Theory of Dynasticism

Actors, Interests, and Strategies of Medieval Dynasties

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Abstract

Dynasticism has emerged as common concept to refer to the logics of rule in pre-modern international systems. This thesis will attempt both to theorise the concept, as well as developing an ideal-typical framework to analyse one of the most important strategies of the dynasty: the dynastic marriage. It will be argued that the dynamics of dynasticism arose from the changing structures to the European family around AD 1000. These structural changes gave further rise to hierarchies among dynastic actors, interests, and strategies, which will form the basis of a theory of dynasticism. This theory will be utilised to make sense of the various interests involved in creating matrimonial strategies for the dynasty. The argument advanced is that dynastic heirs married according to logics of reproduction; dynastic cadets married for territorial acquisitions; and dynastic daughters married to establish and maintain alliances with other dynasties. These theoretical insights will be used to analyse the marriages of three dynasties in medieval Europe: the Plantagenet, the Capet, and the Hohenstaufen.
Acknowledgements

In Dietrich Schwanitz’ *Bildung. Alles, was man wissen muß*, the author notes the danger of appearing to know details about royal families. He argues, essentially, that such knowledge might make one appear to be rather uneducated. For the last six months, however, I have made every effort to uncover details about royal families in European history. Although I might risk giving the appearance of being uneducated, uncultivated, and, even, uncivilised—all the things a student strives not to become—I feel, at least, that these past months have been very educational.

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1 Introduction

King Philip: Speak England first, that hath been forward first
To speak unto this city: what say you?

King John: If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,
Can in this book of beauty read ‘I Love,’
Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen:
For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poitiers,
And all that we upon this side the sea,—
Except this city now by us besieged,—
Find liable to our crown and dignity,
Shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich
In titles, honours, and promotions,
As she in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand with any princess of the world. (William Shakespeare, King John)

The passage above is, in essence, medieval diplomacy. Taken from William Shakespeare’s play, King John, it portrays the conclusions of a conflict between King John, the King of England, and France’s King Philip II in the early years of the 13th century. Diplomatic settlements between two kingdoms might perhaps seem familiar to the modern reader, but that a marriage should be part of the agreement makes it at once strange, as if it belongs to a distant past. But as dynasties—large and powerful families—ruled, dynastic marriages were central to the diplomatic practice in both medieval and early-modern Europe. The marriage agreed to was between King John’s niece, Blanche of Castile, and King Philip’s son, Louis (VII; named in the play as “Dauphin”). And the arrangement seems very fruitful for a diplomatic relationship: King John gives up his niece and swaths of territory to avoid a war with France; King Philip is assured that his English colleague will heed the deal as he now, essentially, is in possession of his niece. The consummation of the settlement by marriage is a way to establish a vital bond between the two dynasties of Plantagenet in England and Capet in France.

But how do we, as modern readers of medieval international relations, make sense of such settlements? How can we, using the tools we have developed for analysing our present, understand a medieval practice? The short answer is that we can make sense of medieval and early modern practices, but not by using the theoretical tools and analytical constructs...
preserved for modern purposes. *Raison d’état*—“the fundamental principle of national conduct, the State’s first Law of Motion” (Meinecke 1957, 1)—remains anachronistic when we explore times when neither nationalism nor the state were invented. Wanted, thus, are theoretical tools that can assist the study of pre-modern international relations; needed are analyses of the times that seem foreign to our own, times that can contrast but also reflect our modernity.

These questions and such issues have caused scholars to take dynasties and dynasticism seriously. As Daniel Nexon, writing on the international relations of early-modern Europe, argues: “Reason of dynasty, rather than contemporary notions of reason of state, drove international-political competition” (2009, 68). The literature on dynasticism, which has grown over the years as the discipline of IR has become more historically oriented, will be reviewed thoroughly in the next chapter; for now, it suffices to note that dynasticism—as the legitimate form of rule and as the constitutive idea of the pre-modern political order—has not received the full scrutiny it deserves. It often appears in historical-sociological accounts of the development of the international system, without exploring dynasticism’s full spectrum.

This issue becomes clear once we review the literature on dynastic marriages—one of the most important political tools of pre-modern international relations. As Vivek Swaroop Sharma argues, studying the international relations of both medieval and early-modern Europe, dynastic marriages were one of the “primary means by which actors achieved their strategic goals and is, therefore, the *sin qua non* of any explanation of the outcomes of international politics in this time period” (2005, 23). The problem, however, is that the scholars that do take dynastic marriages seriously—Sharma and Nexon, as discussed, but also Benno Teschke (2003)—discuss them in relation to their historical-sociological arguments of the birth of the composite state. As such, they focus only on the marriages that would make a dynasty rule over large and heterogeneous territories, which are the marriages of the younger sons of the dynasts: the cadets. Lost in the analyses are the other dynastic marriages; neither the marriages of heirs nor daughters are treated as vital for the explanations of the pre-modern international relations.


1.1 Research Question

What is the nature of dynasticism in international relations? This will be the broad question running through the entirety of this thesis. As dynasticism remain, in the discipline of IR, both an important, yet undertheorised concept, a theorisation of dynasticism is needed to make sense of pre-modern international affairs. To answer this question, this thesis will construct a theory of dynasticism. This theory will utilise the historical forces—forces that gave rise to the dynasty itself—to discern the logics underpinning the various dynastic actors, the dynasty’s interests, and its strategies to obtain these interests. This theorisation will further be used to develop an ideal-typical framework to explain the most important dynastic strategy: marriages. Essentially, the theory of dynasticism will be utilised to answer the second question underpinning this thesis: by which logics did a dynasty marry off their offspring in Medieval Europe? The ideal-typical framework will further be used to inform the matrimonial strategies of three medieval dynasties: the Plantagenets, the Capetians, and the Hohenstaufens.

This necessarily limits the application of dynasticism on two levels: first, it will narrow the exploration of dynastic strategies to marriages alone. This means that other forms of international strategies, such as war-making, will not be a part of the empirical analysis. Dynastic marriages, however, is not only analysed because, as argued earlier, it was one of the most central political tools dynasts used in achieving their strategic and political goals; it is also chosen as few scholars in IR have theorised or analysed extensively the logics and strategies behind these marriages. As such, the question is novel to the discipline of IR. Second, it will be limited temporally. As it focuses on medieval dynasties, we will not be able to explore the dynasticism of early-modern Europe. This, however, does not limit further studies of dynastic marriages to the medieval period. But due to both space and time constraints for this dissertation, it will focus on the dynastic marriages of three European dynasties in the period from 1150-1350. This scope will be discussed further in the next chapter.

There are reasons, however, why dynastic marriages have been neglected in the study of history in the IR literature. Paula Sutter Fichtner, in reviewing the historical scholarship on dynastic marriages, argues that these marriages have been mitigated as a topic of study since the eighteenth century, as “most Western historians have dismissed the court and family
practices of European royalty as unworthy of study” (1976, 243). The “development of societies and cultures as a whole” have been the prime puzzles to solve for historians (ibid.). Equally, the development of the modern state and state-system, have been the reasons why IR scholars have delved into pre-modern history; neglecting, to a large extent, the study of dynastic marriages.

But there are a number of reasons why the IR community should take seriously both medieval international relations, in general, and dynastic marriages, in particular. This topic will, again, be reviewed in detail in Chapter 2, but we will give a brief summary of the main arguments. First, exploring medieval international relations is vital for the full understanding of the contemporary international system. Some scholars, most notably Fischer (1992), have studied the medieval period by extending the theoretical tools of neorealism; essentially regarding medieval international relations as equal to modern international relations: political units competing in a state of anarchy. Others have touched on medieval international relations when theorising the changes that saw the rise of the modern international system (Ruggie 1983; 1993; Hall and Kratochwil 1993; Buzan and Little 200). Most commonly, the medieval period is omitted altogether from the comparative histories of the international state systems. Both Christian Reus-Smit (1999) and Justin Rosenberg (1994), when studying pre-modern international systems, analyse Ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy, as if the millennium of medieval international relations was irrelevant. Following Andrew Latham, whose study of medieval geopolitics has a rare single focus on this period, the medieval international system “is important in its own right” (2013, 3). Notwithstanding the theoretical contributions a study of medieval international relations can bring to the understanding of the modern international system, the intellectual quest of understanding a historical epoch in its own right should be valued.

Second, understanding the dynamics of dynasticism is not just limited to the Middle Ages. Dynasticism, in other words, was not just a legitimate form of rule in the medieval period. As will later be clear, dynasticism arose in the high middle ages and lasted until the late 18th or early 19th century. Thus, although this study focus exclusively on the high middle ages—specifically the period from around 1150 to 1350—the insights it brings to the understandings of dynasticism could help studies of a much more extensive time period. And as inter-dynastic affairs were so crucial for pre-modern times, dynastic marriages cannot be neglected as a topic of study. Thus, neglecting studies of a political tool that was crucial for inter-
dynastic affairs in a time period of over 800 years would be to wash away a vital part of international history. By only studying dynamics of international relations that are important for the modern period—such as medieval wars and medieval diplomacy—we will essentially be guilty of the presentism historically-oriented IR scholarship have been seeking to avoid.

1.2 Argument

The backbone of this dissertation’s argument is that, in and around the year AD 1000, there were several important changes in the structure of the European family. These changes, which saw the rise of primogeniture—a rule of succession whereby the eldest son inherited all of his father’s patrimony, as well as his political office—established three different hierarchical structures within the dynasty. It is from these structures a theory of dynasticism can be constructed. First, primogeniture gave rise to a hierarchy among dynastic actors. The most important actor, the heir, was prioritised at the exclusion of his younger brothers—the cadets—and sisters; the family, in other words, was divided according to order of birth and sex. This argument, however, is not original to this dissertation; it comes from a broad agreement among historians and social scientists, making its way into IR through, primarily, Vivek Sharma (2005; 2015) and Benno Teschke (2003). They both see these changes as fundamental to the birth of the dynasty.

Second, primogeniture also delineated the primary dynastic interests: first, to ensure the dynastic lineage would continue; second, to keep the dynastic patrimony undivided. As primogeniture relied on the most important dynastic actor for the continuation of the dynastic lineage, reproduction became the most crucial interest of the dynasty. And as the practice of primogeniture was geared towards passing the patrimony intact down the lines by excluding all possible heir for the benefit of the eldest son, a second interest became an undivided patrimony. The best strategy for obtaining this second interest, moreover, was to arrange marriages for the unendowed children, and the most viable way to do this is to marry them off to someone who was able to inherit. However, as dynastic actors were separated from one another based on gender, this was an option only available for the cadets of the dynasty. While cadets could marry heiresses to acquire territories for themselves to rule, dynastic daughters had to be married following different logics. The only way a daughter could be married off, while at the same time benefiting the dynasty, was to arrange marriages with
dynasties it was in the interest of the family to befriend. As such, the second interest is divided into two: territorial acquisition and alliances.

These three interests—reproduction, territory, and alliances—create a third hierarchy: a hierarchy of dynastic strategies. As all of these interests could best be obtained by the use of dynastic marriages, this becomes the most important strategy. War, for instance, could only gain the dynasty territory; and the signing of a treaty could only acquire the dynasty an ally. Dynastic marriages, in contrast, was a political tool that could be used for all these purposes. And as we will see, dynasties put great effort into arranging the most beneficial marriages for their children.

Building on these insights, this dissertation will argue that the rule of primogeniture had vital effects on the logics by which dynastic marriages were arranged. As primogeniture arose, the dynasty’s heir became a vital figure; he was to take over for his father as the ruler of the dynasty, and he was to pass it on again to his eldest son. As such, the heir was not married off for territorial acquisitions. Nor was he used for diplomatic purposes to form an alliance with another house, or settle a conflict. Rather, the most important factor determining the heir’s marriage was the likelihood that his prospective wife could produce an heir. The prime characteristic that is sought after, for the heir, is a partner’s reproductive abilities, often associated with her age, or with her maternal history, had she been married before. But as it was believed that it was the blood of the parents that created the child, the heir could not marry anyone with desirable reproductive abilities. Additionally, she needed good blood to run through her veins. This often meant that, for royals, she would preferably be from a royal family; at least, she would belong to the upper nobility. Rather than geopolitics or diplomacy, the heir was thus married according to logics of biological and social reproduction.

For the cadet, however, these factors did not play a prominent role. As a younger son, he was disinherited by his father, whereas before, prior to the rise of primogeniture, all sons would divide the patrimony between them. Now, however, the father needed to find a place in the world for his younger sons, but without dividing the patrimony. They could, of course, be sent to the military or the church. But most often, they would be married to heiresses. For the daughters of magnates in and around Europe could, if no son was born, inherit her father’s patrimony. And these daughters became very attractive on the marriage market just for this reason. Here, we do see dynasticism involving geopolitical logics. But they are not tied to
increasing the relative power of the dynasty. Rather, the territorial focus is central due to the disinherited sons’ lack of a livelihood.

For the dynasty’s daughter, we see the last factor neglected by the marriages of the other two categories: diplomacy. Dynastic marriages were, as has been discussed above, crucial in forming alliances and settling disputes among different dynasties. However, as the marriages of heirs and cadets were ruled by logics of reproduction and territorial acquisition, and can accordingly not be afforded to be used for diplomatic purposes, this established daughters as a vital category of dynastic offspring. They were the only ones that can be used for diplomatic and political gains. As we will see below, dynasties tied a great deal of importance to these marriages, and they would carefully be arranged. Daughters, in other words, were an important commodity for the dynasty.

1.3 Structure of the Argument

Following this introductory chapter, this dissertation will in the next three chapters explore the theoretical, methodological, and methodical underpinnings of the empirical analysis, which will be the focus of the latter three chapters. Chapter 2 will review the historically-oriented IR literature. As there has been almost an axiomatic truth that the modern international system arose in the aftermaths of the Thirty Years War, lasting from 1618-1648, this chapter will necessarily scrutinise the literature on the division between the medieval and the modern. While traditional IR theory have adhered to the benchmark date of 1648, more historically-oriented scholars within the discipline have questioned this creationist narrative, essentially arguing that the modern international system did not arise until the late 18th century, when we see the birth of the modern state-system. These scholars also agree that before the modern, bureaucratic state, dynasticism reigned as the legitimate form of rule; the infamous raison d’état is anachronistic in pre-modern international relations, and a better way to conceptualise logics of rule is reason of dynasty. The problem, as it will be argued in this chapter, is that reason or logic of dynasty is a vague concept, and it most often recalls the same geopolitical logics internal to the logics of the state. There are reasons, in other words, to open up the black box of dynasticism.

Chapter 3 will initiate the methodological and methodical ways of understanding dynasticism in IR. It will assess ways of conducting historical analyses in IR, and in the social sciences in
general, making the argument that in order to theorise history—as is the goal of this dissertation—we cannot treat history as a laboratory whereby the social scientist can “cherry pick” the necessary historical facts for the theoretical construct to make sense. Rather, it will be argued, by constructing historically specific analytical frameworks—or ideal typical frameworks—we can avoid being both a-historical and a-historicist, while still operate at the generalised level a social-scientific study usually demands.

Chapter 4 will round off the first three chapters by constructing both a theory of dynasticism as well as an ideal-typical framework of dynastic marriages in medieval Europe. The building-block of these theoretical frameworks will be the changes in the structures of the European families outlined above, and the first part of this chapter will thoroughly review the historical, sociological, and anthropological literature on this, and demonstrate how these structural changes spurred changes in the dynastic actors, interests, and strategies. The following sections will explore how these structural changes established different logics to the marriages of dynastic offspring. Three categories of children are created, based on order of birth and sex: the heir, the cadet, and the daughter. These three categories will be reviewed in turn, essentially arguing that the heir married according to logics of biological and social reproduction, the cadet married to acquire territory for himself, and the daughter was married away for diplomatic reasons.

The three last chapters, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, will utilise this theoretical framework to explore the marriages of the Plantagenets, the Capetians, and the Hohenstaufens, from about 1150 to 1350. The essential role of these chapters is not to verify or falsify the ideal-typical model; as the theory is more an analytical road-map than a realistic theoretical model, as will be made clear in Chapter 3, it is almost certain to be falsified. The detailed empirical accounts, rather, are used to investigate the usefulness of the ideal-typical framework. As such, we will not see every marriage arranged according to the logics prescribed, and that is not the point. But the framework should guide us through these marriages, and enable us to separate which were exceptional and which were according to the norm. Chapter 8 will round up the dissertation with some conclusory remarks, both about the framework’s usefulness, and about the further investigations needed on dynasticism.
2 Literature Review: Dynasticism in International Relations

Medieval international relations remain, to a large extent, undertheorised and unexplored in the discipline of IR. The disciplinary boundary between pre-modern—essentially, medieval—and modern, which is set in the 17th century, necessarily precludes any curiosity into this epoch, beyond studying it for its own right. As medieval international relations were fundamentally different from the workings of contemporary world politics, there are few lessons to be drawn in order to understand our modern international system. In fact, medieval international relations have been neglected to such an extent that scholars, when reaching beyond our modern state-system, rather study Ancient Greece or Renaissance Italy in order to pan out similarities or contrasts with contemporary world politics (Reus-Smit 1999; Rosenberg 1994). This disregard of medieval international relations is caused, to a great extent, by the “benchmark date” of 1648, which marks the discipline’s self-understanding, and causes scholars to become “inward-looking (centring on the precise content of the event which marks that date) rather than outward-looking (using dates as a means to open-up enquiry into macro-historical dynamics)” (Buzan and Lawson 2012, 441).

Recently, however, a number of historically-oriented scholars of the discipline have investigated the validity of the boundaries set between the pre-modern and the modern international systems. They have critically explored the 17th century events that are generally thought of giving rise to the modern international system, and they have argued that new boundaries between the pre-modern and the modern are need to be set. This is what will be explored in the two first sections of this chapter. We will first review the scholars advancing what has been named the “Westphalian narrative:” that the modern international system emerged after the Treaties of Westphalia following the Thirty Years War. Next, we will present the arguments of those critical to this narrative, and how they regard, essentially, medieval characteristics to survive well beyond the 17th century. The central argument

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1 Though, there are theorisations about medieval geopolitics, see Latham (2013); Teschke (2003), and, more specifically, about the crusades (Alkopher 2005; 2007) Medieval international relations are also touched on in writings about the distinctions between pre-modern and modern international systems (Ruggie 1983, 1993; Watson 1992; Buzan and Little 2000; Hall 1997; Hall and Kratochwil 1993; Fischer 1992).

2 On the politics of time, and the modern construction of the distinction between medieval and modern, see Davis (2008).
advanced by such scholars is that dynasticism, which arose in High Medieval Europe, did not fall apart with the Treaties of Westphalia; rather, it continued well into the 19th century.

But such findings inevitably raise further questions. If the modern state-system were not fully developed until the 19th century, how do we interpret the international relations of a period of over eight centuries prior to that? This will be the question explored in the third and last section of this chapter. Essentially, scholars argue that rather than the modern concept of state interests, it was dynastic interests that drove international relations in this period. But dynastic interests, it will be argued, remain unpenetrated and undertheorised as a theoretical concept. Although scholars often use the concept of dynasticism to inform their studies of medieval and early modern international relations, they all explore different aspects of it, and for different reasons. It will thus be the claim that, if we are to understand international relations that are pre-modern, we need a theoretical exploration into the very concept of dynasticism itself.

2.1 The Great Division: Medieval and Modern

The year 1648 stands central in the discipline of International Relations. It marks the signings of two peace treaties of the Thirty-Years War, the Treaty of Münster and the Treaty of Osnabrück, most commonly known as the Peace Treaties of Westphalia. These treaties are important to the discipline as they demonstrate the “Big Bang” creation of the modern international system: the anarchic international system and its constitutive unit, the sovereign state, was born (de Carvalho et al. 2011, 738). The birth of a new international system signals the death of the older, medieval system, dominated by religious forces standing in stark contrast to modern, secular international relations. Exclusive sovereignty, which is the institution that solidifies the modern pillars of international relations—organised war, diplomacy, and the signing of treaties—cannot but contrast international life in the chaotic middle ages. As Benno Teschke writes about the Westphalian narrative: “After 1648, formalized relations between modern sovereign states superseded the criss-crossing relations between heterogeneous feudal actors capped by the hierarchical claims of the Empire and the Church” (2003, 2).

