

**The Career of Geoffrey de Montbray, Bishop of Coutances (1048-1093)
and *unus de primatibus Anglorum*
(‘one of the chief men of the English’)**

by

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Summary

Geoffrey de Montbray was one of the most important men in Normandy and England during the second half of the eleventh century. As bishop of Coutances, Geoffrey made a significant contribution to the restoration of ecclesiastical life in western Normandy. In post-Conquest England, where Geoffrey became a great landholder, he played a pivotal role in the consolidation of the Conqueror's victory. Geoffrey's role in the conquest and settlement of England, and in particular his association with warfare, has overshadowed his achievements as a diocesan bishop. In modern historiography he has been presented as an example of an old-fashioned type of bishop that was gradually being superseded in Normandy by more reform-minded prelates. This thesis will assess the validity of this interpretation by providing a detailed examination of his career. But it will also consider his activities as a diocesan bishop and his participation in the settlement of England in the context of the development of his personal relationship with the Conqueror. In particular, it will examine the significance of charismatic elements of lordship and the importance of acquiring 'closeness' to a ruler as a means of self-advancement. By approaching Geoffrey's career from his perspective, the intention of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the mindset of an eleventh-century Norman bishop. This thesis uses a range of sources that includes charters and narrative sources, architectural evidence, the evidence of Domesday Book, and manuscript sources.

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In loving memory of

Margaret Julia Howard

(1921-2002)

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Abbreviated References

<i>AdeN</i>	<i>Annales de Normandie</i>
<i>ANS</i>	<i>(Proceedings of the Battle Conference on) Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
<i>Domesday</i>	<i>Domesday Book. A Complete Translation</i> , ed. Ann Williams and G. H. Martin (Alecto Historical Editions, London, 2002).
DB	<i>Domesday Book</i> , ed. John Morris, 38 vols. (Chichester, 1974-92).
<i>DS</i>	‘De statu huius ecclesiæ ab anno 836 ad 1093’ in <i>Gallia Christiana, in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa</i> , vol. xi (Paris, 1759), ‘Instrumenta’, cols. 217-224.
E-DB	J. Palmer, F. Thorn, C. Thorn and N. Hodgson, <i>Electronic Edition of Domesday Book: Translation, Databases and Scholarly Commentary, 1086</i> [computer file] (Colchester: UK Data Archive, University of Essex [distributor], 2007. SN 5694).
Fauroux	<i>Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911-1066)</i> , ed. Marie Fauroux (Caen, 1961).
Fontanel	<i>Le cartulaire du chapitre cathédral de Coutances</i> , ed. Julie Fontanel (Saint-Lô, 2003).
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>GC</i> , xi	<i>Gallia Christiana, in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa</i> , vol. xi (Paris, 1759).
<i>HH</i>	Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, <i>Historia Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996).
<i>HSJ</i>	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
<i>JW</i> , iii	<i>The Chronicle of John of Worcester</i> , vol. iii, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998).
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>

<i>Les évêques normands</i>	<i>Les évêques normands du XI^e siècle</i> , ed. Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (Caen, 1995).
<i>Letters of Lanfranc</i>	<i>The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury</i> , ed. and trans. Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford, 1979).
Mansi	<i>Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> , ed. J. D. Mansi, 31 vols. (Florence and Venice, 1759-98).
‘Miracula’	‘Miracula ecclesiæ Constantiensis’ in E.-A. Pigeon, <i>Histoire de la cathédrale de Coutances</i> (Coutances, 1876), pp. 367-83.
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OV	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969-80).
PL	<i>Patrologiæ cursus completus, series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64).
RAG	<i>Revue de l’Avranchin et du pays de Granville</i>
RdM	<i>Revue du département de la Manche</i>
Regesta	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. The Acta of William I (1066-1087)</i> , ed. David Bates (Oxford, 1998).
RHGF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> , ed. Martin Bouquet, new edition, ed. Léopold Delisle, 24 vols. (Paris, 1869-1904).
RRAN	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154. Volume I: Regesta Willelmi Conquestoris et Willelmi Rufi 1066-1100</i> , ed. H. W. C. Davis (Oxford, 1913); <i>Volume II: Regesta Henrici Primi 1100-1135</i> , ed. Charles Johnson and H. A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956).
Toustain de Billy	René Toustain de Billy, <i>Histoire ecclésiastique du diocèse de Coutances</i> , ed. François Dolbet and A. Héron, 3 vols.

