This paper examines a specific situation of mercenaries and paid men in a particular late-twelfth-century chronicle, *Chronicon Hanoniense (Chronicle of Hainaut)* by Gilbert of Mons. Gilbert of Mons was a cleric who served, among other offices, as chancellor for Count Baldwin V of Hainaut, who governed the county from 1171 to 1195. The county of Hainaut, now part of modern Belgium, is situated east of the county of Flanders and south of the duchy of Brabant. Gilbert wrote his chronicle in the years 1195 to 1196, shortly after the death of his lord and patron Baldwin V. His chronicle has especial significance as a primary source in respect to military history, as Gilbert, in his position as chancellor of Hainaut, was eyewitness to many important events including battles, sieges and treaty negotiations. When not present at such events, Gilbert could access the reports of other witnesses and was privy to court news and gossip. He acted as judge, envoy and negotiator, and made a number of visits to the Imperial court in Germany. Gilbert’s position as chancellor was beneficial to the composition of his chronicle, because he created many charters and had access to a great many official documents of the counties and ecclesiastical establishments of Hainaut and Flanders, the majority of which are lost to us today.

Gilbert’s situation in Hainaut was unusually fortuitous for a chronicler of this period. Although not a large county, Hainaut was particularly prominent in a number of affairs during this period affecting the kingdom of France, the county of Flanders and the German Empire, partly because of astute matrimonial connections, and partly through its favourable geographical position. Baldwin V of Hainaut married Marguerite, sister of the count of Flanders, thereby gaining control of Flanders through her in 1191. By his mother, Alix of Namur, and the favour of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, he became marquis of Namur in 1190. Baldwin was also the father-in-law of King Philip Augustus of France, who married, as his first wife, Baldwin’s daughter Elisabeth. The future heir to the kingdom of France, Louis VIII, was Baldwin’s grandson.
Geographically, the county of Hainaut occupied a sort of middle ground in this area of north western Europe—while part of the Empire, Gilbert of Mons boasts that Count Baldwin had not given homage for the county of Hainaut to the Emperor, but only to the bishop of Liège, suggesting a perceived independence. Yet, through Baldwin’s marriage to Marguerite of Flanders and his subsequent expectation of inheriting the county of Flanders through her, Hainaut had strong ties westward. The marriage of Baldwin’s daughter, Elisabeth of Hainaut, to King Philip Augustus, initiated connections to the kingdom of France which had not previously existed. Moreover, Count Baldwin had accepted a money fief from, and done homage to, King Henry II of England. Thus, the count of Hainaut had interests in all directions—the Empire, Flanders, France and England, while still retaining a perception of his county’s independence from the great powers.

Accordingly, an examination of Gilbert of Mons’ chronicle in respect to mercenaries and paid men, provides a valuable contemporary viewpoint, both from the immediacy of Gilbert’s witness and opinions in his own region, and from his position in a county which was effectively involved in military and political matters with the greater neighbouring powers. Moreover, while there are mercenaries, clearly identified as such, in his chronicle, it seems evident that Gilbert himself had a broader, and most interesting, perception of what constituted a paid man.

To begin with those who are baldly identified as mercenaries, the *stipendiarii*, there are five specific identifications of them in this chronicle. The first two instances occur in the early section of the work, where Gilbert is detailing events from more than a century before. Succinctly described, Robert the Frisian had dispossessed Count Arnoul of Flanders, who was killed at the Battle of Cassel in 1071. Arnoul’s mother, Countess Richilde and brother, Baldwin, retired to their holdings in the county of Hainaut and made plans to attempt the recovery of Flanders. Apparently lacking sufficient ready resources, Richilde and her son Baldwin raised funds by yielding their allods in Hainaut to the bishop of Liège for what Gilbert calls ‘a very great amount of money’. The bishop, in return, gave the lands back as liege fiefs, while Richilde and her son used the money for the exclusive purpose of hiring mercenaries against the usurper Robert the Frisian. As we lack sources for this area which would be equivalent to the Pipe Rolls of England for example, in which it is possible to find specific monies paid to individual mercenaries, this incident gives us some idea of the costs incurred in hiring a large band of mercenaries in