The creationist story of the Westphalian Peace stands so firmly in the discipline that both canons of IR theory and newer studies of the origin of the modern international system alike
have told and keep retelling it. Hans J. Morgenthau, for instance, argues that the territorial state was born with the Treaties of Westphalia, as the latter “brought religious wars to an end” (1985, 254). The modern international system, he writes further, “is the result of the great political transformation that marked the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern period of history. It can be summed up as the transformation of the feudal system into the territorial state” (ibid., 293). Within Morgenthau’s Realist tradition, we also find Robert Gilpin repeating the essential Westphalian division between pre-modern imperial relations and modern inter-sovereign relations (1981, 111).

Also with the theorists of the English School do we find—though of a slightly nuanced version—the vitality of the Westphalian Peace Treaties. Although Martin Wight, one of the English School’s foundational figures, do not regard 1648 as a rupture the same way as other canonical scholars of IR, the Westphalian narrative do stand firmly in his theorisations of international relations. Arguing that the modern international system is fully apparent by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, he nevertheless considers the period between the Council of Constance, commencing in 1414, and the Congress of Westphalia, as a period that “has a greater resemblance to the states-system that succeeds it than it has to the medieval system that precedes it” (1977, 151). Although the origin of the modern international system is dated to the Renaissance, the Treaties of Westphalia, and the later Treaty of Utrecht, marks the dates when it has sprung into full blossom.

It is not, however, only the classical accounts within the discipline of IR that highlights the importance of Westphalia. The essential Westphalian narrative is also to be found in more contemporary, Constructivist writings on the division between pre-modern and modern international relations. Central among these Constructivist theorists stands John Gerald Ruggie. In a widely cited article, inspired by Waltzian neorealism’s inability to explain the shift from the medieval to the modern international system, Ruggie lays out his account of “the most important contextual change in international politics in this millennium” (1983, 141). His argument is based on differentiating ideas of territorial property rights, whereby the medieval international system “was structured by a nonexclusive form of territoriality, in which authority was both personalized and parcelized within and across territorial formations

3 For variations of the “Westphalian narrative” beyond the scholars discussed below, see Bull (1977); Watson (1992); Holsti (1991); Zacher (1992); Spruyt (1994); Sheenan (1996); Gross (1948); Held (1995); Jackson (1999).
and for which inclusive bases of legitimation prevailed,” contrasting the modern consolidation of both personalised and parcelised authority “into one public realm” (ibid., 142). Echoing Ruggie, Friedrich Kratochwil also investigates the territorial shifts that “led to the emergence of the European state system in the 17th century, after the demise of the medieval empire” (2011, 236).

Moreover, focusing on the early-modern dynast Charles of Habsburg’s claims to several European territories, Daniel Philpott argues that “in this conglomerate, all political authorities were linked arcanely—medievally—over much of the surface of Europe, yet looked to no common ruler or law. This surface would eventually be refashioned as sovereign states, but not until 1648” (2001, 81). Essential in Philpott’s account, and in much of the literature highlighting the importance of the Westphalian Peace, is that the modern international system supplants an older system of dynasticism which was driven more by inter-dynastic marriages and conflicts of inheritance than modern reasons of state. Equally, we find in Rodney Bruce Hall’s investigation of Westphalia a separation between the historical system created by the Peace of Augsburg, the “dynastic-sovereign” system, and the “territorial-sovereign” system established at Westphalia (1999).

Recent critical explorations of the Westphalian narrative, however, argue that a strict separation between the medieval and the modern is not to be found in the 17th century. Critically, the medieval system of dynasticism do not end with the Westphalian Peace Treaties; it continues well into the centuries IR theorists have previously believed to be modern. As 1648 has been cemented as one of the most important of the discipline’s “benchmark dates,” or the marks that signalises the “important turning point in the character and/or structure of international relations,” this opens up a myriad of questions of how we are to interpreted the history of international systems (Buzan and Lawson 2014, 438) If the “benchmark date” of 1648 do no longer stand firmly as the birth of the modern state-system, what are the essential boundaries between the medieval world this thesis seeks to analyse, and the modern system of states most IR scholars focus on?

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2.2 Dynastic International Relations

The central concept that runs through the critical approaches to the history of international relations, is that of dynasticism. According to the Westphalian narrative, dynasticism ended with the Westphalian Peace Treaties. Still, not all of the theorists discussed above regard the birth of the modern international system as a consequential end to dynasticism. Martin Wight, for instance, argues that:

The dynastic principle, in the form of hereditary monarchy, was the chief legacy that modern international society inherited from medieval feudal society. Dynasticism was itself an international system. The dynasties were collectively the European ruling class, and inter-married regularly to maintain their social primacy. The dynastic principle gave rise to a dynastic idiom of international politics. Alliances were consolidated by dynastic marriages. Reversals of alliance were marked by matrimonial disengagements. Territorial aggrandisement was justified by dynastic claims. Foreign revolutions were fomented by cultivating dynastic pretenders. Such was the mode of politics down to the 1770’s, when Joseph II launched his project to partition Bavaria under a bogus dynastic claim, and Pugachev impersonated the murdered Peter III, perhaps each the last example of its kind (1972, 2).

The importance of Wight’s claims is two-fold: first, it lies in his insistence that essential parts of the medieval world was to continue into the modern, making a strict separation between the two untenable; second, it highlights that the end to pre-modern state-systems did not end in 1648 but over a century later.

These issues were to be taken up by a later generation of scholars, critically investigating the legitimacy of the Westphalian argument and the birth of the modern international system. Christian Reus-Smit echoes Wight in his constructivist study of the “moral purpose of the state” and the constitutive and constitutional forces that lay behind historical international systems. In his study, we do not see Westphalia as the marking-point between medieval and modern. Rather, as in Wight, Reus-Smit highlights the continuation of dynastic politics in the immediate post-Westphalian period. “For almost two centuries after Westphalia,” he writes, “a decidedly premodern set of Christian and dynastic intersubjective values defined legitimate statehood and rightful state action” (1999, 88). It was not until the middle of the 19th century, in his account, that the modern international system saw its beginning. Also Mlada Bukovansky see dynasticism as lasting until the 19th century, marking the American and French revolutions as the rupture that established a new, modern world order (2002). In fact, Barry Buzan and George Lawson argue in their book, The Global Transformation that it
is the long 19th century which should be regarded as IR’s Westphalian moment, and not the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 itself (2015).

These scholars do a vital work demonstrating that dynasticism was carried on from medieval times, and dominated international relations until somewhere between the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th. However, as Martin Wight argues that dynasticism was itself an international system, it becomes increasingly important not only to mark the end of this system, but also locate its beginnings. The perhaps most extensive treatment of dynasticism and its origins in IR is found in the works of Vivek Swaroop Sharma (2005; 2015) According to Sharma, dynasticism is not a trans-historical concept referring to political systems where the highest political office is transmitted to a member of the same family. Rather, dynasticism’s birth can be located spatially to Western Europe and temporally to developments that occurred around the year A.D. 1000 (2015).

This is a rather different way of looking at dynasticism than the meaning commonly given to the term. Certainly, dynasties existed before the year 1000, as, for instance, in Ancient Rome; and dynasties cannot have its origins in Western Europe, as it simultaneously was a characteristic of the Ottoman Empire. But neither of these societies “establish clear and incontestable lines of succession” (ibid., 12). In the Roman Empire, imperial succession “was determined by the army, typically through civil war” (ibid.) Whilst in the Ottoman Empire, the succession “was open to all sons of the deceased sultan with no legal restrictions on the pool of potential claimants, other than paternity and age at the time of succession” (ibid., 13).

Dynasticism, thus, is tied to successional practices. Before the year 1000, Western Europe also had successional practices akin to the ones found in the two empires discussed above. There were specifically two issues that inhibited an orderly succession of political office. First, the political office was not “owned” by the person holding it; it was not held nor transmitted according to “laws governing ‘private’ property” (ibid., 14). Second, the family structure in early medieval Europe was “that of the ‘clan’ (Sippe) rather than that of the nuclear family (Geschlecht),” which meant that “claims to authority based on kinship could be made by a wide range of male relatives and that there were no clear lines of authority flowing across generations” (ibid.). The result of which was oftentimes conflictual

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5 On the continuation of dynasticism beyond Westphalia, see also Bull (1977, 27-40); Wight (1977, 110-174); Mayall (1989;1990); Mulligan (2005); Barkin and Cronin (1994); Barkin (2001); Buzan (2004).
successions whereby a person wishing to inherit a political office, needed to fight his way to throne.

These two successional problems began to change around the first millennium. The first development was the transformation of political offices from a public to a private holding of the officeholders. As the holding of a political office were held previously by ruler in charge, this gradually changed to a life-time holding of the office, which was further translated “into hereditary possessions” (ibid., 15). As there was yet no order of succession, the territories or estates linked to a political office was thus fragmented into smaller and smaller pieces as it was divided among the family of the previous ruler. This forced another change to happen, a change that would have crucial impacts on the emergence of dynasticism: new orders of succession were established.

The perhaps most crucial change was the creation of primogeniture. Primogeniture, in short, is the practice whereby the paternal inheritance is restricted “to the oldest surviving son to the exclusion of younger brothers, who were disinherited” (ibid.). This development had crucial effects in the development of the dynasty. All the lands and the political offices tied to them was now being passed down the line to one son only; it was, as much as it was possible, kept intact for the heir to inherit. This meant, for instance, that a royal family now had potentially several sons who did not inherit anything from the patrimony, and it was up to the king to decide what these cadets were to do with their lives now that they had no political offices to take over. As Sharma writes, there were a number of things a head of a family could do to make up for his younger sons: they could be placed in the Church, or “make their own way in the world be joining the military retinues of greater lords and hope for suitable rewards” (ibid., 16).

But the safest bet was to marry a younger son off to an heiress. The practice of female inheritance emerged simultaneously with primogeniture; the question of who was to inherit the political office if there were no sons had become prominent. Females had around the turn of the century been allowed to inherit property to which no political offices were ties. But gradually, their inheritance rights were to include also political offices. Disinherited younger sons had thus an opportunity through marriage to acquire political property that they before needed to inherit from their father. As Sharma writes, the “ability of women to inherit and
transmit ‘public’ rights and offices in addition to strictly ‘private’ property constituted the second key component of dynasticism” (ibid., 17).

Sharma’s argument puts great emphasis upon the cadets of prominent families; and for good reasons. The two transformations of primogeniture and female inheritance were crucial for the historical development of the European international system: a new type of political unit, the dynastic-composite state, was born. As younger sons were disinherited and daughters were able to inherit were there no sons available, a marriage between the younger son and the heiress would bring two dynasties together in a union. This, in turn, brought new territories to the dynasty, as the younger brother of a king could now hold a political office outside of the patrimonial lands. The result of which was that dynasties grew massive, and lands were held by fewer and fewer families. This, Sharma argues, is a crucial reason for the territorial consolidation that the modern international system rests upon.

The development of dynasticism and the dynastic-composite state in the Middle Ages, however, is not an argument exclusive to Sharma. Daniel Nexon (2009), for instance, builds upon Sharma’s developmental argument to account for early-modern international relations, and more specifically, the specific path European state-formation took due to the emergence of dynasticism as Sharma accounts for. This path Nexon terms the “Dynastic-Imperial Pathway” of state-formation, whereby dynasties expand their territories to include “heterogenous populations and territories,” which gives rise, not to the sovereign-territorial state, but to the dynastic-composite state, ruled in Nexon’s model much like an empire (ibid., 130).

This line of argument is also to be found in Benno Teschke’s The Myth of 1648 (2003). Like Sharma, Teschke highlights the importance of the “radical reorientations in family consciousness and inheritance law” around the turn of the first century (2003, 91). With these reorientations, “family patterns changed from loose collateral kindreds to clearly defined agnatic (patrilineal) descent groups,” which in turn “heightened aristocratic family consciousness of inheritance culminating in a tightening of lineage in favour of agnatic primogeniture” (ibid.). These changes, and the birth of dynasticism, are tied in Teschke’s account to territorial expansion: “primogeniture created the problem of landless nobles, excess cadets, who were to play a crucial role in the process of feudal expansion” (ibid.). And when he moves from medieval to early modern Europe, he sees geopolitical relations, as
“dynastic family business” (ibid., 222). “Proprietary kingship,” as Teschke argues, “meant that the social relations of international intercourse were largely identical with the ‘private’ family affairs of monarchs” (ibid.).

We thus have a period from around AD 1000 to the middle of the 19th century dominated by what is conceptualised as dynasticism. We saw Teschke above refer to dynasticism as “family business,” and that divisions between “private” and “public” affairs are obsolete. This, however, creates new questions that the IR community needs to answer. If we have a period of over eight centuries dominated by interests other than state interests, how are we to make sense of this? What, essentially, are dynastic interests or the logics by which dynasts create their political strategies?

2.3 Dynasticism: an unexplored concept

In his book, The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe, Nexon warns the reader that “[r]eason of dynasty, rather than contemporary notions of reason of state, drove international-political competition” (2009, 68). In both the title of the book and his mantra about dynasticism, Nexon echoes Garret Mattingly’s claim that the “struggle for power had a dynastic, not a national orientation” (1988, 140). This is also argued by Benno Teschke, who writes that “public policy and, a fortiori, foreign policy were not conducted in the name of raison d’État or the national interest, but in the name of dynastic interests” (2002, 13). The problem is that such dynastic interests, or reasons of dynasty, are left untheorised. As such, it remains a hallow concept to which one can tie anything one can conceive as being in the interests of the dynasty.

Writing extensively about dynasticism and highlighting the importance of dynastic interests, one should expect Vivek Sharma, Daniel Nexon, and Benno Teschke all to have well-developed accounts on this concept. But a full exploration of dynasticism is unfortunately lacking. They all make great contributions to the historical sociological developments of the modern international system. They all reach back beyond 1648 and theorise international

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6 For variations of this argument IR, see Navari (2007); Frankel (1969); Green (2007); Bull (1977); Reus-Smit (1999: 87-121); Shennan (2005); Buzan (2014) This is also a concept noted by historians and historical sociologists, see Tilly (1994); Anderson (1974); Geevers and Marini (2015, 1-22); Geevers (2015); De Ridder (2017); Wilson (2008a, 2008b); Duindam (2015); Rowlands (2002).
relations in pre-modern times. However, due to their focus on the development of the modern state-system, they exclude certain aspects of medieval and early modern international relations that are crucial in order to understand the periods in their own right. And this becomes clear once we view one of the international practices they all deem central to this period: dynastic marriages. First, they focus exclusively on the importance of the cadets of the dynasty, leaving unexplained the decisions made for the cadets’ oldest brother, and heir, as well as for their sisters. These, too, were vital in the marital strategies for the dynasty; as we will see, the marriages of the two other categories of children in the dynasty were used to forge alliances, for peace-settlements, and to reproduce the dynasty both biologically and socially. The second problem arise from the former: as these accounts only focus on the cadets, they leave the term “reason of dynasty” or dynastic interests unexplored. Due to the specific case of cadet marriages, dynastic interests are portrayed as only including territorial expansion.

Other scholars, however, highlight different aspects of dynasticism. As we saw above, Martin Wight argues that, in addition to territorial expansion in the name of dynastic interests, dynasts also have an interest in forming friendly connections with other dynasties. “Alliances were consolidated by dynastic marriages,” he writes, and “[r]eversals of alliance were marked by matrimonial disengagements” (1972, 2; cf. Saco 1997). Whether such alliances were formed due to religious identities, as opposed to the raison de famille (de Carvalho 2014), or because inter-dynastic alliances were an institution that dynasts are “unable to give satisfactory explanations for,” (Fichtner 1976, 246) is unclear. But what remains is a dynastic interest that reaches beyond the strict geopolitical focus given by Sharma, Teschke, and Nexon.

Moreover, some scholars also highlight the issue of reproduction as an important aspect of dynasticism. In fact, it is argued that the prime reasons for dynastic marriages was not territorial expansion nor forming alliances, but “to bear children and establish a clear line of succession” (Saco 1997, 294). “By marrying and having children,” Diana Saco argues, a dynast “could settle the question of an heir to the throne (ibid.). Reproduction, however, is perhaps too obvious to be included in theoretical explorations of dynasticism. Scholars who generally focus on other aspects of dynasticism do note the importance of this issue, but it is taken for granted rather than scrutinised. Fichtner, for instance, writes that “the production of legitimate heirs was a cardinal function of dynastic marriages” (1976, 245), and Teschke
argues that the “biologically determined play of chances of dynastic genealogy and family reproduction...determined the very nature of early modern geopolitics” (2002, 14). But as they advance grander arguments of alliances and geopolitics, the politics of reproduction is often lost in the mix.

Conclusions
We have, thus, three different interests that all can be attached to dynasticism: geopolitics, alliances, and reproduction. But the concept of dynasticism, still, remains unpenetrated; these interests three interests do not, generally, arise from a theorisation of dynasticism, but rather from the topic or case the scholars seek to understand. Sharma, Teschke, and Nexon’s omission of other aspects of dynasticism, for instance, are understandable considering their historical-sociological argument; as the geopolitical outcomes of cadet marriages were, arguably, the most crucial aspect of European state-formation, we could not expect the three theorists considered to explore all sides of dynasticism. But we are, nevertheless, left with an undertheorised concept that could, potentially, help scholars understand a period stretching from the High Middle Ages to the 19th century.

Furthermore, as all of these scholars are in agreement that dynastic marriages were the crucial mean through which dynastic ends were met, it becomes increasingly important to study these marriages in their own right. What interests were involved in shaping a dynasty’s matrimonial strategy, and how were dynastic children used as political tools to acquire such interests? These become crucial questions to answer if we are to understand pre-modern international relations in its own right. As we cannot extrapolate the concept of Raison d’État back in time to inform political strategies in medieval and early modern Europe, we need new theorisations and new understandings of the workings of dynasticism in general, and the functions of dynastic marriages in particular. This, to a large extent, is this thesis’ goal.
3 Methods and Methodology

This thesis attempts to construct a theoretical framework enabling explanations of the logics underpinning dynasticism itself, and the dynastic marriages of medieval Europe. This theoretical framework will be constructed using historiographical literature on medieval Europe, and the framework will later be used to explain the marriages of the heirs, cadets, and daughters of three medieval dynasties: the Plantagenets, the Capetians, and the Hohenstaufens. In the previous chapter, we explored why such a study is needed. But jumping right into a theoretical construction and application will be a premature move; both the general tasks of constructing theory and applying it to history open up a series of methodological and methodical questions that are in need of answers.

These issues will be dealt with in this present chapter. The first section is divided into two issues. The first issue arises from the interdisciplinary nature of the dissertation’s research question; how, in essence, to we combine the social-scientific usage of theoretical models to enlighten cases and phenomena belonging to the discipline of history? In this, we will explore why the method used in this dissertation—ideal-typification—is necessary for a historically-oriented social scientific study. The second issue builds on the first, and deals with the methodological and methodical problems of conducting historical analyses in IR. The problem discussed is that of the usage of secondary sources, and it will as such involve reflections about the data used in the dissertation’s analyses. The next section outlines the methodological underpinnings of the method used in the dissertation, as well as specifics about its usage and evaluation. The last section outlines the spatial and temporal scopes of the dissertation, and will explain to where and when the theoretical model is applicable, as well as the reasons for analysing the three dynasties in question.

3.1 Social Science, History, and International Relations

In the last chapter, we discussed various IR theorists, ranging from the realist mainstream of the discipline to more critical approaches, who effectively conduct studies of history. In fact,
all theoretical strands of the discipline do, to some degree, engage with historical material. Recently, however, a number of proponents for a more historically-oriented IR have criticised the discipline’s mainstream for being a-historical (Reus-Smit 2002). This, undoubtedly, establishes a separation between conducting historical studies and using history in social scientific studies (Lawson 2010). While the former takes the contexts and particularities of history to be the starting point for their analyses, the latter use history as a laboratory to develop and test their theories. As the present study falls squarely in between the two, this binary—between history and social science—needs to be broken down before we can proceed with the analysis.

First, there are a number of ways to “do history,” without being a historian. Surely, when mainstream theorists use history to develop and test theories, their studies cannot be classified as a-historical. John Hobson and George Lawson makes a useful distinction between being a-historical and being a-historicist. While neorealists, they argue, are not a-historical, they cannot claim to be engaging in historicism. They classify the mainstream’s way of doing history as “History without Historicism” (2008, 420). Historicism “is a mode of historical enquiry that recognises the specificity of events within their temporal and spatial contexts and rejects transhistorical categories that render history as exhibiting isomorphic properties” (ibid., 422). As a way of example, Marcus Fischer, a realist theorist whom we discussed in the previous chapter, do conduct a historical study of medieval geopolitics, but fails to meet historicist criteria as he extracts theoretical categories of the realist framework—like anarchy and balance of power—to enlighten a time-period without paying attention to the temporal specificities of medieval Europe (1992).