(Rouen, 1874-86).

TRE

Tempore regis Edwardi

Wace

Wace, *The Roman de Rou*, trans. Glynn S. Burgess with the text of Anthony J. Holden and notes by Glynn S. Burgess and Elisabeth van Houts (St Helier, 2002).

WJ

The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, ed. and trans. Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1992-95).

WM, *GR*

William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1998-99).

WP

The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers, ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford, 1998).

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Introduction

Geoffrey de Montbray (1048-1093) played a pivotal role in the history of Normandy under William the Conqueror. As bishop of Coutances, Geoffrey oversaw the restoration of episcopal power and revitalisation of ecclesiastical life in a diocese that had suffered as a result of the Viking attacks during the ninth and early tenth centuries and from the neglect of its bishops who had lived in exile at the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen between the early tenth century and the episcopate of Herbert who established himself at Saint-Lô following his appointment in *c.*1023.¹ During his episcopate, Geoffrey completed the Romanesque cathedral begun by his predecessor, Bishop Robert, part of which survives today under a Gothic covering. He reconstituted the cathedral chapter by recalling the canons who had been installed at the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen by Bishop Hugh and established its hierarchy of officials. It was also during his episcopate that the church received a ducal confirmation of its possessions and there is evidence which links the origin of the cult of the Virgin Mary at the cathedral to Geoffrey's episcopate. In 1066, Geoffrey participated in Duke William's invasion of England. He was present at the Battle of Hastings and asked the Normans for their consent to the duke's coronation as king in Westminster Abbey. In the following years, Geoffrey emerged as one of the king's most trusted followers. He assisted in the suppression of revolts in Somerset in 1069 and eastern England in 1075, represented the king in several important pleas, including the inquiry into the losses sustained by Christ Church, Canterbury at Penenden Heath in 1072, and, as charter evidence reveals, frequently implemented the king's will. He was rewarded with vast possessions concentrated mainly in South West England where he appears to have been responsible for the defence of the northern coastline of Somerset and Devon. In 1088, he rebelled against the new king of England, William Rufus, in support of the claim of the Conqueror's eldest son Robert

¹ For the date of Herbert's appointment, see below, p. 95 and n. 46.

Curthose to the English throne. Having been defeated, he returned to his diocese where he spent the remaining years of his life defending his pre-eminence in the region against the claims to overlordship made by Henry, the Conqueror's youngest son. By the time of his death in 1093, Geoffrey had travelled more than many of his contemporaries. In addition to covering the length and breadth of England and Normandy, Geoffrey visited the county of Maine, Reims, Rome and parts of southern Italy. His career also provides a link between the Normans in the north who conquered England and their compatriots in the south who dominated southern Italy and went on to conquer Sicily, for it is likely that some of Geoffrey's relatives participated in their conquests.

The scope of Geoffrey's activities highlights the centrality of the bishop in eleventh-century society.² The primary function of a bishop was the provision of pastoral care to all those who lived in his diocese. This role and the powers to confirm and admit candidates to Orders that were unique to the episcopal office afforded the bishop a pre-eminent place in society. As indicated in Bishop Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*, a collection of canon law compiled in the diocese of Worms before 1020, bishops were likened to the keys to the kingdom of heaven in the early eleventh century because they had the power to open and close its gates.³ In addition to their spiritual function, bishops were also involved in secular affairs. At a local level, since the early second century, bishops had fulfilled the role of community leader.⁴ Since the fall of the Roman Empire, bishops had also exercised certain

² For the centrality of the episcopal office, John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones, 'Introduction: The Bishop Reformed' in *The Bishop Reformed. Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 1-20, at p. 1.

³ *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, ed. J. Wagner, 3 vols. (Third edition, Paris, 1901), iii, p. 56; Burchard of Worms, *Decretorum libri XX* in *PL* 140, cols. 537-1053, at col. 586, *Liber Primus*, Cap. CXXV: 'Ipsi enim habent potestatem claudere cœlum et aperire portas ejus, quia claves cœli facti sunt'. For the date and context of its compilation, Greta Austin, 'Jurisprudence in the Service of Pastoral Care: The *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms', *Speculum* 79 (2004), pp. 929-59, at p. 931, n. 15 and pp. 929-32.

