seal, and graced therewith.

"Unto which, by our command, the personages of our household and others have subscribed their names in manner following:

Walter, archbishop of Palermo.
 Alfano, archbishop of Capua.
 Richard, bishop of Syracuse.
 Bartholomew, bishop of Agrigento.
 Reginald, archbishop of Bari.
 Nicholas, first archbishop of Messina.
 Ruffus, archbishop of Cosenza.
 Theobald, bishop and abbot of New Saint Mary.
 Robert, bishop of Catania.
 Guy, bishop of Cefalù.
 Elias, bishop elect of Troia.
 Justus, bishop of Mazzara.
 Robert, bishop of Tricarico.
 Peter, bishop of Caiazzo.

John, bishop of Potenza.
Robert de Bizino.
Robert Malcovenanz
Alexander Gupille
Matthew, royal vice-chancellor
Robert, count of Caserta.
Amphusus, count of Scrulac.
Jocelyn, count of Loret.
Hugh, count of Catanzaro.
Richard, count of Fundano, admiral.
Walter of Moac, admiral of the King's ship *Fortunatus*.
Aldewin of Candida, seneschal of our lord the King.
Berardus Gentili, constable of the palace of Messina.
Richard, keeper of the records in the royal palace.
Bamalis de Montefort, chief justiciar.
Persicus, chief justiciar of the royal court.
Frederick, justiciar of the royal court.

Given at the flourishing city of Palermo by the hands of Walter, the venerable Archbishop of Palermo, Matthew, vice-chancellor of the King, and Richard, the venerable bishop of Syracuse, members of the household of our lord the King, in the year from the incarnation of our Lord one thousand one hundred and seventy-seven, in the month of February, being the tenth year of the indiction; and in the eleventh year of the happy reign of our lord William, by the grace of God, the mighty and most glorious King of Sicily, Duke of Apulia, and Prince of Capua. Amen."

Sealed with the seal of William, King of Sicily. Here follows in the original, the form of the bulla or seal, which contains around the margin the words *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem. Dextera Domini exaltavit me. Dextera Domini fecit virtutem*. "The right hand of the Lord hath created my might. The right hand of

the Lord hath exalted me. The right hand of the Lord hath created my might." In the central portion is a cross surmounted by the words *Divina favente dementia Willielmus rex Siciliae et ducatus Apuliae et principatus Capuae*. "By the favour of the Divine mercy, William, King of Sicily, Duke of Apulia, Prince of Capua." The cross is supported by the following words. *Hoc signum sibi praeferri a vexillifero facit cum ad bellum aliquod procedit*. "This sign he causes to be borne before him by his standard-bearer when he goes forth to battle." [This is identical to the seal affixed to a charter issued in 1169; see the following appendix.]

From the *Ymagine Historiarum* of Ralph of Diceto

The account by Ralph of Diceto is essentially similar to those of Roger of Howden and adds only a few details, among these the route of John of Norwich, chief ambassador of the King of England, to Palermo via Auvergne, Valence, Embrun, Genoa, Gaeta and Messina. A passage recounts the terrible sea voyage of John of Norwich, his stay in Sicily and his return to England. The entry for Joanna's marriage mentions her arrival at Saint-Gilles and her wedding, performed by archbishop Walter, in February. Ralph of Diceto includes a letter from William to Henry dated 23 August 1176 at Palermo.

William's Letter to Henry

"To Henry, by the grace of God most noble King of England, your friend William, by the grace of God King of Sicily, Duke of Apulia and Prince of Capua, sends greetings.

"We have received your ambassadors in honour, and we thank you for so kindly receiving the three nobles sent to your court asking for your consent in granting us the hand of your

daughter in matrimony. Likewise, your ambassadors have expressed to me your consent. As my ambassadors are authorized to act on my behalf, I did not swear a prior oath to this undertaking, but by this letter I hereby confirm their promises to you.

“As the ambassadors have explained, we shall send a fleet of galleys to Saint-Gilles to meet your embassy, from there securely transporting your daughter to our court, and I hope that the nuptials can be celebrated as soon as possible.”

**Translations by British scholars
during the 19th century, with
additional translations by
Jacqueline Alio in 2015.**