It is not the case, however, that mainstream theorists shun being classified as a-historicist. In fact, the opposite is true; they argue, effectively, that a social scientific IR, though not a-historical, should revert from historicist analyses of international phenomena. Colin and Mirjam Elman, for instance argue that “[p]olitical scientists are not historians, nor should they be. There are real and enduring epistemological and methodological differences that divide the two groups, and there is great value in recognising, maintaining and honouring

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7 For an overview of this line of critique, see also the other chapters in Hobden and Hobson (2002). See also Schroeder (1994).
8 For a sustained critique of Fischer’s use of history, see Hall and Kratochwil (1993).
these distinctions” (2001, 35). And, further, clarifying the division of labour between the two
disciplines:

Political scientists are more likely to look to the past as a way of supporting or
discrediting theoretical hypotheses, while historians are more likely to be
interested in past international events for their own sake. Although political
scientists might turn to the distant past, the study of ‘deep’ history is relevant to
their research objectives only insofar as it enables them to generate, test or
refine theory. By contrast, for the historian, the goal of theory building and
testing is secondary—the past interests for itself (ibid., 7)

Thus maintaining boundaries between a theoretically informed social or political science and
a historian’s a-theoretical mode of enquiry, Elman and Elman foreclose any possibility of the
theoretically informed historicist study this dissertation attempts to do. However, there are a
great number of scholars in both historical sociology and IR who disagrees that there are any
fundamental methodological differences between the two disciplines. Lawson notes, for
instance, that “much of both social science and history can be seen as forms of research
which attempt to derive connections beyond the lurches of historical events, yet which do not
contain a predetermined script within them” (2010, 219). The research programme these
scholars proposes is “an historicist approach which is able to construct a narrative while
simultaneously being open to issues of contingency, unintended consequences, particularity
and contextuality” (Hobson and Lawson 2008, 431). One way of methodologically and
methodically conducting a historicist IR study, Lawson argues, is through ideal-typification
(2010, 219-220). This will be the method used in this present analysis, and it will be
discussed further in detail below.

Although one can bridge the gap between history and social science by using specific
methods that lend themselves well to historicism, there are other cleavages that needs
addressing. The perhaps most central among these are the use of sources. While the
traditional historian’s method is oftentimes archival research, and the data used are first-hand
source material, the social scientist, when delving into historical problems, usually bases her
studies on secondary accounts. This is also true for this thesis; both the theorisation of
dynastic marriages, as well as the application of the theory, will exclusively use secondary
source material. There are a number of reasons why both this study and historical social
scientific studies do this. First, the social scientist is usually not trained to interpret pre-
modern source material. But, perhaps more importantly, the number of sources and data which would need to be interpreted for the analytically wide-stretching studies of a historicist social scientific study would be untenable. As Theda Skocpol argues, “a dogmatic insistence on redoing primary research for every investigation would be disastrous; it would rule out most comparative-historical research” (1984, 382).

Nevertheless, there are some immediate problems with basing one’s studies on secondary accounts. Criticising historical sociological writings in the discipline of sociology, John H. Goldthorpe argues that relying on secondary sources would mean not getting access to the pure facts of the historical “relics,” as he calls the primary source material historians analyse. Rather, historical sociological studies are based on historians’ interpretations of these relics, or, even, historians’ interpretations of other historians’ interpretations. Historical sociologists, he writes “have to treat the facts, or indeed concatenations of facts or entire ‘accounts’, that they find in secondary sources as if they were relatively discrete and stable entities that can be ‘excerpted’ and then brought together in order that some larger design may be realized” (1991, 221). Moreover, Ian S. Lustick (1996) have raised the concern that the use of history and historiography in political science could lead to a selection bias, whereby one picks and chooses the historiographical interpretations that suits one’s theoretical claims.10

These are without doubt serious concerns for a historically-oriented IR study. There are, however, some ways to avoid the concerns Goldthorpe and Lustick voice. First, not all of the data drawn from secondary sources are interpretations of the original source material. Joseph M. Bryant makes a useful distinction between “reportage” and “interpretation,” whereby the former “consists of information that pertains to basic questions of what, when, who, how many etc.” (1994, 14).11 When this present study presents basic facts such as who married whom, who divorced whom, at what age did a couple marry, and was the father alive when one of his children got married, these could be classified as reportages instead of interpretations. In such a case, the secondary accounts reporting the occurring events, become primary sources; the information about the marriages, written by historians, become a source in itself (see Moses and Knutsen 2012, 204-206). Undoubtedly the author needs to be cautious when using secondary sources for such information, but the minimal interpretation

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11 Such “reportages” are also what Topolosci (1999, 200-201) refers to as “basic information” and Bailyn (1982) terms “manifest events.”
that has gone into producing these secondary works will make us confident that, if factual errors occur, it will not drastically affect the analysis.

More caution will be needed, however, when developing the theoretical model which will guide the historical exploration. As the theoretical framework will undoubtedly involve more interpretations than reportages—by using secondary sources on the changes of family dynamics in medieval Europe—the next chapter of this theses is more in danger of selection bias than the latter three. In the next chapter, one of the fundamental claims—a claim also made in the IR literature, as we saw in the previous chapter, by Sharma, Teschke, and Nexon—that there were fundamental alterations, around the year AD 1000, to the way Europeans structured their families, thus enabling the rise of the dynasty. As this historical argument is both a building block of this study, as well as a theoretical argument made by historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, it will have to avoid the pitfall of selection bias; we will, in other words, have to review the historiographical debates in detail to see if the disagreements among the interpretations of these historical sources vary to such an extent that it will fundamentally alter the argument of this thesis.

3.2 Ideal-Typification

When constructing and using theoretical frameworks to investigate and explain history, one is immediately placed on the social scientific side of the social science-history binary. But there are a number of different ways to construct, use, and understand theoretical frameworks, and even historians use, to some degree, narratives akin to the models deployed in the social sciences. As Peter Burke explains, a “narrative account of the French Revolution, for example, is a model in the sense that it is bound to simplify events and also to stress their coherence in order to tell an intelligible story” (1996, 28). Indeed, an increasing amount of scholars in IR have started to pay attention to the usefulness of narrative explanations, and the similarities between the archetypical historian’s narratives, and the narratives hidden in our IR theories (Suganami 1999, 2008; Kratochwil 2006) Geoffrey Lawson has even classified it as a “narrative turn” in IR (2006).
When moving from the narrative account to the theoretical framework, Peter Burke adds another element to the narrative and theory as both intellectual constructs and devices of simplification: theoretical frameworks are, unlike the traditional narrative account, interested in emphasising “the recurrent, the general and the typical, which it presents in the form of clusters of traits or attributes” (1996, 28). A theoretical framework like this, he argues, is synonymous with Max Weber’s famous methodological use of ideal-typification. An ideal-typical framework, however, is different from other ways of theorising in the social sciences (see Hvidsten 2014). As such, it is vital, before delving into the method of ideal-typification, to discern on what meta-theoretical foundations inform the method. These methodological underpinnings will also become crucial in understanding how to use, understand, and evaluate an ideal-typical model.

A constructive point-of-departure for carving out the essential methodological specificities of the ideal-typical theory is arguably found in Patric Thaddeus Jackson’s (2011) theoretical framework of different philosophies of science often employed in IR. In making this framework, Jackson establishes a vital difference between scientific and philosophical ontology. While the former regards what the world consists of, be that individuals, states, processes, or practices, the latter concerns itself with the researcher’s “hook-up” to the world. Different philosophical-ontological positions, according to Jackson, can be separated into two core wagers: 1) the relationship between the researcher and the world; and 2) the specific knowledge the researcher has access to. Regarding the first, the researcher and the world is either analytically separated or united; making the two distinct philosophical-ontological positions of mind-world dualism and mind-world monism, respectively. The second wager, however, delineates two different positions on the relationship between knowledge and observation, whereas one—phenomenalism—is “super-empirical,” meaning that the knowledge the researcher can hope to acquire can only be based on the researcher’s experiences. The other—transfactualism—opens “the possibility of going beyond the facts to grasp the deeper processes and factors that generate those facts” (Ibid., 37).

A traditional theoretical model has, oftentimes, a commitment to a realist philosophy of science (Hvidsten 2014). Following Jackson’s framework, this means that the process tracer’s “hook-up” to the world is a combination of mind-world dualism and transfactualism. This position is the stark opposite to the analyticist methodology that informs the ideal type: the analyticist researcher commits herself to both mind-world monism and phenomenalism. This
means, first, that knowledge is not based on objective facts or mechanisms existing in a mind-independent world. Rather, knowledge is found “in the social practices in which people (and scientists are surely people too!) engage as they live their lives and go about their business” (Jackson, 2011: 126). In other words, objective knowledge is nowhere to be found, as our knowledge of the world is continuously related to the practices we engage in or the values we possess; there is no Archemedian point from which scientists can view the world, as we are already so intertwined in the worldly doings. But departing from objective, mind-independent knowledge, however, does not mean that knowledge is purely subjective or relative or even arbitrary. As knowledge-production builds on and is itself a practice, it is not subjective but inter-subjective, “occupying a public space external to the individual minds of the participants but not therefore independent of all minds in general” (ibid., 129).

Theories, in an analyticist sense, are themselves analytical constructs, or what Max Weber terms *Gedankenbild* (Lawson 2010: 219). Weber writes that:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical construct* (*Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct…cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a *utopia* (1949, 90, emphasis original).

Jackson elaborates nicely on what Weber means with this: “An analytical stance is one that seeks to ground the production of knowledge in concrete practical involvements of the researcher and does so through a strategy involving the instrumental oversimplification of complex, actual situations; these deliberate oversimplifications, or *ideal-types*, are then utilized to form case-specific ‘analytical narratives’ that explain particular outcomes.” (Jackson 2010, p.142). These ideal types, or analytical constructs, are thus not philosophical abstractions of phenomena, akin to the rational actor, but needs also to factor in a historical reproduction of reality. As Edward Keene stresses, “philosophical abstractions” and “historical reproductions of reality” need to “be balanced rather than one being privileged over the other” (1998, 57).

But, it is important to note that these ideal-types, albeit their usefulness in explaining outcomes, can never generate any scientific truth; they are useful in making sense of
experienced situations. Furthermore, they are not value-free concepts: "the whole procedure of ideal-typical analysis is all about the transmutation of cultural values into useful analytical tools." (Jackson 2010, 144) This point is crucial, as any theorising about dynasticism, for instance, can and will come from theorists with different cultural values, and thusly, it is possible that they will focus on different aspects of the same object of enquiry. Nevertheless, and this is central, neither of them are necessarily "wrong" theorisations: idealisation of concepts or institutions, such as anarchy, sovereignty or dynasticism, is not about getting them as accurate as possible to reality, they are "nothing like pictorial representation of objects or processes; they are more like deliberate caricatures or partial sketches, or perhaps specialized conceptual filters that focus our scholarly attention on particular aspects of actually existing things to the detriment of other aspects of those same things." (ibid., 145)

So, how do we evaluate an idealised theoretical model? They “cannot be ‘refuted’ by a case that contradicts the concept...The only test of an ideal type is whether it explains the phenomena under investigation” (Hekman 1983, 36, emphasis original) Thus, in evaluating the idealised concepts, we need to "examine whether, once applied, the ideal-type is efficacious in revealing intriguing and useful things about the objects to which is applied." (Jackson, 2010, 152) Thus, any evaluation of any idealised, theoretical framework, should assess its usefulness in explaining one concrete case, not cases in general. In this concrete case, the evaluation of its usefulness should be on whether a scholar is able "to discriminate between adequate, coincidental, and incidental factors within it" (ibid., 152). As Watkins argues, the ideal type is constructed and used “to assist in the detection of disturbing factors, such as habit and tradition, which deflect actual individuals from a rational course of action” (1952, 25). As such, it should, if useful, help us tease out the case-specific factors that led outcomes to differ from the ideal-typical framework.

### 3.3 The Study’s Spatial and Temporal Scope

The first limit of both the ideal-typical framework, and, necessarily, the application of which, is spatial. The geographical scope is, similarly to Vivek Swaroop Sharma’s (2005) study of dynasticism, to that of “Latin Christendom.” This means that non-Christian polities, such as the Ottoman Empire, are excluded from the analysis. The reason for which follows logically.
from the topic in question. As Sharma explains, the “dynastic institutional structure…emerge only in Catholic medieval Europe” (2005, 27). As we saw in reviewing Sharma and Benno Teschke above, and as will be discussed further in the next chapter, dynasticism emerged in medieval Europe with the changing family structures from a clan-based family (*Geschlecht*) to a vertically-structured family (*Sippe*). As these changes occurred first in Latin Christendom, these changes necessarily preclude the analysis from spatially stretching the theoretical model outside of this region.

The theoretical framework, thus, should spatially be applicable to all dynasties in medieval Latin Christendom. The exploration and application of the theory, however are further limited to the marriages of three dynasties: the Plantagenets, the Capetians, and the Hohenstaufens. This does not mean that any other dynasty that have developed the necessary institutional structures cannot be analysed using the theoretical framework; it only means that this present study has limited it to three dynasties. But the choice of dynasties is not made arbitrarily. All of the three families under question were central on the European marriage market in the Middle Ages (Rhys Davies 1998, 28). The members of the dynasties were also kings and emperors of some of the most powerful polities in medieval Europe, and should thusly be useful for such an analysis. While the Plantagenets and Capetians were, respectively, the kings of England and France, the Hohenstaufen dynasty were both kings of Germany, as well as the Holy Roman Emperors.

Moreover, the Hohenstaufen dynasty had not developed the same institutional structures as the other two. The logics behind the dynasty’s marriages, thus, should be expected to differ from the other two. As the Hohenstaufen dynasty had yet to institutionalise the practice of primogeniture, whereby the eldest son inherits the throne as well as the patrimony to the exclusion of younger sons, all sons should be expected to marry according to the same logics, as all of them are heirs. This issue, however, will be discussed further in Chapter 6 below. What is necessary to note here is that this case serves as a useful test for the theoretical model: if the model is useful, we should expect to see differing logics when it comes to Hohenstaufen marriages compared to both the Plantagenets and Capetians.

This dissertation is also bound temporally. This means that, although this is a study of *medieval* Europe, it will necessarily not be applicable to its entirety (AD 500-1500). Rather, we have limited the scope from ca. 1150-1350. The period of 150 years is chosen for two
reasons. First, as the institution of dynasticism does not emerge until around the year AD 1000, this necessarily precludes any analysis of the Early Middle Ages. It does not, however, preclude analyses extending beyond 1300; and as we have seen in the last chapter, dynasticism remained as the prime form of rule until the 18th century. But the limit of 1150-1300 is set, second, by the three dynasties in question. Although the House of Capet had its first kings of France in the 10th century, both the Hohenstaufen and the Plantagenet dynasties emerged in the middle of the 12th century. Similarly, although the House of Plantagenet had kings of England until 1400, both the Capetian and the Hohenstaufen dynasties died out, respectively, in 1328 and 1268. As such, I have for these reasons, and of restrictions of the space of the dissertation, limited the scope from the middle of the 12th century to the middle of the 14th.

Conclusions
The method used to theorise and explain the strategies by which dynasts married will be to construct an ideal-typical framework, balancing philosophical generalised abstractions with a reconstruction of historical reality. The framework, moreover, will need to analytically delineate the specific forces that drove the different dynastic marriages. These forces are drawn out from the institution of the dynasty itself; the specific logics by which these marriages were arranged arose, in other words, from the newly developed structure of the family. These issues will be explained further in the next chapter. In the three last chapters of the dissertation, this ideal-typical framework will be applied to marriages of three different dynasties in medieval Europe: the Capetians, the Hohenstaufens, and the Plantagenets. The framework, as an idealisation, will not be able to explain all marriages of these families, nor will it be “tested” against the evidence; but it will, if useful, be able to explain the general patterns of the marriages, and it will be able to separate the “adequate” causes for a marriage, and the “coincidental” causes.
Towards a Theory of Dynasticism

Dynasticism remains, although noted and explored by various theorists in IR, an undertheorised and vague concept. This is unfortunate for the discipline, as a greater understanding of dynasticism would help scholars explain and theorise pre-modern international relations. To this end, this chapter will attempt to open up the black box of dynasticism. First, it will theorise the concept by explaining how the very forces that gave rise to dynasticism itself also constructed structures vital for understanding dynastic actors, interests, and strategies. Second, it will utilise this theorisation to develop an ideal-typical framework to explain the most important dynastic strategy: marriages. Essentially, this framework will be able to answer the question set out at the start of this thesis: by which logics did dynasts marry their offspring?

4.1 Theorising Dynasticism

There is broad agreement among historians and anthropologists that there was a transformation in kinship structures in Europe around the turn of the first millennium. It is from this literature both Sharma and Teschke draw inspiration for their historical-sociological arguments about the birth of dynasticism. The three central figures of the transformation argument, and with whom most debates centre around, are Georges Duby (1977; 1983), Karl Schmid (1979), and Gerd Tellenbach (1957). They all conducted studies, from the 1950s through the 1970s, on aristocratic families and their changing family structures (Sabean and Teuscher 2007, 4).

In the early middle ages, the family was structured as what anthropologists call the Sippen, which was more like a clan than a tightly knit family. The Sippen was horizontally linked and “[h]ierarchies within these groups were not defined by specific genealogical constellations, but by individual members’ positions outside their kin group” (Sabean and Teuscher 2007, 4). One’s power-position, in other words, was due to one’s personal not genealogical proximity to the ruler. The head of the family, which in a royal family was the king, did not practice monogamy, nor did he distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate offspring. All

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the king’s offspring could therefore claim his patrimony after his death, thus making the division of which almost endless. Moreover, the political offices tied to the head of the family were not strictly hereditary, and no orderly rule of succession existed. All sons and daughters could therefore make their claim to the throne, making the succession a conflictual affair.

When we approach the turn of the first millennium, we see aristocratic families change their successional practices. This is when anthropologists mark a move from the *Sippen* to the *Geschlecht*, a move both historians and, as we have seen above, theorists in IR have linked to the birth of the dynasty.\(^{13}\) In order to keep an undivided patrimony within the family and to have an orderly succession so that political power, too, could pass on to the immediate family members, aristocratic families begun to practice primogeniture: the eldest son would succeed his father and inherit his patrimony, thus excluding both younger sons and daughters (Jochens 1987, 331). This is the first move towards a political order ruled by dynasticism; families become tighter, wealthier, and more powerful as the patrimony and the political offices tied to it are passed on undivided. A father would no longer need to divide his lands among his sons, thus gradually weakening the power-hold the family had.

**Hierarchy of Dynastic Actors**

With such an organisation, it established “hierarchies within the new patrilineal dynasties [which] came to be defined by gender, birth order, and descent, emphasizing vertical structural patterns” (Sabean and Teuscher 2007, 5). Hierarchies within the dynasty were, of course, not new. But what was new, was that the factors determining the hierarchy were genealogical. First, the broadest factor was what Sabean and Teuscher terms “descent,” meaning that the dynasty was patrilineal, or followed the father’s lineage. This means that in the order of succession, and in the dynasty’s hierarchy, actors from the matrilineal line were excluded. In a royal family, for instance, the queen consort, and her descendants in the patrilineal and matrilineal line, were eliminated from the order of succession.

Second, within the patrilineal line, the hierarchy was decided by gender. Female descendants within the lineage were excluded at the expense of men.\(^{14}\) In the dynasty’s pecking order, daughters will thus remain at the bottom of the hierarchy. They were in most royal families

\(^{13}\) For the historical and anthropological literature, see footnote above. For the review of the IR literature, see Chapter 2.

\(^{14}\) See amongst others Brundage (1987); Ennen (1989); Herlihy (1995)
excluded in the order of succession, but as Sharma (2005; 2015) argues, this was not always the case for all noble families. Nevertheless, although women could, potentially, inherit both political and private property, they would not do that at the expense of any male relatives. Third, male descendants were ordered according to their date of birth. This, however, does not mean that age determined, in all cases, the order of succession. The dynast’s younger brother, for instance, was not higher up in the hierarchy than the dynast’s eldest son, just because he was his senior. What it does mean is that, among the dynastic children, the eldest son was favoured to the exclusion of younger sons (Turner 1995, 83).