⁴ W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church* (Third edition, London, 1991), p. 40.

civic responsibilities.⁵ In many cases, as members of noble families, bishops naturally became involved in local political life.⁶ Some bishops, such as Bishop Odo of Bayeux, whose role as a counsellor to his half-brother Duke William II of Normandy is depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry, were also involved in secular affairs at a regional or national level as the counsellors of princes and kings.⁷ Despite the pervasiveness of episcopal power, the episcopal office has not been adequately treated by modern historians. Whilst aspects of the office and episcopal culture have been studied, there has been no full-length study of the episcopal office and few studies of the careers of individual bishops.⁸ In recent years, an attempt has been made to redress this historiographical anomaly. Two important collections of essays, *The Bishop* (2004) and *The Bishop Reformed* (2007) have cast light on the range of activities associated with the episcopal office.⁹ But the episcopal office is largely treated as a subject of peripheral importance in histories of the medieval Church, and discussion of bishops is usually confined to subsections within these works.¹⁰

The development of the modern historiography of the episcopal office and the place of bishops in medieval society has been directly affected by changing interpretations of the episcopal response to the reform movement associated with Pope Gregory VII. The view of

⁵ Jacques Fontaine, 'L'évêque dans la tradition littéraire du premier millénaire en Occident' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 41-51, at p. 48.

⁶ For the importance of a noble background to the bishops of Neustria between 950 and 1050, Jacques Boussard, 'Les évêques en Neustrie avant la réforme Grégorienne', *Journal des Savants* (1970), pp. 161-96, at pp. 185-86.

⁷ Lucien Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, trans. Richard Rex (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 212.

⁸ Most notably, in English, Robert L. Benson, *The Bishop-Elect. A Study in Medieval Ecclesiastical Office* (Princeton, 1968), and more recently Mary Frances Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2007). An exception is Steven Fanning, *A Bishop and his World before the Gregorian Reform: Hubert of Angers, 1006-1047*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 78, Part 1 (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 1-193.

⁹ *The Bishop. Power and Piety at the First Millennium*, ed. Sean Gilsdorf (Münster, 2004); *The Bishop Reformed*.

¹⁰ For example, Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 219-26 and the scattered references noted in the index at p. 659; H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Structure of the Church, 1024-1073' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume IV, c.1024-1198, Part I*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 229-67, at pp. 247-48; I.S. Robinson, 'The Institutions of the Church, 1073-1216' in *New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume IV, c.1024-1198, Part I*, pp. 368-460, at pp. 441-45.

this movement as a top-down, papally-led campaign against a church dominated by the laity led historians to focus on episcopal participation in secular activities.¹¹ An example of this view is provided by Auguste Dumas' chapter entitled 'La féodalité épiscopale' in a contribution to a multi-volume history of the Church edited by Augustin Fliche and Victor Martin. Dumas located bishops in the feudal hierarchy during the ninth, tenth and early eleventh centuries by likening the bishopric ('episcopatus') to the 'comitatus' of a count. Since both may be described as 'honours', which constituted the foundation of feudalism, bishops were effectively locked into the secular world.¹² The influence of this view has been reflected in the approach of some historians to the German episcopate, which has focused on the secular activities of bishops and in particular the Ottonian and Salian rulers' use of bishops (and abbots) as political counterbalances to the influence of the nobility. The background of many of these bishops as royal chaplains before their promotion has even led to the identification of an episcopal ideal at the royal court which governed their behaviour.¹³ But it has also been reflected in the historiography of bishops in France between the ninth and early eleventh centuries. Since historians have examined the careers of these bishops in regional studies which have focused on the breakdown of royal power and its impact on society, their participation in secular affairs has been emphasised at the expense of other activities.¹⁴

¹¹ This view derives from Augustin Fliche's *La réforme grégorienne*, 3 vols. (Louvain and Paris, 1924-37). For an overview of Fliche's interpretation of 'Gregorian Reform', Maureen C. Miller, 'New Religious Movements and Reform' in *A Companion to the Medieval World*, ed. Carol Lansing and Edward D. English (Chichester, 2009), pp. 211-30, at pp. 214-15. For a discussion of the importance of this view on episcopal historiography, see Ott and Jones, 'Introduction', pp. 7 and 12-14.

¹² Emile Amann and Auguste Dumas, *L'Église au pouvoir des laïques (888-1057)* (Paris, 1948), pp. 220-49, at pp. 221-22.