This hierarchical ordering within the Geschlecht created different categories of the offspring; the family now had a tripartite division between the heir, the younger sons, and the daughters. With the changes towards a vertically structured family, there was now a hierarchical ordering of dynastic actors. After the paterfamilias himself, the most important dynastic actor was the eldest son. Further down the order came the dynasty’s cadets, meaning either the head of the family’s younger sons, his younger brothers, or his father’s younger brothers. They were all excluded at the expense of each heir in the vertical line, but had the preference over every female descendants within the patrilineal family. This means that, at the bottom of the hierarchy, were dynastic daughters, sisters, or aunts.\(^5\) This had crucial bearings on how a dynasty operated and how dynasticism can be theorised: if we are to understand dynastic interests, and use raison de famille with any utility, they will most likely be influenced by the hierarchy of dynastic actors.

**Hierarchy of Dynastic Interests**

Among the interests of the dynasty, as we saw in Chapter 2, were reproduction, territorial conquests, and alliances. These interests, however, were never theorised, but only noted as important for the survival and benefits of the dynasty. But once we have determined that, with the changes towards a Geschlecht, a hierarchy emerged among the dynastic actors, so we can begin to theorise the pecking order of dynastic interests. In essence, both the changes towards agnatic primogeniture pan out a hierarchy among dynastic interests. Dynasticism, as such, is not a hollow concept to which scholars can tie, arbitrarily, all conceivable interests a family might have. Rather, dynastic interests, just like the order of dynastic actors, are hierarchically structured.

\(^{15}\) For anthropological accounts of the structure of primogeniture, see (Schusky 1965); Graburn (1971); Fox (1967); Keesing (1975).
The changes towards agnatic primogeniture establish two distinct interests for the dynasty: first, to ensure the dynastic lineage would continue; second, to keep the dynastic patrimony undivided. These need to be tackled in their order of importance. While both, of course, are crucial interests for any dynasty, and they both emerge from the changing family structures, reproduction takes precedence as it has the most fatal consequences if not fulfilled: it would mean the end of the dynasty all together. A divided patrimony, in contrast, would not be as detrimental; it would only cause a fragmented dynasty.

As the practice of primogeniture designated only one heir, it became increasingly important for the dynasty that this heir safeguarded the continued vertical line running through the dynasty’s history (Goody 1970). Reproduction, thus, took a prime role in the pecking order of dynastic interests (Fichtner 1976). Factoring in this motivation might seem like—and indeed, to some extent is—an obvious fact, a truism: human beings have, whether due to biological or social forces, always had incentives to reproduce. But this mere fact underscores the importance of reproduction for dynasts and, especially, dynasts of a royal family. The importance of reproduction for the medieval European dynasties was tied to the very changes that others have argues gave birth to the dynasty. When the family structure changed from a Sippe to a Geschlecht, the structural lines which defined the family were altered. Whereas horizontal lines of association were the defined structure of the Sippe, the emergence of the Geschlecht gave gradually more credence to the opposite lines: the vertical (Lewis 1981, 4).

This gave rise to the all-important concept for a dynasty, that of lineage (Barthélémy 1988, 90) This concept, although not new to the High Middle Ages, its importance was nevertheless severely altered. As noble dynasties were constructed, it was vital to find a common ancestor to define the starting-point of the lineage. As David Crouch argues, “[w]riters in the middle of the twelfth century used the word frequently and unequivocally to refer to people vertically linked by common ancestry” (2005, 125). When so much importance was tied to the vertical lines running through the family history, a childless marriage could potentially mean the end of the dynasty. All their political offices, all their territorial belongings, would thus be up for grabs by other dynasties. As such, both the emergence of agnatic

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16 See Hrdy and Judge (1993); Goody (1983, 10-11; 232-233); Barthélémy (1988, 90); Crouch (2005, 124-155)
17 See Bullough (1969, 3-18); Goody (2000); Gaunt (2001).
18 See also Livingstone (2010).
primogeniture, and its consequential hierarchy of dynastic actors, establish structural forces that make reproduction a prime interest of the dynasty.

This argument can be followed to denote the next interest in line in the dynastic pecking order. If primogeniture excluded all possible heirs for the benefit of one, and this was done for the patrimony to be kept intact, an additional interest of the dynasty must have been to keep the patrimony and its political offices undivided. The consequences of which, however, was that both younger sons and daughters were left unendowed (Bullough 1969, 6). In order to secure an undivided patrimony, thus, a dynast had two immediate options: either allow them to live in the castle they grew up in and be provided for by the family or be sent to the military (Teschke 2003, 90-92) or to the Church (Sharma 2015, 16). The problem with these two options was that they did not come with any additional benefits for the dynasty; dynastic children were vital assets that could be used by the dynasty to acquire further interests (Gillingham 2001, 25).

A third option, that would both ensure an undivided patrimony, while still adding benefits to the dynasty, was to arrange beneficial marriages for them. The most viable solution to this conundrum was a marriage that would guarantee territories to rule for the undenedowed children: he or she would acquire lands they otherwise would have inherited before the practice of primogeniture, while still adding territories to the overall amount ruled by the dynasty. As such, second in the hierarchy of dynastic interests was the acquisition of territories. We see here a familiar theme for modern IR, where political interests are determined by logics of geopolitics. But, the geopolitical interests of the dynasty are not as much a logic to acquire as much land as possible to expand the dynasty’s power, as it is about the logistics of keeping the patrimony undivided, while simultaneously not abandoning the second and third most important dynastic actors. Territorial expansion, thus, becomes a crucial interest for the dynasty. But as heirs are already provided with his father’s territories, territorial acquisitions come second-in-line of the interests of the dynasty.

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19 On the importance marriages for obtaining dynastic interests, see Anderson (1974: 39); Parrott (1997; Teschke (2002; 2003)


21 On the “logics of geopolitics” in medieval Europe, see Fischer (1992); Latham (2013). On geopolitics as territorial conquest, see Hui (2004).
However, as dynastic actors were separated from one another based on gender, this was an option only available for the cadets. Only the cadets could marry heiresses to acquire territory for themselves to rule, while still adding to the dynasty’s total land-holdings. A marriage arranged for dynastic daughters, thus, would involve different interests than that of cadets. It would also be different than that of heirs, as any children produced by such a marriage would belong to the patrilineal line of another dynasty. In consequence, the only feasible option available for daughters, with respects to keeping the patrimony undivided, while still being beneficial for the dynasty, was to marry them off to someone who it would be in the interest of the dynasty to befriended (Fichtner 1976)22. Third and last in the hierarchy of dynastic interests, thus, was diplomacy: to either settle a conflict or ally with another dynasty.

Hierarchy of Dynastic Strategies

The two hierarchies established—of actors and of interests—construct a third hierarchy: a hierarchy of dynastic strategies. To tease out this argument, it will be instructive to briefly summarise the logic leading up to this. As agnatic primogeniture arose, this established a hierarchy of dynastic actors; the king and his heir on top, followed by the cadets and the patrilineal females of the dynasty. Together with agnatic primogeniture, this hierarchical structure gave us, moreover, a hierarchy of dynastic interests. As primogeniture made it increasingly important to reproduce for the heir, and as the heir was the most important dynastic actor, thus reproduction became the most important dynastic interests; and so followed the next interests for the next actor in line.

If reproduction, territorial acquisitions, and alliances were the most important interests of the dynasty, and if these interests pan onto the various dynastic actors, there are structural incentives to choose a strategy by which all interests can be served for all dynastic actors. A strategy that would fulfil all these requirements was the dynastic marriage. While, as mentioned, the cadet could seek territory by conquest, war was not a strategy that would acquire any of the other of the dynastic interests. This, moreover, was the case with treaty-signing: while this could be a way to consummate alliances, none of the other interests would be met. As such, the dynastic marriage not only emerges as the top strategy due to the fact that the most important interest for the most important actor require it to be fulfilled; it can

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22 See also Fox (1967, 202-203); Hylland-Eriksen (1995, 114); Gaude-Ferragu (2016, 15).
also be used to acquire the interests for the other actors as well. It was thus through the hierarchical structures of the dynastic actors and interests a hierarchy of strategies emerged.

In total, agnatic primogeniture gave rise to three vital hierarchies in the structure of the dynasty: of actors, interests, and strategies. All of these hierarchies combined take us a long way in theorising dynasticism, and we can now explain why dynasties pursued certain strategies, involving various actors, to acquire specific interests without reverting to a hollow concept like “reasons of dynasty.” The next section will utilise this theory of dynasticism to build a framework which can map out the logics underpinning the marriages of the different dynastic actors.

### 4.2 The Strategies of Dynastic Marriages

In order for any dynasty to acquire all dynastic interests—reproduction, territory, and alliances—it needs to utilise the strategy of dynastic marriages. Only through these can all interests be met. Furthermore, any dynast need to assign each interest to each dynastic actor. This, we have seen, follows the hierarchies outlined above: the heir marries for reproduction, the cadet marries for territory, and the daughter marries for alliances. Each actor, thus, is specified a function according to their order in the genealogical hierarchy of the dynasty. But knowing that an heir, for instance, marries according to logics of reproduction only takes us so far. What characteristics are sought after in the potential partner are left unexplained. As such, this section will tease out the essential attributes which determined the marriages of each dynastic actor.

**Kings and Heirs**

When the king decided to assign one heir who will inherit the patrimony and his political office, he puts all the eggs in one basket. For this reason, he needs to make sure that his heir is able to pass these two endowments on to the next generation. The likelihood that a king would marry off his son to an aged heiress to a geopolitically important territory is thus slim; an old heiress would for the king be less likely to produce an heir for his eldest son, and he would be risking the continuity of his dynasty for territorial gains. The same doubts will undoubtedly arise in the king’s head were he to marry off his heir for diplomatic gains. In the hierarchy of factors determining an heir’s partner, the reproductive abilities of his chosen one
will most likely be at the top. And as such, the first characteristic determining an heir’s marriage is that of age.

The second characteristic is that of the potential partner’s familial background, meaning, quite literally, what blood runs through her veins. The metaphor most often used in medieval writings about lineage is that of blood. As David Crouch argues, “[t]he middle ages called a man’s relatives (in Latin) his consanguinei, ‘the people who share his blood’” (2005, 127). But blood was not simply a metaphor, as we use it today; it was also rooted in medieval medical knowledge about biological reproduction. It was believed that the “embryo grew out of the commixture of menstrual blood and sperm…the menses provided the matter from which the child grew and the sperm gave its shape and soul” (ibid.). As the character of the blood was passed onto the next generation, it was thus important to pass on noble blood to the offspring.

The central medieval idea was that an ignoble mother would not give birth to a fully noble son, and when the son was designated to rule the kingdom, this was of the utmost importance. As John Parsons argue, the partner’s “desirability came from her male kin’s sphere of influence, but high lineage established suitability for matrimony and maternity—as chroniclers said, good trees do not bear bad fruit” (Parsons 1998, 3). We thus see a pattern whereby kings and heirs, especially, marry partners equal in social status as themselves. This pattern has, among anthropologists and sociologist, a technical term: homogamy—meaning, quite simply, mating—but also marrying—a person equal to oneself.

What we should expect, then, when reviewing and analysing the marriages of the kings and the heirs is a pattern whereby two specific characteristics stand out as vital in the preference of marriage candidates: first, her reproductive abilities, which oftentimes are associated with her age, but also with her maternal history (if she has previously been unable to produce any male offspring, or any offspring at all); and secondly, her familial background, meaning, quite literally, what blood runs through her veins. We should, noting this second point, expect kings and heirs to marry, in the best case, a daughter of a royal family; due to constraints in the marriage market, we might also see them marrying a daughter of a count, duke, or margrave—all belonging by birth to the ranks of nobility.
Cadets

Dynastic cadets are abandoned children of a family who have prioritised their eldest brother for the overall benefit and survival of the dynasty. All the material goods, and most importantly, territories with attached political offices, were inherited by the heir. In consequence, as has been argued, it was in the interest of the dynasty to provide for the cadet without dividing the patrimony. Thus, the acquisition of territory became the second most important dynastic interest. But acquiring territory through conquest would only add land to the patrimony inherited by the eldest son; territories for the cadets needed to be provided by other means. The elegant solution to this problem was territorial acquisition through marriage. As such, there were different characteristics involved in the choice of the cadet’s partner, compared to the heir; the partner’s reproductive abilities and noble lineage did not determine a cadet marriage. The prime characteristic of the female partner that was sought after by the cadet, rather, was that of her right to her father’s patrimony.

This latter point is the argument made by Sharma. As we have explored earlier, he ties the birth of the dynasty to the rise of primogeniture, and further, the latter’s rise and the emergence of female inheritance to the establishment of a new type of polity: the dynastic union, or what Nexon terms the composite state. Primogeniture cannot account for these developments alone, Sharma argues, as “without female inheritance, the process of consolidation under primogeniture regime would have been extremely slow, since only male relatives would have inherited” (2015, 18). When daughters of dynasts were able to inherit both his private and his political properties, dynastic marriages took on a whole new meaning: “the acquisition of an heiress became as much of an imperative for ambitious dynasts as the launching of military campaigns aimed at territorial conquest” (ibid., 17).

Daughters

It is easy to underestimate the importance of daughters as political assets for the dynasty. Being located at the bottom of the hierarchy of dynastic actors, without any right to inherit, they can easily be relegated to a useless piece in the dynastic puzzle. But daughters, like their brothers, could be part of the dynasty’s grand strategies. So why were daughters such an important asset for the dynasty? Because, as any other social grouping, the dynasty was in need of establishing contacts with other dynasties. Such contacts could function in the form of diplomacy, as known in international relations today, where one dynasty enters into a
formal alliance with another dynasty. But it could also be, equally known in relations among modern states, to seal a peace settlement. Inter-dynastic marriages were perfect for such occasions, as the bond created between the two social groups were not just symbolised by ink on paper, as in a treaty; rather, it was sealed by a union of marriage. As Murielle Gaude-Ferragu writes on the matrimonial strategies of medieval France: “[m]atrimonial unions belonged to the realm of courtly diplomacy, both foreign and French. They made it possible to establish alliances between the great houses of Europe and reinforced France’s position on the European chessboard” (2016, 15). And further, “Among the various forms of reconciliation between states, marriage occupied a central role by creating new ties between groups that had recently become related. The woman played a crucial role by conveying peace between the involved families and, if she was a princess, to the entire kingdom” (ibid.: 16).

In order to tease out just how important these daughters were to an overall political strategy for a dynasty, it might be instructive to visit a marriage, or rather marriages, of one of the princesses which will be discussed later, in chapter 7. Eleanor was the daughter of King John of England, from the Plantagenet dynasty. However, as so often happens, the king dies before all of his children are of a marital age, thus shifting the burden over to the heir, which in this case was Henry, crowned as King Henry III. Eleanor’s first marriage was, as should be expected, part of a diplomatic settlement with the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshal, who had a territorial dispute with the crown. But William Marshal and Eleanor’s married life would not be long; he died, and Eleanor was once again available on the marriage market.

Although still bound to her family, and was to be married again according to King Henry’s will, her actions following her first husband’s death proves than the theory proposed here is not infallible. First, at the age of sixteen, she took a vow of chastity, thus removing most of her value on the marriage market. This was, evidently, an obstacle the king was able to overcome, as he, seven years later, married her to Simon de Montfort. This marriage was neither an alliance, nor a diplomatic settlement; it was simply a romantic affair on Eleanor’s part, and a service to a friend on Henry’s part. The reactions to which, however, proves perhaps that this marriage was the exception that proves the rule. The king’s brother, Richard of Cornwall, was furious for the lack of political benefits obtained from the marriage. And, as Elizabeth Thomas notes, Richard felt that “Henry III had, in essence, wasted one of his most
precious commodities” (2009, 48). This fury, which almost tipped England into a civil war, illustrates well just how important these daughters, or in this case sisters, were to the dynasty.

The “political benefits” the Plantagenets lost by wasting on of their most “precious commodities” was a potential ally that could prove useful to the dynasty. King Henry III might also have needed Eleanor to fully seal a settlement of one of the many disputes the dynasty was involved in. The sentiment behind these, that social groups are in need of forming alliances, is not exclusively a prerogative for the IR community, however; the phenomenon of alliances and, more specifically, matrimonial alliances, are key issues dealt with in the kinship literature in the discipline of anthropology. In Claude Lévi-Strauss’s seminal book, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969), he proposes a theory whereby the heart of kinship is not the shared descent of the involved, but rather the alliance created through matrimony. Indeed, Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes, “he argues that the very formation of society occurs when a man gives his sister away to another man, thereby creating ties of affinity” (1995, 114).

Although Lévi-Strauss’s studies were on the familial or tribal level, others have argued that the practice of matrimonial alliances is not limited to those levels. Robin Fox, for instance, argues that they function also on the international stage. The royal dynastic alliances, as will be studied in the chapters to follow, are in Fox’s argument a continuation of the matrimonial alliances found on a more local level by anthropologists (1967, 202-203; see also Fichter 1976, 250). In the grand scheme of medieval inter-dynastic relations, thus, marriages were used to tie social bonds between dynastic families, royal and non-royal. Of course, these bonds were also created in the marriages of both heirs and cadets. But, as explored, these marriages were to constrained by extant forces to be used for alliance-purposes alone. The princesses of royal dynasties, in contrast, were so valuable to the dynasty only because they were the only category of royal children whom the dynasty could “afford” to send away for diplomatic purposes. And, as we will see in chapter 7, most dynasts, unlike King Henry III, used this advantage to the fullest.
4.3 Ideal-Typical Framework of Dynastic Marriages

Making sense of dynastic marriages is a difficult task without the necessary theoretical tools at hand. Being left with loose concepts such as “reasons of dynasty” does not make this task any easier. The theorisation of dynasticism above, and the expansion of which to the strategies of dynastic marriages, will be helpful in this regard. It will assist us in grasping a complex system of beliefs and ideas that go into designing a matrimonial strategy for a dynasty. Before delving into the history of dynastic marriages in medieval Europe, however, it will be useful to systematise the theoretical insights into an ideal-typical framework. This framework will outline how the marriages of different dynastic actors, based on the hierarchy of dynastic interests, will most likely unfold. The framework, moreover, will also outline the counterfactual scenario: by which logics dynastic marriages would be arranged without the practice of primogeniture, and the consequential hierarchies of actors and interests.

The interests involved in the marriages of the different dynastic actors should by now be familiar. In a system of primogeniture, the heir marries to reproduce. This will be the strategy pursued by the dynast when he is searching for a potential partner for his eldest son. In order to increase the possibility of reproduction, a partner will moreover most likely be of a young age. And to ensure that a son with noble blood is born, she will also have been born into the same social class as the heir. For the cadet, in contrast, it is not reproduction that is ultimately sought, but territory. As such, neither age nor nobility are requirements necessary for his potential partner. For him, it is crucial to find a partner who have the rights to her father’s patrimony. As daughters cannot acquire territory nor provide an heir for the dynasty, she will be married to establish a friendship with a different dynasty. It is thus according to diplomatic interests her marriage is arranged.

These interests are panned onto the different dynastic actors due to the hierarchies constructed by primogeniture. In a counterfactual scenario, however, when the successional practice is not based on the eldest son as the sole inheritor, the logics of dynastic marriages change. First, in such a scenario, there would be no hierarchy of dynastic actors. Each of the dynastic children would inherit the same share of the patrimony, and the political lands of the dynasty would be divided between them. In consequence, dynastic interests would, secondly, be ordered differently. As all children are provided with both money and territory from the
patrimony, dynastic cadets are not in the immediate need to marry heiresses, and the daughters are on an equal standing to that of her brothers. This means that all children, as equal parts in the dynastic whole, will marry according to logics of reproduction: they will all need to reproduce in order to pass on their share of the patrimony down the line. Combining the theory of dynasticism with its counterfactual model, establish the following ideal-typical framework for dynastic marriages:

\[\text{Table 1: Ideal-Typical Framework of Dynastic Matrimonial Strategies}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successional structure</th>
<th>Primogeniture</th>
<th>Non-Primogeniture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynastic Actor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heir</td>
<td>Reproduction</td>
<td>Reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadet</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>Reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Alliances</td>
<td>Reproduction</td>
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It is vital to emphasise that the interests involved in determining the matrimonial strategies for each actor are ideal-typical. This means, as we explored in Chapter 3, that it does not represent the actual interests concerned in every historical case, but is, as Patrick T. Jackson argues, “a deliberate oversimplification of a complex empirical actuality for the purpose of highlighting certain themes or aspects that are never as clear in the actual worlds as they are in the ideal-typical depiction of it” (2011, 37). For this reason, this framework will not be used for its accuracy, but for its utility in making sense of the complex empirical actuality of medieval international relations.

**Conclusions**

It was highlighted in Chapter 2 the shortcomings of the IR literature’s usage of dynasticism, and argued that in order to grasp the complexity of pre-modern international relations, we need to take seriously such theoretical concepts. The goal of this theoretical endeavour has been to open up the black box of dynasticism, and theorise, based on the structural forces that gave rise to the system of government itself, the order of the actors, interests, and strategies involved. The theoretical framework outlined above, however, is constructed ultimately for practical purposes: to make sense of the matrimonial strategies of medieval European dynasts. In the chapters to follow, the framework will be utilised to entangle the reasons and
causes underpinning the marriages of three dynasties: the Plantagenets, the Capetians, and the Hohenstaufens. In the end, the framework will be successful if it allows us to single out the adequate causes from the coincidental and incidental causes of these dynasties’ marriages.
5 Of Kings and Heirs: Finding a Proper Queen

Louis VIII was born in 1187. He was the son of King Philip II Augustus of France and Isabella of Hainaut. His marriage has been discussed previously: in Shakespeare’s play King John, Louis’s father and the English king discuss his potential marriage to the latter’s niece. The theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter should now guide us to make sense of this marriage. At the outset, the agreement reached by Philip Augustus and John might look like a straightforward diplomatic; they met, in the year 1200, to settle a conflict between the two dynasties. Part of the settlement was the marriage of Louis to one of John’s nieces (Bradbury 2007: 178).

To consider this marriage, however, as simply an act of diplomacy would underscore the importance of heir marriages. For a potential partner to be deemed suitable for a royal marriage, she needed both to be young and to be of noble descent. Regarding the latter, John’s nieces were perfect, being the daughters of both Eleanor of England and Alfonso VIII of Castile. They came from a royal background, and any potential children produced by the marriage would be noble in both the patrilineal and matrilineal lines. Of John’s nieces, Louis was originally intended to marry Urraca. However, John’s mother, Urraca’s maternal grandmother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, intervened: she argued that Urraca’s sister, Blanche, would be a better Queen of France. (Shadis and Berman 2002, 192) Blanche was twelve years old in 1200, and a perfect match for Louis.

The story of Louis and Blanche is told because it nicely outlines the ideal trajectories of the dynastic marriages of kings and heirs in the high medieval Europe. Not all cases, however, are as straightforward as the marriage of Louis and Blanche. This, however, will be the real test of the theoretical framework constructed in the previous chapter; it needs to assist us in making sense of the marriages that contradict the ideal scenario outlined. In this chapter, I will analyse the marriages of the heirs to the Plantagenet, Capetian and Hohenstaufen dynasties. The chapter will be divided into two sections, each considering the two characteristics which are theorised as important for an heir’s wife: noble descent and age.
5.1 The Queen’s Noble Descent

In an ideal scenario, one should expect the heir to be married to someone equal in social status. When the heir is royal, thus, his potential wife should be so too. Indeed, some marriages are perfectly aligned with the ideal-typical framework. In the Plantagenet dynasty, King Henry III’s search for a queen illustrates this. It took Henry III 26 years from his first betrothal to the day he was married. His story begins with his father’s agreement with King William of Scotland to marry the latter’s daughter, Margaret, to Henry. She and her sister Isabel—whose marriage was also in the hands of King John—moved to the English court. Henry was only two at the time of the agreement, and when his father passed away in 1216, he was not yet of age to marry his intended (Thomas 2010, 37). Margaret, Henry’s betrothed, was later married to Hubert de Burgh; this “freed Henry III again for the marriage market after a twelve-year betrothal,” and begins a time of many attempts to marry within the royal houses of Europe (ibid.).

The first of these is Henry’s attempt to marry Isabelle of France, King Louis VIII’s daughter (ibid.). In the same year, however, Henry also approached Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor, to marry his sister, Isabelle, to the emperor’s son, Henry (VII), and himself to Margaret of Austria. All these attempts failed: Isabelle of France remained unmarried; and Margaret of Austria married the Emperor’s son instead of the English king, a marriage which will be discussed further below (Weiler 1997). Before eventually marrying Eleanor of Provence, the daughter of Roman Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, in 1236, Henry III went through a further three marriage proposals: Agnes, daughter of the king of Bohemia; Marjorie of Scotland, sister to the Margaret he was betrothed to when he was two years old; and Jeanne, daughter and heiress of the Count of Ponthieu (Thomas 2010, 38-41).

The daughters of the Count of Provence seemed to have been popular on the European marriage market, as Eleanor’s sister, Margaret, also married King Louis IX of France, known as Saint Louis. His father, Louis VIII, only reigned for three years, from 1223 to 1226; and after his death, it was his mother, Blanche of Castile, that ruled as queen consort. As such, it was also Blanche who negotiated the marriage of their son and heir, Louis IX (known as Saint Louis). Blanche sought out Count Raymond Berengar V of Provence to marry his son to one of his daughters. Louis IX and Margaret were married in 1234; the latter only at the
age of twelve (Bradbury 2007: 203-204). Their son, Philip, who was later crowned as Philip III of France, also married from the noble classes of Europe. In 1262, his father and King James I of Aragon agreed a marriage between the latter’s daughter, Isabella of Aragon, and Philip. Isabella was not only the daughter of the Aragonese king, her mother was also Violant of Hungary (ibid., 224). Isabella, thus, was royal in both the patrilineal and the matrilineal lines, making her an attractive match for a dynastic heir.

This pattern is also present in the marriages of Hohenstaufen heirs. Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II’s three marriages, for instance, were all to daughters of kings. The first, in 1209 when he was fourteen, was to Constance of Aragon. Constance was the daughter of King Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancha of Castile, who were both from royal families. Moreover, as she was also the widowed Queen of Hungary, there was no doubt that Constance was attractive on the royal marriage market in Europe (Rousseau 1998, 325). When Constance died in 1221, however, Frederick II had to remarry. The choice fell on Queen Yolande of Jerusalem, daughter of Maria of Jerusalem and John of Brienne. Maria had been queen up until her death, shortly after Yolande was born, and since John did not have any claim to the throne, Yolande was crowned queen (Abulafia 2002, 150). Frederick II’s third wife was discussed briefly above: Isabelle of England, King Henry III’s sister, was proposed to Frederick’s son, Henry (VII). This match never happened, but when Yolande of Jerusalem passed away in 1288, Frederick sought out Isabelle for himself. The couple were married in July 1235, which concluded Frederick II’s three royal matches (ibid., 239-40; Thomas 2009, 46-47).

Not all marriages, however, were so straightforward. Rarely do we see a perfect combination of a clearly demarcated heir and a consequential marriage to a spouse of the same social status. As the proposed ideal-typical framework is a utopian description, and not a mirror-image, of the preferred matrimonial strategies by dynastic actors, as was discussed in Chapter 3, this is not necessarily a problem. Nevertheless, the framework should help us isolate the case-specific factors determining a different a different process than in the ideal-typical scenario. These factors are what Max Weber terms “coincidental causes,” and Jackson notes that in developing ideal-typical frameworks, Weber recognized “that some situations will be decisively influenced by unique, idiosyncratic factors” (2010, 149). The utility of the ideal-typical framework lies in its ability to distinguish between the adequate causes and these coincidental causes.
There are several ways in which case-specific factors cause a matrimonial strategy to diverge from our ideal-typical framework. In the early years of the Plantagenet dynasty, for instance, a strict primogeniture was neglected by the dynasts (Turner 1995). King Henry II, although he endowed his eldest son the central parts of the patrimony, the county of Anjou and his possessions in the Anglo-Norman realm, also cared for his younger sons. His second son, Richard, for instance, inherited his mother’s possessions in Aquitaine (ibid., 85). Richard was thus simultaneously a cadet and an heir, and his father needed to decide whether to marry him to an heiress so that further territories would be added to his relatively—compared to his older brother—or if he was to marry for reasons of reproduction. To this end, the theoretical framework does not specify which of the reasons that will determine the marriage, but leaves room for coincidental and case-specific factors to play a part. In Richard’s case, he married as we will see, as an heir; perhaps because King Henry II saw Aquitaine as a sufficient platform on which Richard could build his career, or because as Richard was second-in-line to inherit the patrimony after Henry the Young King, he deemed it probable that Richard could one day become the King of England.

In any case, it was a clever move, as the eldest son died childless before he was crowned king. In 1159, when Henry the Young King was still alive, King Henry II sought to marry Richard to the daughter of Count Raymond of Barcelona. Although entitled a count, Raymond was de facto the king of Aragon as he ruled the kingdom in the name of his wife, Petronilla of Aragon (Gillingham 1999, 28-29). This marriage, however, never consummated. Instead, Richard was betrothed to Alix of France, King Louis VII of France’s second daughter. But King Henry II, however, made sure Richard was kept unmarried, though betrothed to Alix (Turner and Heiser 2000, 25) Both of these betrothals occurred while Richard was still technically a cadet, but as neither of them was to an heiress, one can adduce that King Henry II sought to find Richard a wife who could give birth to a noble son.

When the Young King died in 1183, however, Richard lost his technical status as a cadet, and was in line to inherit both Aquitaine and Henry II’s patrimony. He was to become King of England the day King Henry died. As such, we see a change in the ambition of the marriages. Though Richard was still betrothed to Alix, King Henry II attempted to agree with The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, to a marriage between his daughter and Richard. Unfortunately for the Plantagenet dynasty, the young princess died only moths after they had
discussed this matter (Flori 2006, 58). In the end, Richard married Berengaria, daughter of King Sancho VI of Navarre and Sancha of Castile (Trinade 1999, 57). Although the marriage was a prestigious one for Richard—Berengaria was a suitable candidate both for queenship and for royal maternity—he failed on one account: the marriage remained childless. As such, the crown passed on to his younger brother, John.

In a similar case, King Philip IV of France, was a cadet of the Capetian dynasty who later became heir. Unlike Richard, however, Philip was both betrothed and married as a cadet. Again, we see coincidental and contextual forces influence the matrimonial strategy. Philip was the second son of King Philip III and Isabella of Aragon. The eldest son and heir was Louis, but he died prematurely in 1276. Philip IV’s betrothal to Jeanne of Navarre was arranged before Louis’s death; the marriage, however, was not celebrated until 1284. As such, Philip was betrothed as a cadet, but married as an heir (Strayer 1980, 9). Jeanne was an attractive match for a cadet; as heiress to both the kingdom of Navarre and the county of Champagne, she would bring large and important territories for Philip to rule. However, as they were only betrothed when Philip became the heir to the kingdom, did Jeanne suit the role as the Queen of France and the mother of the future king? Following the framework, Jeanne was from the noble house of Blois, and she was already queen regnant in Navarre and Countess of Champagne, following her father’s death (Woodacre 2013, 25-30). Moreover, in order to secure Navarre and Champagne from usurpers, her mother placed her, upon her betrothal to Philip, in the French court; she thus grew up alongside her future husband, getting the necessary royal education and experience needed to become a proper queen (ibid.).

There are also difficulties regarding the marriages of the Hohenstaufen heirs. We saw above that King Henry III of England sought to marry his sister to the Hohenstaufen heir Henry (VII) and himself to Margaret of Austria. The Holy Roman Emperor and Henry (VII)’s father, Fredrick II, declined this offer, marryng Henry to Margaret of Austria instead. In addition, Frederick also had proposals for Henry from the Capetian dynasty, which were also turned down. Following the theoretical framework, these are ideal marriages for Henry (VII); daughters of two of the largest, most powerful, and prestigious royal houses in Europe certainly make a good match for an heir. Why, then, were the offers declined? Any marriage, as discussed in Chapter 4, establish a bond between two families. According to Björn Weiler,
the Emperor did simply not want to pick sides between England or France, risking to alienate a potential ally (1997, 185).

Coincidental causes like these are basic to any ideal-typical theory, which are necessarily constructed as abstract. Moreover, the choice of Margaret of Austria was not a rejection of marrying noble daughters. After all, Margaret, the daughter of Leopold VI, Duke of Austria, and Theodora Angelina, was not an outcast on the marriage market of the European nobility: her father was from the Austrian noble dynasty Babenberg, who, like the Capetians, descended from the Robertians of France (Beller 2006, 17). As such, Emperor Frederick II made a strategic move in balancing his dynastic interests of reproduction to his diplomatic interests with the major European dynasties.

As we have seen, there are some marriages which are perfectly aligned with our ideal-typical framework: the eldest son is the sole heir, and he marries a partner equal in status to himself. However, these cases are rather the exceptions than the rule; as the ideal-typical description of the marriage strategies are necessarily abstract, there will most often be contextual and coincidental forces which influence the dynasties’ matrimonial strategies. Yet, this is not necessarily a problem for the framework, as long as it leaves room within the theoretical construct to identify these extant forces. In the above, we have considered how dynastic heirs are usually drawn towards partners of noble blood in order to secure a fully noble son. But another characteristic sought after was the partner’s young age; if she was young enough, she would more likely succeed in her job of providing the heir with a son. As we will see, the search for a youthful partner was not always as straightforward as the framework predicts.

5.2 The Queen’s Age and her Prime Responsibilities

In order to guarantee such a success, kings often married partners significantly younger than themselves. King Henry III of England, went, as we have seen, for a long search for a wife. When he eventually found Eleanor of Provence, he was twenty-nine years old; she, however, was only thirteen. The strategy worked, as Eleanor gave birth to an heir, Edward I, in 1239, three years after they married (Howell 1998). This was not only a case for Plantagenet kings; also Capetians and Hohenstaufens pursued this strategy. Father and son, Louis IX and Philip
III of France, both married spouses younger than themselves: Louis married, when he was twenty, the twelve-year-old Margaret of Provence; their son, Philip, married Isabella of Aragon when she was fourteen (Bradbury 2007, 203-204; 224). The next Capetian in line, Philip IV, married Jeanne of Navarre when she was eleven (Strayer 1980, 9). The Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II’s second and third marriages followed the paths of his Plantagenet and Capetian colleagues: he married Yolande of Jerusalem when she was thirteen, and Isabelle of England when she was twenty-one (Abulafia 2002, 150; 239-40).

Not all marriages, however, were so straightforward. Frederick II’s father, Henry IV, sought the hand of Constance of Sicily, daughter of the King of Sicily, Roger II, and Beatrice of Rethel. Constance was a perfect match considering her background: she was from a prestigious noble house, the Hautevilles, who rules Sicily. As such, she would be a perfect mother to Frederick’s children. But in terms of age, the choice seem rather peculiar considering Constance was thirty years old, eleven years Henry’s senior. As a thirty-year-old, the Hohenstaufens took a risk considering their dynasty’s continuance; it was not certain that Constance was able to provide Henry with an heir (Freed 2016, 456) The king’s daughter and Emperor’s son were nevertheless married in Augsburg in 1184.

What caused the Hohenstaufens to take this risk, however, is uncertain. John B. Freed suggests that it was regarded as a good match for the Hohenstaufens for both diplomatic and territorial reasons: diplomatically, Henry VI’s father, Frederick Barbarossa, and William II of Sicily “wished to make permanent the fifteen-year truce they had concluded in 1177;” territorially, “Henry could claim the Regno by hereditary right,” expanding the Hohenstaufen rule to Sicily (ibid.). Moreover, Frederick Barbarossa had several sons including Henry, thus minimising the risk of an end to the dynastic lineage. Nonetheless, Constance, notwithstanding her relatively old age, fulfilled her responsibility: in 1194, she gave birth to the future Emperor Fredrick II.

Taking the risk of not reproducing must be seen as an anomaly; more often than not, dynasts went to great lengths to acquire a partner for his son who could provide him with sons. In fact, even if the partner both came from a noble lineage and was of young age, she was rarely shown patience had she not done her duty of giving the heir a son. Frederick II’s grandfather of the same name—known, to most, as Frederick Barbarossa—married in 1147 Adela of Vohburg. Adela, being twenty when she married Frederick, was not too old for it to be
considered a risky marriage by Frederick. However, when the couple divorced, in around 1152, the marriage was childless (Freed 2016, 50). The official reason for the divorce was that the couple was related within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity as both descended from Henry III (the Holy Roman Emperor of the Salian dynasty; not the King of England) and Agnes of Puitou.\(^{23}\) The most probable cause for the divorce, however, was Adela’s inability to provide Barbarossa with an heir.

The use of consanguinity to be allowed a divorce was also used strategically by King John of England.\(^{24}\) John’s first marriage were not planned to be the marriage of an heir. As a cadet in the Plantagenet dynasty, his father, Henry II, sought to marry John to a wife that could provide him with land. John was first betrothed to Alice, the daughter of the Count of Maurienne, but she died before the wedding could take place. Instead, John married Isabel of Gloucester shortly after King Henry II died. John and Isabelle were, like the others we have considered, related within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, but Pope Clement III deemed the marriage acceptable if the couple could refrain from sexual relations (Weir 1999:252). When King Richard, John’s older brother, died, however, John was now the heir to the throne. He consequently sought a divorce from Isabel, using consanguinity as a reason. As a soon-to-be crowned king of England, it could be imagined that things changed radically for John. As a king, he needed a wife of noble descent that could secure the future of the Plantagenet dynasty; Isabel fulfilled neither of the criteria.

Also within the Capetian Dynasty do we find such divorces. King Philip II Augustus married three times. His first marriage, to Isabella of Hainault, seems to have been, unlike the two considered above, a perfect match. As dowry, Isabella would provide Philip with important lands; but more importantly, she carried the necessary status to be a Queen of France: she, like her husband, was a descendant from the Carolingians. As Jim Bradbury argues, there was “value to the monarchy in this period of being able to claim Carolingian ancestry” (1998, 174). However, like the two above, Philip sought a divorce on the reasons of consanguinity. Isabella, still only fourteen, had not yet born Philip a son, and is the most likely reason for Philip’s initiative to separate from his wife. The divorce, however, was never finalised, and Isabella gave later birth to a son and heir for Philip. Their son, Louis, was in such a poor condition at birth that he died in childhood.

\(^{23}\) The prohibited degrees of consanguinity were seven degrees prior to the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and four degrees after. See Rolker (2012); Davidson and Ekelund (1997); Donahue (1983).

\(^{24}\) On the general use of consanguinity for divorce, see Bouchard (2002).
health that, when Isabella died shortly after his birth, Philip sought a new wife. He needed certainty that his lineage and dynasty could continue. He found a new wife in Ingeborg of Denmark, but only a little while after their wedding, he again sought a divorce for the same reasons as with his first wife (Baldwin 1986: 82-83). His son with Isabella, however, was to survive a turbulent infancy, and grow up to become the King of France. But as a case in the importance of providing for the lineage, and using reasons of consanguinity strategically to this end, Philip’s case shows that kings rarely take any risks on this matter.

Over a century after Philip II married and divorced Ingeborg, we see a good reason why kings cautiously makes sure that their royal lineage continues: 1314 marks the year of the beginning of the end of the Capetian dynasty. Philip IV was in his last year as King of France. His three sons were functioning in different roles for the French crown: Louis, his heir, was the king of Navarre; Charles was the count of La Marche; and Philip was count of Poitiers (Strayer 1980, 130) But in this year, all the three sons’ wives were arrested: Margaret of Burgundy, wife of Louis, and Blanche of Artois, wife of Charles, due to speculation about their adultery with two royal knights; Joan of Burgundy, wife of Philip, for not disclosing the adultery of the other two. This came to be what is now called “the scandal of the Tour de Nesle” (Bradbury 2007, 277). While Joan was later released to her husband, Margaret died of a cold in the prison. Blanche was released after ten years, after having her marriage to Charles annulled, and devoted the rest of life to the church.