¹³ Ott and Jones, 'Introduction', p. 9. For example, see Edgar Nathaniel Johnson, *The Secular Activities of the German Episcopate 919-1024* (Lincoln [Nebraska], 1932). For the *Reichskirchensystem*, see Timothy Reuter, 'The 'Imperial Church System' of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: a Reconsideration', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982), pp. 347-74, at pp. 347-50; for the importance of the royal chapel as a source of bishops, pp. 352-54. For the 'courtier bishop', C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness. Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 19-48.

¹⁴ Anna Trumbore Jones, *Noble Lord, Good Shepherd. Episcopal Power and Piety in Aquitaine, 877-1050* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 8-10. For the debate surrounding the 'feudal revolution', see T.N. Bisson, 'The "Feudal

Whilst this emphasis on episcopal participation in secular affairs has brought several aspects of episcopal conduct into sharper focus, it has led to the neglect of other activities associated with ecclesiastical life.¹⁵ As a consequence, and as historians have taken a greater interest in popular devotion at a local level as an inspiration for reform rather than the papacy, in more recent years, historians have focused on these relatively neglected aspects of the episcopal office.¹⁶ A number of important studies of the diocesan activities of bishops have been produced that have highlighted the multifarious nature of a bishop's duties and as a result suggested fresh approaches to the study of the episcopal office. These approaches are represented by the essays which make up the two collections cited above, *The Bishop* and *The Bishop Reformed*, but they are also exemplified by the work of Constance Bouchard, Jeffrey Bowman, John Eldevik, Anna Trumbore Jones and John S. Ott in particular, which have influenced the approaches adopted in this study.¹⁷ By complementing the work of previous generations of historians which tended to focus on episcopal participation in secular activities, these approaches have created a more rounded picture of the episcopal office in

Revolution", *Past and Present* 142 (1994), pp. 6-42 and Dominique Barthélemy, Stephen D. White, Timothy Reuter, Chris Wickham and T.N. Bisson, 'Debate. The "Feudal Revolution"', *Past and Present* 152 (1996), pp. 196-223 and 155 (1997), pp. 177-225.

¹⁵ Jones, *Noble Lord*, p. 10. Notable examples of work on bishops' secular activities used in this study include Olivier Guyotjeannin, *Episcopus et Comes. Affirmation et déclin de la seigneurie épiscopale au nord du royaume de France (Beauvais-Noyon, X^e-début XIII^e siècle)* (Geneva, 1987); Timothy Reuter, 'Episcopi cum sua militia: The Prelate as Warrior in the Early Staufer Era' in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London, 1982), pp. 79-94.

¹⁶ For the role of the laity in supporting reform, see John Howe, 'The Nobility's Reform of the Medieval Church', *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), pp. 317-39.

¹⁷ See above, n. 9; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration. The Role of the Bishop in Twelfth-Century Auxerre* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1979); Jeffrey Bowman, 'The Bishop Builds a Bridge: Sanctity and Power in the Medieval Pyrenees', *The Catholic Historical Review* 88 (2002), pp. 1-16; John Eldevik, 'Ecclesiastical Lordship and the Politics of Submitting Tithes in Medieval Germany: the Thuringian Tithe Dispute in Social Context', *Viator* 34 (2003), pp. 40-56; Jones, *Noble Lord*; John S. Ott, 'Urban Space, Memory, and Episcopal Authority: The Bishops of Amiens in Peace and Conflict, 1073-1164', *Viator* 31 (2000), pp. 43-77.

which the bishop is depicted as performing several ‘balancing acts’ between competing obligations.¹⁸

The influence of the reform movement is also evident in the historiography of the pre-Conquest Norman episcopate. In 1957, in the only published survey of the duchy’s bishops in the pre-Conquest period, David Douglas described an episcopate ‘controlled and administered by a small close-knit aristocratic group’. Citing several examples, including Geoffrey, Douglas argued that the ducal dynasty and the duchy’s leading families ‘used the Norman episcopate almost as an additional endowment of their own families’. As such, the episcopate was representative of the new secular aristocracy that Douglas thought had emerged during the eleventh century.¹⁹ Although Douglas highlighted the positive impact on the development of ecclesiastical life of Geoffrey and Odo of Bayeux in particular and the significance of the restoration of the bishoprics undertaken by the pre-Conquest episcopate in the rise of Normandy under Duke William, he criticised these bishops as representatives of an older, pre-reform ecclesiastical tradition.²⁰ They were ‘out of touch with the reforming ideals which were radiating from Cluny and its offshoots, and their conception of the episcopal office had little in common with that envisaged by later reformers’.²¹ In short, Douglas argued that Geoffrey and his pre-Conquest episcopal colleagues were ‘[c]rude and violent in

¹⁸ Thomas Head, ‘Postscript: The Ambiguous Bishop’ in *The Bishop Reformed*, pp. 250-64, at p. 250.