Upon Philip IV’s death this same year, Louis, succeeded to the throne as Louis X. His only child from his marriage to the then imprisoned Margaret was a daughter, Joan; and as Margaret later died imprisoned, he decided to marry again, this time to Clementia, daughter of the Hungarian king. Louis’ reign was to be short-lived; after only two years as the king of France, he passed away in 1316, with no son to pass the throne onto. However, Clementia gave him a son posthumously, who became John I, King of France. His reign was to be, tragically, shorter than his father, as he died only five days old. The throne then passed onto Louis’ brother, Philip, who now became Philip V. Philip’s wife, Joan, had been released from prison after the scandal of the Tour de Nesle, but was not able to provide him with an heir. Thus, when he became ill and died six years after ascending to the throne, in 1322, he left with four daughters and son who died in infancy (Adams 2012, 170)
The next, and final, Capetian king on the French throne was thus Charles, crowned as Charles IV. After his first wife, Blanche of Burgundy, had been released from prison and become a nun, Charles married Mary of Luxembourg, daughter of Henry (VII), the Holy Roman Emperor. Mary, however, died only two years after the marriage, and left behind no children. Charles, thus, married for a third time; this time to Jeanne d'Évreux, the daughter of his uncle, Louis, Count of Évreux. Before he died, in 1328, she bore him a daughter. But as primogeniture ruled in France—female succession to the throne was not an option—Charles was to end the Capetian Dynasty in France. The next king of France became Philip of Valois, Charles’ cousin, thus establishing the Valois dynasty as kings of France (Bradbury 2007, 277).

Conclusions
In a utopian scenario, an heir to a dynasty would marry a young and noble wife who would give birth to several sons, guaranteeing the continuation of the dynasty. But in such an ideal scenario, as the theoretical framework advances, rarely exist once one analyses the complex nature of actual dynastic relations in medieval Europe. The framework, however, is not constructed for its accuracy; it is supposed to guide us through this jungle of different intervening forces influencing the decisions of actual dynasts. In general, most dynasts stick to the ideal-typical scenario: they marry young females from royal descent. They do so for important reasons: failing to provide a son to continue the dynastic lineage, could mean the end of the dynasty, as we saw in the case of the Capetians. But others, like the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry IV would take such a risk for territorial or diplomatic gains. Dynastic strategies are not constructed in a vacuum; other forces might drive a dynast to make decisions which are against his prime interests. As we will see in the following chapter, the history of cadet marriages is as complex as the marriages of heirs.
6 The Dynasties’ Cadets

In this chapter, we will discuss the younger brothers of the kings and heirs discussed in the previous chapter. One may hold, and many do, that the most important marriage of a royal family was the marriage of the king and heir. Certainly, for the continuation of the dynasty, such a marriage held a vital importance. But this should not make us neglect the vitality of a cadet marriage: a cadet could expand the realm controlled by the dynasty, and, potentially, establish their own cadet-branches in the territories they acquired. Unlike the heir, who due to the practice of primogeniture inherited all the patrimonial lands, the cadet—especially the youngest—needed to marry an heiress of a landed area. The king who married away his sons had incentives to maintain the patrimony as much as possible, and in order to do so, it was structurally easier to marry his younger sons to an heiress than giving him lands from his own realm.

As such, this chapter will mainly deal with two things: inheritance and marriage. We will first discuss how the combination of a minimal inheritance lead cadets to be married to heiresses across Europe. The argument brought forward here fits nicely with the marriages of the cadets of the Capetian and Plantagenet dynasties, and they will be discussed accordingly in this first section. The Hohenstaufens, however, did not practice primogeniture; the patrimony of the Emperor was divided, almost equally, among his sons. This practice, thus, forces us to consider such cadets in a different manner. Due to the equal standing of the sons, they married also equally, seeking prominent marriages akin to the ones discussed in the previous chapter. The Hohenstaufens, thus, will take the scene in this chapter’s second part. The third part will deal with the importance of cadets. It will, more specifically, study how Charles of Anjou, King Louis VIII’s youngest son, managed to establish a cadet branch of the Capetian dynasty in Italy.

6.1 Cadets and Territory

As we explored in the previous chapter, Louis VII had only one son: Philip Augustus. There where thus no cadets to worry about. Philip Augustus, however, had three sons: Louis (VIII),
Philip Hurepel, and Peter Charlot. While Louis was his oldest son and heir, he was also his only legitimate son; both Peter Charlot and Philip Hurepel were born outside of marriage. The two, however, were legitimised by Philip Augustus, and should thus be treated as Capetian cadets. Peter Charlot, who was the youngest of the three brothers, had a trajectory outside of the issue dealt with here: he devoted his life to the Church (Baldwin 1986, 120; 306). Philip Hurepel, however, outlines nicely the usual trajectory for younger sons of the king.

As an infant, Philip Hurepel was betrothed to Mahaut, daughter of Renaud of Dammartin, the count of Boulogne, and Ida. This was a clever move by Philip Augustus: he had arranged the marriage between Renaud and Ida, the latter of whom was the countess of Boulogne. Renaud, thus, owned Philip Augustus for both his title as count of Boulogne, as well as later being knighted by the King. And when Renaud conspired against Philip Augustus by allying with Richard of England, which Philip Augustus later pardoned, this put the latter in the strategic position of dictating the terms of the marriage of his son to Renaud’s daughter (Lewis 1981, 158). Andrew W. Lewis writes of the contract negotiated by Philip Augustus and Renaud of Dammartin as follows: “On the day of the wedding, Philip Hurepel was to receive one-third of the lands held by Renaud and Ida at the time of the contract and one-half of all their subsequent acquisitions; after their deaths, Philip Hurepel and Mahaut would inherit all their lands” (ibid.). These were now lands in the possession of the Capetian Dynasty; were Philip Hurepel to die without an heir to pass the lands onto, they would immediately “revert to the king and his heirs” (ibid., 160).

It was important, as we have explored, to avoid dividing the patrimony of the king. This does not mean, however, that cadets were not endowed with land outside of marriage. A common scheme for cadets, as Lewis argues, was to inherit the lands held by their mothers or grandmothers (ibid., 163). The younger sons of King Louis IX (Saint Louis), for instance, were endowed with small counties in France: John Tristan was given Valois; Peter received Alençon and Perche; while Robert inherited Clermont-en-Beauvaisis (Le Goff 2009, 373). This inheritance, however, was only to supplement the lands received from marriages to heiresses. Indeed, all of St. Louis’s younger sons married heiresses to counties in France. John Tristan married Yolande II of Nevers, daughter of Odo of Burgundy and Matilda II, Countess of Nevers. Upon his marriage to Yolande, she was already the Countess of Nevers, as her mother had died prior to the wedding. Meanwhile, Peter married Joan, heiress to the
county of Blois. She was the daughter of John I, Count of Blois and Alix of Brittany. In fact, with Peter’s marriage to Joan, he acquired land which formed a territorial unit with the lands that was part of his matrimony: Alençon and Perche. This was the only instance, Lewis notes, whereby such an arrangement was allowed by St. Louis; none of his sons, other than Peter, were married to heiresses to counties neighbouring their matrimonial lands. (Lewis 1981, 174) The third cadet, Robert, for instance, married Beatrice of Burgundy, the heiress to Bourbon, lands distant from Robert’s matrimonial lands of Clermont.

St. Louis’s strategy of endowing younger sons with counties and marrying them to heiresses, is very similar to that of his father, Louis VIII. Louis VIII had four surviving sons: Louis (IX), his heir, and the cadets Robert, Alphonse, and Charles; three sons who did not survive infancy; and two sons who died when they were very young: John and Philip Dagobert. Robert received Artois as an appanage, while Alphonse inherited Poitou and Auvergne. Charles, meanwhile, was the youngest of all of them, and was originally not endowed with any inheritance. But when John and Philip Dagobert died in 1232, Charles was next in line to inherit. While Philip Dagobert, like Charles, was not endowed, John had inherited the counties of Anjou and Maine. These were, in 1246, given to Charles by his brother, St. Louis (Le Goff 2009, 436). Originally designated to a life in the church, Charles life now took an important turn; he was now Count of Anjou and Maine, as well as the Count of Provence and Forcalquier, after his marriage to the heiress to the counties, Beatrice of Provence. Charles was to have an extraordinary political career, becoming the King of Sicily and establishing a cadet-branch of the Capetians—a topic which will be explored later in this chapter.

The problem of finding land for cadets was not exclusive for the Capetians; the Plantagenets, too, had to creatively and strategically balance between giving lands to their younger sons, while simultaneously arranging marriages to heiresses which would increase the landholdings of the dynasty. We explored, in the last chapter, the story about the sons of King Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine; of the four sons they had together, three of them succeeded to the English throne: Henry the Young King, Richard, and John. Although the latter two married firstly as cadets, their stories were recounted in the last chapter, and will not be explored further here. Rather, let us look briefly at the issue of the patrimony and matrimony in the case of Henry II and Eleanor, as well as their hitherto unexplored son, Geoffrey, who was the only of the four who never gained the status as heir.
The pressure to marry a cadet off to an heiress is perfectly illustrated by the case of Geoffrey, Henry II and Eleanor’s third son. Before Geoffrey’s birth, the inheritance plan of Henry was similar to that of Louis VIII discussed above: the oldest son would receive the lands of the patrimony, and the cadets could inherit territories belonging to their mother or grandmother. This was Henry’s plan too: his heir, Henry the Young King, would inherit Henry’s Angevin, as well as Anglo-Norman, territories; Richard would take over his mother’s duchy of Aquitaine (Turner 1995, 85). This scheme only became problematic when further sons were born; Geoffrey, the next in line, had no territory to inherit. He thus needed to be married to an heiress.

To this end, Henry saw a perfect opportunity in the Duchy of Brittany. And he used his powerful status, akin to Philip Augustus move, discussed above, to acquire a beneficial marriage for his cadet Philip Hurepel. In Brittany, his brother, also named Geoffrey, had been the count of Nantes until his death a couple of months before Henry’s third son had been born. The county of Nantes had in the meantime been taken over by the duke of Brittany, Conan IV. As Thomas suggests, “the threat of an invasion by Henry cooled Conan’s ambitions, and he agreed that Henry should be named his brother’s heir” (2009, 23-24). Initially, however, Henry allowed Conan to continue as the ruler of Brittany. But when he was not able to “retain control over the Breton barons,” Henry intervened and forced Conan to abdicate (ibid., 24). Henry had previously arranged Conan’s marriage to the sister of the Scottish king, and their newly born daughter was a perfect match for Henry’s third son, Geoffrey. They were betrothed, and Conan’s daughter, Constance, was made his heiress.

While neither of these cases show a strict primogeniture, whereby the cadets are left landless and an incentive to marry heiresses becomes paramount, their marriages are nevertheless arranged for such purposes. There may be many reasons for this pattern, but the most probable is that the portions of land inherited by the younger sons were so small that in order to avoid a scenario where the cadet would claim his right to larger parts of the patrimony, beneficial marriages were arranged to keep them contempt. But such a scheme is bound to sometimes fail; as the rules of succession are not concrete, it demands complacent cadets who are comfortable seeing most of the patrimony go to the eldest brother. If the cadets were full
of ambition, however, they would pressure the heir into giving away a larger share of the patrimony.  

Indeed, this is what happens with Richard, 1st Earl of Cornwall. Richard was King John’s second son. He had seen his father rise to the throne as the youngest son of four, as all of his older brothers died childless. Such a precedent might have induced Richard of being ready to suddenly become heir to the throne, had his older brother not yet been given a son. Richard was early in life given nominal grants to Eye in Suffolk, and received Cornwall to hold at the king’s pleasure. He was also appointed Count of Poitou (Vincent 2004). It is important to note that neither of these territories was given to Richard as part of his inheritance; he was merely ruling them in place of Henry. Nevertheless, these possessions might have spurred Richard’s ambition, as he, in 1225 sought to marry, without the king’s approval, the daughter of King Alfonso IX of León (Thomas 2010, 42).

The proposal, however, was rejected; not by the Leónese king, but by King Henry III. The King stated, on behalf of his minority council, that “it is our opinion and that of our magnates that there are many rational reasons, shown to you, why this marriage should not in any way come to pass” (cited in Thomas 2010, 42). Among these “rational reasons,” Maurice Powicke argues, was that the king “hoped to arrange for him a more advantageous union” (1991, 41). On the other hand, there was at least one crucial reason why King Henry would consent to such a marriage: King Alfonso’s daughter was the heiress to his kingdom, and by marrying Richard to her, he would avoid giving up more of his patrimonial lands to his brother. Whether Henry actually believed a more advantageous marriage could be arranged for his brother, or whether he rejected the proposal because Richard had arranged it on his own, which agitated Henry (Thomas 2009, 42), is difficult to pin down. Nevertheless, the decision would come back to haunt King Henry.

Only a few years later, Richard rebelled against his brother. To settle the conflict, Henry gave him Berkhamsted to rule—lands previously owned by their mother (Powicke 1991, 40). And again, Richard arranged a marriage behind his brother’s back: in 1232 he married the newly-widowed Isabella Marshal. Isabella had previously been married to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of

25 Such cadets are akin to the abandon youths in Georges Duby’s story of the consequences of primogeniture: “Always on the lookout for adventure from which ‘honour’ and ‘reward’ could be gained and aiming, if possible, ‘to come back rich’, they were mobile and ready for action with their emotions at a pitch of war-like frenzy” (Duby 1977, 115). For a version of these cadets in IR, see Teschke 2003, 90-92.
Gloucester, and was sister to the Earl of Pembroke, which both had posed threats to King Henry’s rule in England. But not only in this regard was Richard’s marriage to Isabella a threat to Henry; as Henry was still unmarried and was yet to be given a son, Richard might have seen the opportunity, in case Henry died, to become heir.

Richard’s plans to succeed his brother, however, were hampered when King Henry III married Eleanor of Provence, and she gave him a son, Edward. Moreover, when Isabella died in childbirth in 1240, Richard was therefore entering the marriage market as a cadet of the Plantagenet dynasty. Richard, however, was still claiming his right to parts of Henry’s patrimony; as he had previously been the Count of Poitou, he was demanding the right to rule Gascony. By giving up more territory to Richard, however, the king would now severely weaken the patrimony which was to pass on to Henry and Eleanor’s son, Edward. A compromise was made: Richard was to give up his claims to territories in England and France in return for a marriage to Eleanor’s sister, Sanchia (Vincent 2004).

The concluding agreement was at last beneficial to the dynasty, as Richard could no longer claim shares of the patrimony. The case proves that dealing with cadets is more difficult than in theory. A successful handling of cadets requires a strict primogeniture, and a consequential hierarchy among dynastic actors. Once this hierarchy is broken down, cadets might pose severe threats to the dynasty’s security and continuation. In the next section, we will analyse what occurs when primogeniture is not practiced in the first place. Unlike the dynasties of Plantagenet and Capet, the Hohenstaufens divided the patrimony equally among each of the sons. This has crucial impacts on how we are to understand their matrimonial strategies.

6.2 The Hohenstaufens

The cadets of the Hohenstaufen dynasty bring us some immediate problems regarding the argument brought forward in this chapter: unlike the Capetians and the Plantagenets, the Hohenstaufens did not practice primogeniture. As Jonathan R. Lyon argues: “For the German upper aristocracy of the Staufen period, lineages were not based on narrow lines of descent from fathers to eldest son. Instead, they embraced multiple children with equal claims to
rights and properties” (2013, 33). The successional and inheritance practices of the Hohenstaufens, in other words, were still much closer to the partible inheritance that was practices in both England and France prior to the emergence of primogeniture.

The lack of primogeniture and the presence of partible inheritance have both important implications for the theoretical framework advanced in Chapter 4. First, as primogeniture established a hierarchy among dynastic actors, the Hohenstaufen actors relate differently to one another than actors of the two other dynasties considered. But the lack of primogeniture does not denote a non-hierarchical order among the Hohenstaufens; although the order of birth did not determine a hierarchy among them, they were still differentiated from each other based on gender (Lyon 2013, 33). Second, this gender-based hierarchy also establishes a hierarchy of dynastic interests, albeit a different hierarchy than specified in the original theoretical framework. As all sons of the Emperor inherited an equal share of territory from their father, an impetus to seek heiresses for younger sons was lacking. Rather, as all sons were classified equally as heirs, all had incentives to reproduce in order to pass their share of the patrimony down the lines. According to this logic, the younger sons of the Hohenstaufen dynasty will search more for young females of noble descent than heiresses.

We can see this, first, by looking at how the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa laid plans for his sons. As was explored in the last chapter, Frederick’s heir for the imperial throne was Henry (VI). And, in fact, Henry was not the oldest of Frederick’s sons; his first son was renamed after his father, and was born one year prior to Henry. But Frederick was not designated as the future Emperor, as Henry was elected when he was only four years old, in 1169. Rather, Frederick (V), in his father’s plans, was to be the next duke of Swabia (Munz 1969, 66). Frederick, however, passed away at an early age, altering Barbarossa’s inheritance plans; his younger brother, Conrad, would instead take his place as the Duke of Swabia, and change his name to Frederick VI. The younger brothers of Frederick, Henry, and Conrad too, were to play prominent roles within the Holy Roman Empire. Conrad II (the younger brother of the Conrad above) was entitled duke of Rothenburg, and his younger brother, Otto, was to inherit

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26 See also Kannowski (2008); Weiler (2008).
27 Although cadets were minimally cared for both in the Plantagenet (Turner 1995) and the Capetian dynasties (Lewis 1981), this was qualitatively different from the equal division of the patrimony practiced in the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Although matrimonial strategies created for the Hohenstaufen cadets and the cadets of the two other dynasties might overlap, it will be useful to keep them analytically separated.
28 Daughters, in contrast, will still be married according to the logics specified in Chapter 4, as they are still at the bottom of the dynastic hierarchy of actors. This, however, will be discussed further in Chapter 7.
his mother’s lands in the duchy of Burgundy. Only the youngest, Philip, was not endowed a duchy like his brothers; his role was to be played in the religious, rather than secular, parts of the Empire, as provost of Aachen, and later the bishop of Würzburg (Lyon 2013, 130).

This inheritance structure reflects to a great deal the marriage arrangements made for younger sons of Frederick Barbarossa. John B. Freed notes that Frederick did not consider “the daughters of the German princes as suitable brides for his sons but engaged them instead to the daughters of foreign princesses” (2016, 479-80). In this sense, “suitable,” would to a great extent mean lacking in social status; by the token of the marriages Frederick arranged for his sons, the status of the bride’s family must be high up on the social ladder. As Frederick Barbarossa’s oldest son, Frederick, the Duke of Swabia, passed away before he was betrothed to anyone, so we do not know Barbarossa’s plans for the duke. However, the next duke, Frederick VI, was betrothed to two of the prominent princesses in Europe: the unnamed daughter of King Valdemar I of Denmark and Princess Constance of Hungary, daughter of Bela III, King of Hungary (ibid., 439; 480).

Conrad II, the duke of Rothenburg, was too designated for a spectacular marriage. In 1187, Frederick Barbarossa arranged a marriage between him and the daughter of King Alfonso VIII of Castile, Berenguela. As she was the heiress to the throne in Castile, Conrad would be given the opportunity to have his cake and eat it too: he could acquire a young wife of prominent status, as well as extending his rule beyond the lands inherited from his father. The marriage, however, was never to take place; the Queen of Castile gave birth to a son and heir for Alfonso, and as the papacy did not want a Hohenstaufen successor in Castile, the union was dissolved (Shadis 2010: 55). Conrad, thus, like the two Fredericks of Swabia, died unmarried.

This was not the case for Otto and Philip. Otto married Marguerite, the daughter of Thibaut V, Count of Blois and Alix of France in 1192 (Bumke 1991, 76). Although Otto’s marriage was not quite as grand as his brothers’ betrothals, Marguerite was nevertheless the granddaughter of King Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine, which with no doubt brought benefits to Otto’s rule in his mother’s lands in Burgundy (ibid.). Philip, who, as we saw, was designated for a career in the church. However, after both Frederick VI, duke of Swabia, and Conrad II, his replacement as duke, had died, there were only three of Barbarossa’s sons left. In 1196, when Conrad II died, Henry was the Emperor and Otto was the Duke of Burgundy.
The vacant role as Duke of Swabia was thus for Philip to fill (Freed 2016, 455). And as duke, Philip needed a wife. In 1196, when Philip took over as duke, Barbarossa was already dead, and it was Henry who arranged Philip’s marriage. The choice fell on Irene, the daughter and heir of Isaac II Angelos, the Byzantine Emperor. Henry’s choice to marry his brother to Irene may be due to his prior conquest of Sicily and, as Walter Ullmann writes, the marriage “was to provide the handle by which the unity of the one Roman empire could be demonstrated” (1964, 102). But the marriage also follows the pattern by which the Swabian dukes were married: all three sons of Barbarossa who ended up with this position married daughters of monarchs.

Frederick Barbarossa’s heir, Henry VI did not have to contemplate his inheritance as much as his father; Henry only had one son, Frederick, who would later be crowned Emperor as Frederick II. We explored in length the marriage of Frederick II’s first-born, Henry, in the last chapter. But what we did not discuss was his short-lived reign as Frederick’s heir. Henry, was at a young age crowned both King of Germany and of Sicily. But as he rebelled against his father, he was in 1235 disinherited and dethroned. Frederick’s only other son at the time of Henry’s disinheritance, Conrad, was to be his replacement. This immediately shook up Frederick’s inheritance plans: as Henry was to inherit the kingship in Germany and Sicily, while Conrad was endowed with the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the duchy of Swabia. Frederick’s final plans of inheritance were drawn up in 1250, when he had fathered two more sons, and fell ill. Conrad was his heir in Germany, Italy, and Sicily. His younger brother, also named Henry, would take over his possessions were he to die without an heir. He would additionally receive Jerusalem or Arles. Manfred, the youngest, and an illegitimate son of Frederick, “was entrusted with the government of the regno during Conrad’s absence in Germany” (Abulafia 2002, 406).

Almost a decade after he replaced his brother as King of Germany, Conrad married Elisabeth of Bavaria. Elisabeth was the daughter of the duke of Bavaria, Otto II and his wife Agnes, and was as such a member of the prominent Wittelsbach dynasty (Weiler 2006, 115). Before marrying Conrad to Elisabeth, Frederick had attempted to arrange a marriage with the daughter of Louis IX of France. He sent Walter of Ocra, in 1243, to France to arrange this, but as Weiler writes, “no further evidence survives from this project” (ibid., 89). While Henry, the younger brother, died before he was married, Manfred did prove useful on the
marriage market. In 1247, Manfred married Beatrice of Savoy, daughter of the Count of Savoy, Amadeus IV, and Marguerite of Burgundy.

Only Conrad of Frederick II’s children was to carry on the Hohenstaufen lineage. In 1252, Elisabeth of Bavaria gave birth to Conradein, who would be the last Hohenstaufen ruler in Italy (Runciman 1992, 15). He was never to be King of Germany or the Holy Roman Emperor; his father was the last of the Hohenstaufens to be so. While Manfred and Beatrice only had a daughter, Constance, Henry (VII), Frederick’s original heir, had two sons who died prematurely. Conradein, thus, was the Hohenstaufen’s last card to play. He ruled both Sicily and Jerusalem, as well as serving as the Duke of Swabia, from the day his father died, in 1254. Conradein, however, was to have a short-lived reign. At the age of 16, he was imprisoned and sentenced to death by the man who was to build up his own dynasty in Sicily: Charles of Anjou, King Louis VIII’s youngest son and cadet (ibid.). Charles, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was to have an extraordinary carrier as a cadet, building up an important cadet-branch of the Capetian dynasty. His case, in order to grasp at the value of the cadets and their marriages, should be discussed thoroughly.

6.3 Charles of Anjou and the Angevin Kings of Sicily

Charles’ story begins where we discussed him earlier in this chapter: that of his inheritance. His destination was originally not kingship, nor to be married to an heiress of some county like most cadets of the Capetian dynasty. He was rather designated for a career in the church. But as often happened in medieval Europe, his older brothers passed away, and the trajectory envisioned for him was altered. In the case of Charles, he was now to become the Count of Anjou and Maine, the territories previously belonging to his older brother John (Lewis 1981, 172). But Charles’ ascendance up the Capetian ladder did not stop here, thus making him an interesting object of study when considering the careers of cadets. Although kings often had problems with finding a place in the world for their younger sons, Charles’ case shows that also cadets could serve a vital role for the expansion of the dynasty. Destined for greater things than serving a small, though important, role in the Capetian dynasty, his life serves as a testimony that cadets should not be neglected when studying dynastic marriage strategies.

But if not neglected by the analyst, he was certainly overlooked within his own family. As he was born only a few months after his father’s death, he only had his mother and brothers to
rely on. After King Louis VIII’s death, Charles’ mother, Blanche of Castile, had little time for her children. As Runciman notes, “Blanche was a proud vigorous woman, too busy over politics to spare much time or much affection on her children” (1992, 71). Nor did Louis, who later would be crowned King Louis IX and later known as Saint Louis, care much about his youngest brother: “[o]f the two surviving brothers, Alfonso and Charles, Louis preferred Alfonso; and Charles knew it” (ibid.). What this is clear, is that were Charles to climb higher up the Capetian ladder, it had to be by his own doing.

Charles’ ascendance begins with his marriage to Beatrice of Provence, daughter of the count of Provence, Raimond Bérenger V. This particular count should by now be familiar; the marriages of all of Raimon Bérenger’s daughters have previously been covered. The count of Provence had no male heir to his county. The two sons he had died prematurely. It was thus one of his four daughters who were to inherit Provence from him. By the time old Raimon Bérenger wrote his will, in 1245, all but one of his daughters were married (Le Goff 2009, 85). The oldest, Marguerite, was married to the King of France, Charles’s brother, Saint Louis. Eleonore and Sanche, the two next in line, were married to the two Plantagenet brothers King Henry III and Richard of Cornwall respectively. Only Beatrice was in 1245 left unmarried, and it was to her Raimon Bérenger endowed the county of Provence. One year later, after the count’s death, Beatrice were married to Charles, expanding the latter’s territory to include Provence and Forcalquier (ibid.).

The four Provence sisters all did well with their marriages; in the end, all were queens in the heart of Europe. Marguerite of France and Eleonore of England. Sanche, who married Richard of Cornwall, became Queen of the Romans (Germany) after her husband was crowned king fourteen years after they married. Beatrice, too, would see her husband ascend to the throne: twenty years after they married, Charles ascended the throne as King of Sicily. His acquisition of Provence through marriage, and his later stabilisation of the rebellious county, “was the jumping-off point for Capetian moves into Italy, first Piedmont, and then, the great prize, the kingdom of Sicily” (Rhys Davies 1998, 23). Another “jumping-off point” was Pope Urban IV’s eagerness to end the Hohenstaufen rule in Sicily. Other potential rulers had been sought out without success: Richard of Cornwall, for instance, was now occupied with the role as King of the Romans. Charles had been approached before, but his older brother, Saint Louis, had forbidden him to take action to seize the throne. But now, in 1262, as the Pope’s envoy was sent to Paris too seek Louis’s approval, the latter had changed his
mind (Runciman 1992, 65-77). Charles was now blessed by the Church to take Sicily from the Hohenstaufens. And in 1266, Beatrice and he was crowned king and queen, after they destroyed what was left of the Staufen dynasty.

But, as one might deduce from Charles’s desirous character, the acquisition of Sicily was not the end to his ambitions. Rather, he had ambitions of reconquering Constantinople, and a strategy to this end “required the establishment of matrimonial connections in the East” (Rhys Davies 1988, 30). While Charles’s first matrimonial move, the marriage of his eldest daughter Blanche to Robert of Flanders, reflect that it occurred before he entered Sicily and was at the time a count in France, the marriages arranged while King of Sicily follow both his “pivot” to the East, but more importantly for this dissertation’s goal, they also follow the matrimonial patterns identified with the other dynasties considered. His heir, Charles (II) were married according to the logics presented in the previous chapter: in 1270, he was married to the twelve-year-old daughter of King Stephen V of Hungary, thus making sure that the continuation of the lineage, as well as maintaining the latter’s royal status. Charles’s second son and cadet, Philip, married Isabelle, the heiress of William of Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia (ibid.).

But in Charles’s Eastern excursion, his matrimonial strategies were not just influenced by the biological and social reproduction of his lineage; nor just the acquisition of land for his cadets. Evidently, his matrimonial schemes were also infused with a sense of diplomacy: the abovementioned quote from Stephen Rhys Davies illustrates the importance of the establishment of connection with Eastern rulers. To this end, his only cards were not only his heir and his cadets; he also used his daughters effectively to create alliances with the Eastern rulers. His daughter Beatrice was married to Philip of Courtenay, son of Baldwin II, the former Emperor of Constantinople. Isabella, meanwhile, was married to Ladislas, also one of Stephen V of Hungary’s children. The use of daughters to establish connections, create a friendly alliance, or to seal a peace treaty was common among medieval dynasts: as none of the daughters could inherit their fathers’ throne, they were crucial when striving towards these ends. Such a strategy for daughters was also in place for the Hohenstaufen, Capetian, and Plantagenet dynasts, as will be thoroughly discussed in the next chapter.
Conclusions

Charles’ story is told as it nicely outlines the ideal scenario for a cadet. In order to make amends his exclusion from inheritance, he will marry an heiress and use that as a foundation to build a career. In Charles’ case, his marriage to Beatrice of Provence proved to be a splendid strategy; from this, he moved on to become the King of Sicily, and start his own cadet-branch of the Capetian dynasty. Not all cadets, however, follow this ideal trajectory. Some are married off to an heiress to a small county where the cadet settles, in the shadow of his brother, the king; others choose to abandon their family before a beneficial marriage is arranged for them. Nevertheless, the ideal-typical framework proves useful also viewing these anomalous marriages. It helps us discern the coincidental and contextual causes from breaking with the cadet’s ideal strategy. In the next chapter, we will analyse the last category of dynastic children: daughters. As with cadets, their marriages was also vital for the overall interest of the dynasty; marriages needed to be arranged for them in order to keep the patrimony intact, and their marriages could prove to be very beneficial in inter-dynastic affairs.
7 Dynastic Daughters

Dynastic daughters are, as we have explored, at the bottom of the hierarchy of dynastic actors. This is also true for alliances, in the pecking order of dynastic interests. This does not mean, however, that either for these two are unimportant for the strategic affairs of medieval dynasties. In stark contrast, dynastic daughters, and the alliances made from their marriages, were crucial in medieval inter-dynastic affairs. As will be explored in this chapter, they were considered valuable assets whose marriages could not be squandered: alliances were established or maintained, and conflicts were settled, by the arrangement of dynastic marriages of daughters. This chapter will be divided into three sub-chapters; each devoted to the marriages of each of the dynasties in question.

7.1 The Plantagenets

In 1114, Matilda married the Holy Roman Emperor, and became Empress Matilda (Leyser 1982: 195). She was the daughter of the English king, Henry I, thus making her the granddaughter of William the Conqueror, the first Norman King of England. After the Emperor’s death, however, Matilda returned to Normandy and married Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou (Chibnall 1991, 51). Together with Geoffrey, Matilda was to have a son who by now should be familiar to the reader: Henry, later crowned King of England as Henry II. Matilda’s story is told, not only to give a biographical background to Henry II, but indeed to demonstrate how closely his family were connected to the Holy Roman Empire. This, moreover, also sets Henry’s later matrimonial schemes directed towards the German lands in context: why, if not to maintain close connections to the Kings of Germany did Henry attempt to arrange marriages for two of his daughters to men placed high up on the social and political ladder of the Empire? This will thus be the theme explored in this chapter: how Kings use their daughters to establish or maintain diplomatic bonds with other kingdoms.

In the next generation of Plantagenets, King Henry II and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, had three daughters: Matilda, Eleanor, and Joanna. All of whom were married for diplomatic reasons of their father, whether to maintain an alliance, like the Anglo-German alliance briefly discussed above, to befriend a neighbour, or establish contacts with those close to the
Pope. The latter of which is the context that surrounds the marriage of Henry and Eleanor’s youngest daughter, Joanna. This is not to deny that the two kingdoms involved in the marriage—England and Sicily—had historical connections that might have instigated a marriage between the Sicilian prince William II and Joanna. Indeed, as Elizabeth Thomas argues, they had both “been overrun by the Normans in the eleventh century” (2009, 27). The Sicilian king, moreover, had also given Henry II friendly support when the latter was under papal sanction for the murder of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Also when Henry’s own sons rebelled against him in cohort with King Louis VII of France, King William of Sicily had declared himself supportive of the English King (Bowie 2014, 88).

And it was perhaps due to the conflicts related to the French king and the Archbishop of Canterbury, that Henry sought to consummate the two kings’ friendship in a bond of marriage between their children. William could certainly prove a useful ally for Henry, as he “had influence with the papal curia” (Huffman 2000: 98). Henry had previously attempted to establish contacts close to the Pope after his domestic problems: “he attempted to buy outright influence at the papal court through subsidies to the Italian cities of Milan, Cremona, Parma, and Bologna, and even made efforts to bribe the pope directly” (ibid.). Perhaps the diplomatic bond established with William was the most efficient channel through which he could be close to the Pope?

It might also be the case, as Huffman further suggests, that Joanna’s marriage to William II was a response to a diplomatic break between the Plantagenet dynasty and the Hohenstaufen Emperors. The Anglo-German bond had been tightened when Joanna’s older sister, Eleanor, betrothed Emperor Frederick Barbarossa’s eldest son, Frederick. But Prince Frederick, as has been explored in the previous chapters of this thesis, was not chosen as Barbarossa’s heir to the imperial throne, and it was perhaps Henry’s disappointment with this that lead him to marry his youngest daughter to Sicily rather than Germany (ibid. 100). Eleanor and Frederick, meanwhile, was never to marry; five years after their betrothal, Frederick died at the age of seven. And it was not to the Hohenstaufen family Henry thus turned to find Eleanor a new husband. He turned instead to King Sancho III of Castile’s only son, Alphonso (Bowie 2014, 110) This move suggests further that Henry saw diplomatic ties outside of the Empire as more important than his previous alliance with the German rulers. But the marriage of Eleanor and Alphonso should not be reducible to the diplomatic break with Frederick Barbarossa; diplomatic ties with the Kingdom of Castile were certainly paramount for the Plantagenet king. Henry’s marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine meant that he now ruled
over territories close to the Spanish kings, and he was “forced to deal with the complicated Aquitanian-Toulousin history, a conflict that prompted contact with the rulers of Christian Spain, specifically those of Aragon, Castile, and Navarre” (Thomas 2009, 26).

Henry’s break with the Hohenstaufens cannot fully be grasped without regarding the marriage of his oldest daughter, Matilda, to Barbarossa’s cousin and one of his closest imperial advisors, Henry the Lion. Indeed, the marriage of Henry the Lion and Matilda was part of a double betrothal arranged with Frederick Barbarossa, where the other match was between Eleanor and Frederick (Jordan 1986, 144; Munz 1969, 239) This move was clearly an act of tying tighter bonds with the Holy Roman Empire. Henry was already close to the Hohenstaufen family; his abovementioned grandmother had married the Holy Roman Emperor, who was also Frederick Barbarossa’s great-aunt (Huffman 2000, 93). But with Empress Matilda’s death, the time was perhaps ripe for a new consummation of the alliance between the two royal houses. With Henry’s problems with Thomas Becket and Louis VII of France, friendly bonds with the Holy Roman Emperor was perhaps just what he needed.

While Eleanor and Frederick’s marriage never took place, Matilda and Henry the Lion’s did. In the autumn of 1167, Matilda was brought to Germany by a Saxon embassy, and was married in Minden Cathedral on February 1, 1168 (Bowie 2014, 69) But whatever benefits the English king could draw out of the matrimonial alliance with the Germans, it was nevertheless a short-lived friendly union. Frederick Barbarossa and Henry the Lion’s relationship had begun, as we move into the 1170s, to deteriorate. The ultimate blow, which would also hit hard on the English king’s friendship with the Empire, would come eight years after the matrimonial alliance was made. As Frederick Barbarossa was fighting a war in Lombardy, he was in need of military assistance. This he sought from his cousin, Henry the Lion. Henry, however, “denied his cousin the emperor the military assistance he so desperately needed, even after Frederick prostrated himself at the duke’s feet” (Freed 2016, 387). Henry’s rejection, one can imagine, must have been a fatal blow to their relationship; it was “an unforgivable insult” to deny a monarch when he is kneeling before your feet and begging for your approval (ibid., 389).

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29 On the territorial benefits of a matrimonial union between Eleanor and Alphonso, see also Bowie (2014, 119-122).
When we move into the next generation of Plantagenet princesses, we see again efforts to establish matrimonial alliances with the Empire. Only one of King John’s daughters’ marriages were arranged by himself, when his eldest daughter, Joan, married into the Scottish royal family. It was thus his son, Henry III, who was to establish a matrimonial alliance between the Plantagenets and the Hohenstaufens. Henry III’s first move in this regard was, as we explored in Chapter 5, a double marriage: he was to marry the daughter of the duke of Austria, while his sister, Isabel, was to wed Emperor Frederick II’s son, Henry (VII). This arrangement never consummated; Henry (VII), in fact, married the English king’s intended, Margaret of Austria (Thomas 2009, 46). After a failed attempt of diplomacy with the Empire, Henry III then sought to end a territorial dispute with the French crown. In 1229, a new double-marriage was proposed: Henry III would marry Louis IX’s sister, while the latter would marry Isabel. Henry’s offer was again, however, rejected. But ten years after the attempted matrimonial scheme with the Germans were turned down, new opportunities for an alliance arose. This time, in 1235, it was the Emperor Frederick II himself who sought the hand of Isabel. The couple was married the same year (Weiler, 1997).

Also John’s youngest daughter, Eleanor, was to have her marriage arranged by her brother. But the agreement reached for Eleanor’s marriage was not the high-diplomatic scheme we saw with her sister; this marriage agreement was rather akin to the one proposed for her sister with the French king: it was more about settling a dispute than establishing diplomatic bonds. When William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, returned to England following his father’s death, he had found out that portions of his land were seized by the sheriff. He complained about this matter to the Hubert de Burgh, the head of Henry III’s Minority Council, and the agreement reached was that William would marry Eleanor (Howell 2002, 169).

But if Eleanor’s marriage history does not symbolise a grand inter-dynastic alliance, it does prove how valuable royal princesses were to the crown. After William’s death, Eleanor did something that “should have removed her permanently from the marriage field thereafter” (Thomas 2010: 48). In 1231, at the age of sixteen, Eleanor took a vow of chastity, “promising to remain a chaste widow” (ibid.) But seven years later, Henry III married her to Simon de Montfort, who was born and raised outside of England, but had recently come to the country to claim his right to the earldom of Leicester (Maddicott 1994, 21). But if Henry III was supportive of this marriage union, this sentiment was not unison within the royal ranks of England. Henry’s brother, Richard of Cornwall, was kept in the dark about the marriage of
his sister; when he found out, he was furious both for not being told as well as the lack of political benefits the marriage brought to the crown: “Henry III had, in essence, wasted one of his most precious commodities” (Thomas 2010, 48). The fury of Richard, as well as that of other English barons, nearly caused the kingdom a civil war, thus illustrating how important these matrimonial schemes were to the dynasty.

Eleanor’s small, secretive, and troublesome marriage to Simon de Montfort stands in stark contrast to that of her eldest sister, Joan. Joan was, as mentioned above, the only one of John’s daughters whose betrothal was arranged by their father. When she was only four years old, John reached an agreement with Hugh IX de Lusignan, count of La Marche, to betroth his daughter to the count’s son. This arrangement was again part of a settlement between John and Hugh; Hugh would, as part of the agreement, gain John’s approval of his rights to La Marche, while John, in turn demanded that the count would pay homage to him (ibid., 45). But this betrothal was to remain just that; after John and Hugh’s deaths, the former’s widow and Joan’s mother, Isabelle of Angoulême, married the count’s son herself. This lead Henry III—who now, as with his other sisters, had the responsibility to arrange their marriages—to search elsewhere. Joan’s intended was found in Scotland; in 1220, Henry reached an agreement with Alexander II, King of Scotland, and the couple was married the following year (Mackenzie 1957, 251)

The diplomatic connection with the Scots was evidently important for the English king, as he, only four years after Joan’s death, again arranged a marriage with Joan’s former husband, Alexander II. This time, Alexander’s son, of the same name, was to marry Henry III’s eldest daughter, Margaret (Howell 2002, 168). As Joan and Alexander II’s marriage had not produced any children, one might speculate that Henry’s new agreement with the Scottish king was to reaffirm the friendly relations between the two kingdoms—just like his grandfather, Henry II, had done with the Holy Roman Emperor. The agreement might also claim its more immediate diplomatic reasons; Elizabeth Thomas argues that as the English king was about to depart for France to “enforce his rights there,” he wanted to “ensure the safety of the Scottish border” (2010., 51). The couple was nevertheless wed in 1251, following Henry’s knighting of Alexander.