¹⁹ David Douglas, ‘The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest’, *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 13 (1957), pp. 101-15, at pp. 102-3. A French version of the article was published as ‘Les évêques de Normandie (1035-1066)’, *AdN* 3 (1958), pp. 87-102. Lengthy extracts from the article appear at David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), pp. 118-24. Douglas also emphasised the links between the episcopate and the aristocracy at *The Norman Achievement 1050-1100* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 28. For the rise of Douglas’ ‘new aristocracy’, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 83-104.

²⁰ Douglas, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 106. For the importance of the restoration of the bishoprics, p. 107; Douglas, *Norman Achievement*, p. 27.

²¹ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 118.

a crude and violent age [...] [whose] work was partial and circumscribed, and their worldliness needed the correction which the monastic teaching was to supply'.²²

Although the positive contribution of the pre-Conquest episcopate to the development of the Norman Church has been brought into sharper focus in recent years by a number of important studies, Douglas' view of the episcopate has been sustained by the notion that the character of the men appointed to bishoprics changed during Duke William's reign.²³ The event that has been most frequently cited as a marker of this transformation is the consecration of Maurilius as archbishop of Rouen in 1055 following the deposition of Mauger at the council of Lisieux.²⁴ According to the biographical information in the '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', Maurilius had been a monk at the abbey of Fécamp before and after a spell in Italy where he had lived as a hermit and had an unhappy experience as abbot of Sainte-Marie at Florence.²⁵ At Fécamp, he had come under the influence of the leaders of the monastic reform in the duchy, Abbot John and William of Volpiano, and during his stay in Italy, Michel de Boüard has suggested that he probably knew the reformer Peter Damian.²⁶ Although, as Richard Allen has pointed out, Maurilius may not have been

²² Douglas, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 115. This interpretation is similar to Peter L. Hull's view of the Norman bishops in office before the deposition of Archbishop Mauger of Rouen whom he described as examples of 'an older type of prelate, regarded by 'post-Gregorians' mostly with horror', at 'The Norman Episcopate during the Reign of William the Conqueror' (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Bristol, 1953), p. 27.

²³ For example, the essays collected in *Les évêques normands*; Lucien Musset, 'Observations sur la formation intellectuelle du haut clergé normand' in *Mediaevalia Christiana XI^e-XIII^e siècles, hommage à Raymonde Foreville* (Tournai, 1989), pp. 279-89; David Bates, 'Le patronage clérical et intellectuel de l'évêque Odon de Bayeux 1049/50-1097' in *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie*, ed. Sylvette Lemagnen and Philippe Manneville (Caen, 1997), pp. 105-14. For example, David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (Harlow, 1982), pp. 197-98 and 212; François Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois X^e-XII^e siècle* (Rennes, 1998), p. 284.

²⁴ For the council, Guillaume Bessin, *Concilia Rotomagensis provinciae* (Rouen, 1717), pp. 46-47; for a discussion of its date, Richard Allen, 'The Norman Episcopate, 989-1110' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2009), pp. 330-31. For this view, Hull, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 1 and 35; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 286; to a lesser extent, Douglas, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 106-7.

²⁵ Richard Allen, 'The *Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*: Study and Edition', *Tabularia "Documents"* 9 (2009), pp. 1-66, at pp. 39-40 and 53.

²⁶ Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 325; Michel de Boüard, 'Notes et hypothèses sur Maurille moine de Fécamp, et son élection au siège métropolitain de Rouen' in *L'Abbaye Bénédictine de Fécamp. Ouvrage scientifique du XIII^e centenaire 658-1958*, 3 vols. (Fécamp, 1959-61), i, pp. 81-92, at p. 84.

wholeheartedly committed to reform ideals, his reformist sentiments are highlighted in his attempt to enforce clerical celibacy at the council of Lisieux in 1064.²⁷ Maurilius' sympathy for reform has led to the identification of his appointment as the moment that marked the duke's initiation of the reform of the secular church in Normandy. As such, the deposition of Mauger and subsequent promotion of Maurilius acted as a turning-point after which the standard of the episcopate improved.²⁸

Geoffrey occupies a prominent place in this historiographical tradition as an emblem of an older ecclesiastical tradition. This view may be attributed to the influence of John Le Patourel's biography of Geoffrey which had informed Douglas' assessment of the pre-Conquest episcopate.²⁹ Le Patourel intended to reconcile the contrasting views of Geoffrey that had emerged by 1944 on either side of the Channel. Whereas French historians had portrayed him as a local hero, English scholars had depicted him as a 'warrior bishop'.³⁰ Having catalogued Geoffrey's activities on both sides of the Channel, Le Patourel concluded that

²⁷ Léopold Delisle, 'Canons du concile tenu à Lisieux en 1064', *Journal des Savants* (1901), pp. 516-21, at p. 517: c. 2: 'sancitum est de villanis presbiteris atque diaconibus, ut nullus abinde uxorem vel concubinam seu introductam mulierem duceret'; c. 3: 'ut nullus canonicorum a clero in antea uxorem acciperet; qui vero acceperat omnino amitteret, siquidem presbiter vel diaconus esset'; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 333-34.

²⁸ Olivier Guillot, 'La libération de l'Église par le Duc Guillaume avant la conquête' in *Histoire religieuse de la Normandie*, ed. Nadine-Josette Chaline (Chambray, 1981), pp. 71-85, at p. 77. For the link between Maurilius and the implementation of reform in Normandy, De Boüard, 'Notes et hypothèses sur Maurille', pp. 86-91; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 325.

²⁹ Douglas, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 103 and n. 18, p. 105 and n. 38; p. 109 and n. 65 (it should be n. 66; the footnotes are incorrectly numbered on this page).

³⁰ John Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093', *EHR* 59 (1944), pp. 129-61, at p. 129. For the French view, Toustain de Billy, i, p. 144; Auguste-François Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques de Coutances* (Coutances, 1839), p. 119; Auguste-François Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse de Coutances et Avranches*, 2 vols. (Coutances, 1877-78), i, p. 163; E.-A. Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale de Coutances* (Coutances, 1876), p. 40. For the English view, 'warlike', E.A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, iv (Second edition, Oxford, 1876), pp. 277 and 579 ('warlike'); E.A. Freeman, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1888), p. 173 ('fighting bishop'); E.A. Freeman, *The Reign of William Rufus and the Accession of Henry the First*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1882), i, p. 40 ('warrior bishop'); Freeman, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 167 and 175; Freeman, *William Rufus*, i, pp. 41 and 444 ('fierce'); Freeman, *William Rufus*, i, p. 40 ('brigand').

there was nothing exceptionally worldly or bellicose about Geoffrey. He was, indeed, a very good specimen of a type of bishop which, for all the reforms, never died out in the middle ages, and a type whose qualities were of special value in the time of William the Conqueror.³¹

Despite the work of Lucien Musset, Monique Dosdat, Gilles Désiré Dit Gosset, Maylis Baylé and Julie Fontanel in particular, which has enriched our knowledge of Geoffrey's contribution to the development of ecclesiastical life in the diocese, Le Patourel's view of Geoffrey has persisted.³² In 1983 Lucien Musset described Geoffrey as 'a great bishop, but in the manner of eleventh-century Normandy', and in 1995, Marjorie Chibnall provided a more generous assessment of Geoffrey's spirituality which was underpinned by the notion that he represented an older ecclesiastical tradition.³³

This study will consider the validity of Geoffrey's reputation as a representative of an older ecclesiastical tradition through a detailed examination of his career as a diocesan bishop and an assessment of the significance of his participation in secular affairs after 1066 as evidence of an old-fashioned conception of episcopal conduct. However, this thesis also intends to gain a broader understanding of Geoffrey's career by setting his ecclesiastical and secular activities in the context of his personal relationship with Duke William. This approach has been inspired by the work of Thomas Bisson, who has highlighted the significance of personalities and emotions in the exercise of power, and Richard Barton, who has examined the charismatic elements of lordship. Bisson, for example, has described

³¹ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 157.

³² Musset, 'Observations sur la formation intellectuelle du haut clergé normand', p. 282; Monique Dosdat, 'Les évêques de la province de Rouen et la vie intellectuelle au XI^e siècle' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 223-52, at pp. 227-28; Gilles Désiré Dit Gosset, 'Les chanoines du chapitre cathédral de Coutances', *RdM* 41 (1999), pp. 17-40, at p. 31; Maylis Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande au XI^e siècle' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 151-72, at pp. 161-67; Julie Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse sous Guillaume le Conquérant: le cas de l'église de Coutances', *RAG* 77 (2000), pp. 189-208, at pp. 191-96.