Henry’s youngest daughter to survive infancy was Beatrice. Of her marital history, there are sparse evidence to suggest the reasons for her eventual marriage to the eldest son and heir of
the duke of Brittany. As Thomas writes, “[v]ery little is known of the negotiations or motives for this marriage, however the former were concluded by Henry III at Paris in January 1260” (ibid., 54). But Beatrice’s marriage to John, the heir to Brittany, was only the end-point of her matrimonial history; before this agreement, Henry had plenty of times used his daughter to attempt alliances with other rulers. The first of these was with the King of Aragon: Beatrice was to marry the King’s eldest son (Howell 2002, 170) This might be part of Henry’s eagerness to establish diplomatic ties to rulers on the Iberian peninsula; Beatrice’s brother, Edward, was, after all, to marry the daughter of the Castilian king (ibid., 175) But as negotiations with Aragon failed, Henry looked to Norway to find a possible suitor for his daughter. In 1255, Henry looked to “draw Norwegian support for his efforts to conquer Sicily,” and negotiations for a marriage between Beatrice and the Norwegian king’s eldest son, Magnus, commenced (Thomas 2010, 53). There were also discussions to marry Beatrice to the son of the Queen of Cyprus, as part of a double-marriage, where Henry’s cadet, Edmund, would marry the Queen herself. None of these schemes bore any fruit, and Beatrice was in the end to become the Duchess of Brittany.

7.2 The Capetians

We saw in Chapter 5 the arrangements made for Henry III’s uncles, Henry the Young King and Richard, to marry the daughters of Louis VII, King of France. The marriages, arranged by their father, King Henry II, was undoubtedly made for all reasons advanced in the chapters of this dissertation: status, territory, and diplomacy. Status was highlighted for the young Henry, as his intended, Margaret, indeed would be suitable as the queen of England due to her royal blood and upbringing. When we view the marriage from the other side, from the side of Louis VII, we will see the same picture painted; different factors are likely to be part of the French king’s marriage strategy for his daughters. It is nevertheless worthwhile to follow the argument made here, that daughters were often involved in diplomatic marriages. To place his daughter as the Queen of England would, indeed, bring status to the Capetian dynasty. But if the marriage would not bring any other goods than status, it is likely that King Louis would search elsewhere for a suitable husband for his daughters; too valuable were these daughters as an asset for the dynasty in inter-dynastic affairs to squander the change of tying bonds or settling conflicts by marrying them off to a great house.
But these issues went, as we have seen with the Plantagenet princesses, and as we will see with the Capetians, hand in hand; the diplomatic ties bound in matrimony were often with great dynasties, and the dynast would therefore gain both status for his house, as well as a friend. This was certainly the case when we view the arrangements made for Margaret and Alys, the two daughters of Louis VII who were betrothed to boys of the Plantagenet dynasty. Margaret’s marriage to Henry the Young King was part of a diplomatic settlement between their two fathers. King Henry II had challenged the French crown’s rights to a “vital strategic slice of land on the border of Normandy and the French-held territory,” the Norman Vexin, and the settlement between the two kings was the marriage between Margaret and the young Henry (Thomas 2009, 16). The reasons for Alys’s marriage to the young Henry’s brother, Richard, is less clear. But as Richard was just endowed with Aquitaine, belonging to his mother, and the former wife of Louis, the latter’s eagerness to marry his daughter to Richard might be to acquire a friendship with the count of the territory that was previously his.

The couple, as we saw in chapter 4, was never married, partly due to the rumour that Alys had become Richard’s father’s mistress. And Alys was not to marry until after her father’s death. Charged with marrying Alys was now her brother, and her father’s successor, Philip II Augustus. In England, Henry the Young King had died, and Richard had succeeded his father as king. As the marriage of Richard and Alys never occurred, disagreements about the Norman Vexin, the slice of land that was part of Alys’s dowry in her betrothal to Richard, continued to divide the two kingdoms. But a diplomatic solution, with a possible marriage arranged between the two dynasties, was not an option; rather, what seems to be Philip Augustus’s strategy now was to establish bonds with powerful magnates before Richard was able to do so. This strategy is reflected in the eventual marriage of Alys. Philip’s focus had especially turned to Flanders; he had married one of his cousins to the brother of the count of Hainaut and Flanders. But he needed, evidently, more connections in this region. As Flanders’s neighbour laid Ponthieu, and it was to the count of which Alys was betrothed, and in 1195, she and the count, Guillaume, were wed (Bradbury 2007, 65).

As part of Philip Augustus’s strategy “designed to draw the Flemish region more securely into the royal orbit” were also the marriages of his daughter, Marie. (Baldwin 1986, 91). The regent of the county of Flanders, Philip of Namur—brother to the Count of Flanders, Baldwin IX, who had just passed away—was seen by Philip Augustus as the perfect match for his only daughter. And the couple married in 1211 (Bradbury 1998, 284). But with Philip of Namur’s
death, only a year after the marriage, the French king needed both a new husband for his
daughter and new contacts in the Flemish region. The choice fell on Henri, duke of Brabant.
As part of the agreement, the duke would promise “to take part in the expedition against the
English and to support Frederick of Hohenstaufen or any other French candidate in the
imperial election” (Baldwin 1986, 210). Philip Augustus’s manoeuvring in Flanders and its
immediate surroundings established some vital bonds, bonds which he could benefit from
were he to go to war against the English (Pollock 2015, 53).

But the scope of Philip’s strategy did not just extend to the immediate region around his
realm in France. And it was not just to margraves he sought support. After Margaret was
widowed, following Henry the Young King’s premature death, she was married to King Bela
of Hungary (Makk 1989, 120). It is unclear why Philip chose the Hungarian king as a suitable
match for Margaret. It might be that he sought friends in the East. This reason certainly
makes sense when we consider the marriage of his youngest sister, Agnes. Agnes was only
nine when she was sent by ship to Constantinople to marry the Byzantine Emperor’s son,
Alexios. Brokering the agreement between Emperor Manuel I Komnenos and Philip
Augustus, was Philip, Count of Flanders. As the Flemish count was returning home from a
crusade, he visited Constantinople and convinced the Byzantine Emperor to wed his son to
the daughter of the French king (Magdalino 1993, 100) Only years after Manuel I’s death,
and Alexios’s succession as the Emperor, the throne was usurped by Manuel’s first cousin,
the 65-year-old Andronicus. But it was not only the throne Andronicus took from his cousin’s
son; he also took the then eleven-year-old Agnes as his bride (Garland and Stone 2005).
Although Agnes’s married life would, as many daughters married for political reasons
experienced, prove an unhappy affair, the matrimonial scheme that her brother had laid out
for her would prove politically successful: having his sister married twice to the Emperor of
Byzantine would produce important allies in the East.

Not all royal daughters, however, are used for diplomatic alliances. Some are never married
at all. Although dynastic females are vital in the overall strategy of a dynasty, there are
several coincidental causes to why a matrimonial union was never arranged. One of these
causes was affection. Saint Louis’ sister, for instance, ended her life in a church rather than
being a part of a matrimonial alliance. Her father, Louis VIII, had attempted to marry his only
daughter to the son of Hugh the Brown of Lusignan, the count of the March (Le Goff 2009,
594). But the marriage was never consummated. After King Louis VIII’s death, however, it
was Saint Louis who oversaw her matrimonial career. An opportunity arose when the
Emperor Frederick II wanted his son, Conrad, to marry her. This, of course, would have been
a prestigious union for the Capetian dynasty; tying closer contacts with the Hohenstaufen
emperors could prove vital in medieval inter-dynastic affairs. Isabelle, however, refused to
marry the Hohenstaufen prince, and her brother, who arranged the marriage, was too fond of
her not to accept her refusal. Isabelle, thus, was to remain unmarried for the rest of her life; a
rare occasion for a daughter of a king, and, of that, his only daughter. She would retire in a
church in Longchamp that was built by her brother upon her request (ibid.).

7.3 The Hohenstaufens

The Hohenstaufen dynasty, and other high medieval dynasties in Germany, did not practice
primogeniture. This changed, as we saw in Chapter 6, the hierarchy of dynastic actors; as the
patrimony was divided equally between all sons, they all married according to the same logic.
For dynastic females, however, the case was different. Although dynastic actors were not
distinguished from one another based on order of birth, there was still a gender-based
hierarchy: women were excluded from the order of succession and from inheritance (Lyon
2013, 49-59). As such, they are married according to the same logic as the other daughters
considered in this chapter.

However, there are some differences: Hohenstaufen Emperors had substantially fewer
dughters than the Capetian and Plantagenet kings discussed above. Henry VI, for instance,
had no daughters. His father, Frederick Barbarossa, had only two surviving daughters. And
this is the second difference with the Hohenstaufen dynasty: only a handful of daughters of
the Holy Roman Emperors lived long enough to be arranged marriages for. Essentially, of the
five Hohenstaufen Emperors considered in this dissertation, they only had five betrothed
daughters all together. We will in turn discuss the betrothals of the two daughters of
Frederick Barbarossa, and next, the three daughters of his grandson, Frederick II.

None of Frederick Barbarossa’s daughters grew old enough to marry. Only two, Beatrice and
Agnes, were arranged marriages for. In fact, in the case of Beatrice, she was never formally
betrothed to anyone. But it is nevertheless interesting for the argument advanced here to
discuss the plans Barbarossa had for her. The first marriage arranged for Beatrice was with King Louis VII of France’s son, Philip Augustus (Bradbury 1998, 54). This arrangement needs to be set in the wider context of European affairs in the 1160s and the 1170s. As we discussed above, when the Plantagenet daughters were considered, Henry II’s daughter, Eleanor, was betrothed to Barbarossa’s son Frederick V. The betrothal ended with Barbarossa’s election of his second son, Henry, instead of Frederick, as his successor. Eleanor, thus, went on to marry Alphonso VIII of Castile. This made a bond between the royal houses of Castile and Plantagenet, and together with King Alfonso II of Aragon, they allied in a “coalition directed against Louis VII’s brother-in-law, Count Raymond V of Toulouse, who also claimed Provence” (Freed 2016, 353) The trio allied against the Count of Toulouse caused the uniting of the French king and Barbarossa, who had almost fought a war in 1165. It is within this context that the arrangement bade for Beatrice should be viewed. The marriage, however, was never to be, as it was blocked by the pope in 1173 (ibid.)

In the same year, Pope Alexander also caused another of Beatrice’s marriages to fall through. Barbarossa, keen on strengthening his allies in Italy, sent the Archbishop of Mainz, Christian, to negotiate a peace between Genoa and Pisa. Barbarossa was also planning on his fifth Italian campaign, and “Christian, assisted by a Venetian fleet of forty ships, began the siege of Ancona, the center of Byzantine influence in Italy, on 1 April 1173” (ibid., 354). As part of Barbarossa’s campaign, he needed friends in Italy, and the Archbishop lead negotiations with the Sicilian king, William II, to marry Beatrice (Runciman 1992, 6-7). This time, however, it was not Pope Alexander that refused the marriage; rather, it was William II himself who declined the offer not to upset the pope, who were against an alliance between the King of Siciliy and the Holy Roman Emperor. Beatrice, thus, who died the following year, never entered married life.

The failure of marriage is also the story of her sister, Agnes’s matrimonial career. Also for her were a marriage arranged, but an early death set a stop for Frederick Barbarossa’s plans for his daughter. He had originally intended to use Agnes to manifest political ties with the East; Barbarossa saw King Bela III of Hungary’s son as the perfect match in this regard (Makk 1989, 116) The Kingdom of Hungary’s important strategic location, in the midst between the Holy Roman and the Byzantine Empires, made a potential alliance with the Magyar king ever so vital. Moreover, the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel’s instalment of Bela III as the King of Hungary, which effectively ended the feudal lordship Frederick Barbarossa
had over Hungary, made a matrimonial alliance with King Bela a crucial affair for Barbarossa (Freed 2016, 274). A betrothal was agreed upon for the young couple, but Agnes passed away three years of age.

When we move into the next generation of Hohenstaufen rulers, we know from the previous chapter that Barbarossa’s successor, Henry VI, only had one son, Frederick. The latter, however, fathered three daughters, all of whom engaged in matrimonial alliances for the political benefits of the dynasty. With his daughter Constance, Frederick II continued the matrimonial policy of his grandfather directed to the East. The alliance he made with John Vatatzes, Emperor of Nicaea, was, as Steven Runciman argues, due to their “common enmity with the Papacy” (1992, 41). After the fall of Constantinople, following the Fourth Crusade, and the later establishment of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Empire of Nicaea had emerged as one of three succession states. Nicaea was one of the greatest contenders to the Latin Empire, and Emperor John Vatatzes had made great promise in capturing lost land in the outskirts of Constantinople. Frederick II was his continuous ally, and the marriage of his daughter, Constance, to the Emperor only further manifests their friendship.

Frederick II’s other daughters had more modest marriages than Constance. Margaret, Frederick’s eldest daughter, married Albert of Thuringia, Margrave of Misnia. Albert was the son of Henry III and Constantia of Austria, and was a member of the House of Wettin. Another daughter, Violante, married Richard, Count of Caserta (Abulafia 2002, 227). These three marriages of Frederick’s daughters portray nicely the trajectory followed for the daughters of most kings considered in this chapter. While political alliances manifested through marriages with distant kings and magnates proved vital for the international strategies of a dynasty, daughters were also used to secure friendship and support in the king’s more immediate surroundings. While status undoubtedly played a certain part in the choice of marriage partners for kings’ daughters, we have nevertheless seen that political advantages were expected from their marriages: bonds were created and alliances were maintained.

**Conclusions**
In the hierarchy of dynastic actors, females are at the bottom. This does not mean, however, that their marriages are of any way irrelevant to the dynasty’s overall strategy. Rather,
dynastic daughters were crucial in the inter-dynastic affairs of medieval Europe. As we saw in the case of Isabelle Plantagenet, a marriage not arranged properly can cause large problems for the dynasty; as a vital asset, squandering the chance of a beneficial marriage could be detrimental. Isabelle’s marriage nearly caused a civil war in England. In inter-dynastic affairs, just like in modern international relations, establishing and maintaining alliances was one of the most important strategic moves a dynasty could make in order to survive as a political unit. And dynasts knew well how to use their female relatives for such purposes.
8 Conclusions

The ultimate goal of this thesis has been to demonstrate that a theory of dynasticism is needed in order to make sense of the various actors, interests, and strategies that make up pre-modern international relations. The concept has increasingly been used in the discipline of IR to explain the strategies and policies of pre-modern rulers, as well as the political order they were operating in. But when dynasticism is left unexplored, and used as a general concept to denote the self-interests of the family as opposed to the state, one risks historical accuracy for parsimony. This is problematic as most of these studies attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the presentist, a-historical, and a-historicist studies that have dominated the discipline. Needed, this thesis has argued, is a theory of dynasticism which explored its full spectrum.

From the emergence of primogeniture—the very successional practice that gave rise to the dynasty itself—a theory of dynasticism was constructed. The hierarchies of dynastic actors, interests, and strategies was discerned from these structural changes. Moreover, seeking to explain the different logics underpinning dynastic marriages—the most important dynastic strategy—this thesis outlined an ideal-typical theoretical framework based on the historiographical literature on medieval Europe. This framework’s prime goal was to guide us through the myriad of reasons that would determine the matrimonial strategies of medieval dynasts. But as much as any theoretical framework needs to simplify the complexity of the real world, it was nevertheless important to construct a framework that would be historically specific. Not doing this would sacrifice accuracy for parsimony—the exact same thing this dissertation has criticised the extant IR literature on questions of dynasticism.

Through the emergence of primogeniture, the theoretical framework specified three different interests that would determine the marriages of each of the categories of offspring. As the European family no longer divided the patrimony and the political lands and offices belonging to the family’s head among all the sons, but endowed one heir, this established a different logic determining the heir’s marriage. He had now the prime responsibility of continuing the dynasty’s lineage, and as he needed an heir of his own, his marriage was largely determined by the reproductive abilities of his prospective spouse. As such, we cannot claim that the marriages of heirs were determined by geopolitical or diplomatic forces; the heirs’ marriages were about producing a son. Factors such as the spouse’s age and maternal
history would be characteristics that were sought after. Moreover, as the dynasty needed to continue the lineage of noble blood, the spouse needed to be of royal or noble descent. This is why we see the marriages of the heirs of the Plantagenet, Capet, or Hohenstaufen dynasties are all with women from the upper classes of society.

The marriages of cadets and daughters, however, followed different logics than that of their oldest brother. As cadets were disinherited by their father, they needed a place in the world. Although one could imagine a father sending the cadet off to a career in the military or in the church, we do not see this in the exploration of the three dynasties analysed. Rather, we see that the father often seeks to find a spouse for his younger sons that can inherit territory. Thus, what determines the marriages of the cadet is whether the prospective spouse is an heiress or not. As the cadet, if married to an heiress, he would take over the rule in his wife’s territory, the cadet’s father did not need to divide his patrimony to provide for his younger sons.

This issue was, perhaps, best illustrated when we discussed the Hohenstaufen dynasty. As this German dynasty did not practice primogeniture, the father divided his patrimony among all of his sons. This meant that there were no cadets of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, as all sons were heirs. Although only one of the sons—but not always the oldest—would inherit his father’s throne as Holy Roman Emperor, the other sons would inherit other territories belonging to the dynasty. The test of the utility of the ideal-typical model, thus, would be if the younger sons followed the same logics as normal heirs; if they, in essence, also married young and noble spouses that could produce a son of noble blood. To a large extent, this was the case for younger sons of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. We did not see the same drive to marry heiresses as we saw with the cadets of the two other dynasties.

When marrying off his daughters, however, the dynasty’s father would not think of issues such as reproduction or territory. Daughters would be married into a different family, and consequently, both the children the daughter produced and the territory she married into would belong to a different house. But this does not mean that daughters were irrelevant for dynastic interests. In fact, daughters were crucial for the overall strategy of the dynasty. As all of the sons had been forced to marry specific spouses due to the constraints created by primogeniture, the daughters’ marriages are the only ones that can be strategically designed to reward the dynasty political or diplomatic benefits. As we have seen, the marriages of
daughters were thus involved in diplomatic schemes of alliance formation or peace settlements.

These theoretical insights demonstrate the complexity of dynasticism as a theoretical concept, and that it needs to be taken seriously in order to gain a full understanding of the dynamics of pre-modern international relations. It also highlights the importance of dynastic marriages as a political tool; a topic that has been noted by IR scholars, but rarely theorised. The theoretical framework constructed and the empirical material it was applied to expose, moreover, the need for scholars can engage with medieval international relations. As most historically-oriented scholars either jump over this period all together, or use it in some argument about the birth of the modern state-system, more studies on this period are needed in order to understand the history of international relations, better apprehend the differences between pre-modern and modern international relations, and further the development of historically-specific theoretical concepts.

Furthermore, those that do engage with medieval international relations usually study the topics already so prevalent in modern IR—wars and diplomacy, for the most part. But by studying dynastic marriages in its own right, isolated from the historical-sociological arguments of the development of the early-modern or modern state systems, we increase our understanding of the underlying logics and the dynamics of one of the most important political tools used in international affairs for eight centuries. As such, it has been an important goal for this thesis to make evident the demand of such studies; analyses of something so foreign to our own world, but still highly relevant to the overall development of the state-system we are currently living in.

This means that further studies should attempt to both theorise and analyse dynasticism and dynastic marriages in different times and different places. Studies of the logics behind the dynastic marriages of early-modern Europe, for instance, could prove vital both for our understanding of the development of our modern state-system, and for the changing dynamics of dynasticism itself. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, studies going beyond the thematic scope of dynastic marriages in order to explore the full spectrum of dynasticism are needed. When analysing the crusades, for instance, few scholars have taken dynasticism to its length in order to understand how family logics determined the strategies of these religious wars. Summa summarum, IR as a historically-oriented discipline need to
continue exploring the concepts we use, and conduct rigorous historical analyses to better understand present and past international-political dynamics. In this regard, this thesis has attempted to enhance our understanding of an under-explored epoch and the undertheorised concept most often used to make sense of this period.
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