³³ Lucien Musset, 'Un grand prélat normand du XI^e siècle: Geoffrey de Montbray, évêque de Coutances (1049-1093)', *RdM* 25 (1983), pp. 5-17, at p. 6: 'un grand évêque, mais à la mode du XI^e siècle normand'; Marjorie Chibnall, 'La carrière de Geoffroi de Montbray' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 279-93, at p. 292.

‘[o]ffices [...] animated by lords [...] whose power was effluent in expression, affective in impact’.³⁴ The bond between a lord and his follower in this period did not rest on the principle of command and obedience, as the characterisation of Geoffrey as the Conqueror’s loyal subordinate suggests; it was a personal relationship based on mutual fidelity.³⁵ In return for a follower’s faithfulness, aid and counsel, a lord was expected to show favour in the form of gifts of land or offices, such as bishoprics, or of booty won through military exploits. Indeed, as Gerd Althoff has pointed out, to a great extent, the coherence of a lord’s followers as a group rested on the expectation of rewards.³⁶ Since those closest to their lord received the greatest benefits from this relationship, each follower sought closeness to his lord, a process described by German historians as *Königsnähe*.³⁷ A lord surrounded himself with those men who possessed the greatest ‘honour’ in order to augment his own reputation.³⁸ ‘Honour’ may be defined as the ‘public expression of one’s legal, political, social and economic status’, but as Barton has noted it also formed an element of charisma, an aura that reflected an individual’s ‘reputation, honor, and personal standing’.³⁹ Therefore proximity to a lord was determined by the charisma of each follower. As Barton has demonstrated, charisma was rooted in the possession of cities, lands and rights, but it also derived from the

³⁴ Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century. Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, 2009), p. 4. Also, Thomas N. Bisson, ‘Medieval Lordship’, *Speculum* 70 (1995), pp. 743-59; Richard E. Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c.890-1160* (Woodbridge, 2004); Richard E. Barton, ‘Emotions and Power in Orderic Vitalis’, *ANS* 33 (2010), pp. 41-59.

³⁵ Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 103 and 105; Walter Schlesinger, ‘Lord and Follower in Germanic Institutional History’ in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. Fredric L. Cheyette (New York, 1968), pp. 64-99, at p. 70. For an example of this view of Geoffrey, Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1066-1154* (London, 1979), p. 281.

³⁶ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 103-6 and 112; Schlesinger, ‘Lord and Follower’, p. 76. For gifts as signs of a lord’s favour, Gerd Althoff, ‘(Royal) Favour: A Central Concept in Early Medieval Hierarchical Relations’ in *Ordering Medieval Society*, ed. Bernhard Jussen, trans. Pamela Selwyn (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 243-69, at p. 250.

³⁷ Björn Weiler, ‘Politics’ in *The Central Middle Ages*, ed. Daniel Power (Oxford, 2006), pp. 91-120, at p. 117; Gerd Tellenbach, ‘From the Carolingian Imperial Nobility to the German Estate of Imperial Princes’ in *The Medieval Nobility*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Amsterdam, 1978), pp. 203-42, at p. 207.

³⁸ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, pp. 79, 89 and 109. A similar point is made by Althoff in relation to the Merovingian period, at *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 112.

³⁹ Weiler, ‘Politics’, p. 118; Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 7.

composition and extent of an individual's network of personal relationships.⁴⁰ In light of this interpretation, Geoffrey's diocesan activities and his participation in secular affairs may be seen as elements of a *Königsnähe* strategy. Indeed, Timothy Reuter has interpreted the participation of certain twelfth-century German bishops in military affairs in this way.⁴¹ Therefore this dissertation will examine Geoffrey's activities as attempts to acquire and maintain closeness to the Conqueror through the enhancement of his charisma.

By adopting this approach, Geoffrey will be placed at the centre of this analysis as the principal agent in his rise to prominence. In addition, such an approach takes into consideration the influence of Geoffrey's aristocratic mentality on his career. The negative view of Geoffrey in modern historiography may be attributed to the fact that he is traditionally judged as a bishop. But Geoffrey was not only a bishop; he was a lord and a member of the aristocracy. Geoffrey himself is described by two twelfth-century chroniclers as 'descended from a family of noble barons' and 'of noble Norman stock'.⁴² Indeed, it was vital for eleventh-century bishops to possess 'nobilitas', the 'noble attributes' that characterised noblemen, so that the resources of his family might lend weight to his authority and contribute to the protection of his church.⁴³ As a consequence, as Heinrich Fichtenau has pointed out, a noble bishop 'remained bound by the concepts and customs of his social group'.⁴⁴ Therefore it follows that Geoffrey's conduct would have been shaped by a natural

⁴⁰ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, pp. 51-76 and 77-111.

⁴¹ Reuter, 'Episcopi cum sua militia', pp. 79-94, at p. 88. An alternative *Königsnähe* strategy might derive from a household position. Archbishop Ebbo of Reims' appointment has been linked to the position of his mother who was Louis the Pious' wet-nurse, Stuart Airlie, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious' in *Charlemagne's Heir*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191-204, at pp. 201-2.

⁴² *DS*, cols. 218-19: 'nobilium baronum prosapia ortus'; *OV*, ii, pp. 266-67: 'de nobili Normannorum progenie ortus'; iv, pp. 278-79: 'nobilitate cluebat'.

⁴³ Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble. Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca and London, 1998), p. 1; Michel Parisse, 'The Bishop: Prince and Prelate' in *The Bishop*, pp. 1-22, at p. 5; Ott and Jones, 'Introduction', p. 1.

⁴⁴ Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, trans. Patrick J. Geary (Chicago, 1991), p. 198.

inclination to seek closeness to the Conqueror for the material rewards and prestige that he stood to gain from the relationship constituted the very essence of ‘nobilitas’.

Sources

Little evidence from the eleventh and twelfth centuries has survived from the diocesan and *départementales* archives, and those documents that are extant do not exist as originals. Although the archives sustained considerable losses during World War 2, it appears from the evidence of the nineteenth-century inventories that nearly all of the diocese’s pre-fourteenth century acts had been lost before 1944.⁴⁵ It is likely that the archives suffered some losses at the time of the siege of Coutances in 1356, since the compilation of the diocese’s three cartularies, which have been dated to the period between 1350 and 1360 by Julie Fontanel, has been attributed to a crisis in the management of the archives prompted by the Hundred Years’ War and the outbreak of plague.⁴⁶ Further losses probably occurred in 1562 when the diocesan archives were attacked by the Huguenots and during the French Revolution when it is likely that two of the diocese’s three cartularies, A and C, were destroyed.⁴⁷ The three registers of the medieval diocese ironically survived these tumultuous events, but were unable to endure what Léopold Delisle described as the ‘ultra-libérales’ conditions of the chapter’s archive in the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ The *Livre noir* of the chapter, a collection of documents compiled between 1251 and 1279 on the order of Jean d’Essey, bishop of Coutances (1251-1274/76), and interpolated up to 1316, was lost in c.1820. It contained the two most important sources for Geoffrey’s career, the ‘De statu huius ecclesiæ ab anno 836

⁴⁵ Christiane Dairea, ‘Les divers périls auxquels ont échappé, au cours des siècles, les archives du chapitre de la cathédrale de Coutances’ in *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie*, ed. Sylvette Lemagnen and Philippe Manneville (Caen, 1997), pp. 91-96, at pp. 95-96; Julie Deslondes-Fontanel, ‘Le cartulaire B du chapitre cathédral de Coutances: histoire d’une résurrection’, *Tabularia “Études”* 9 (2009), pp. 71-84, at p. 73.

⁴⁶ Fontanel, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁷ Dairea, ‘Les divers périls’, p. 93; Deslondes-Fontanel, ‘Le cartulaire B’, p. 74.

⁴⁸ Georges Huard, ‘Léopold Delisle et la Normandie’, *Cahiers Léopold Delisle* 1 (1947), pp. 5-29, at p. 9, cited at Deslondes-Fontanel, ‘Le cartulaire B’, p. 74.

ad 1093', and the 'Miracula ecclesiae Constantiensis' written by a canon of Coutances cathedral in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, which are discussed in Chapter 1.⁴⁹ The *Livre noir* of the bishop, a partial copy of the chapter's *Livre noir* made during the episcopate of Robert d'Harcourt (1291-1316), was rediscovered in 1833 but destroyed in 1944.⁵⁰ A similar fate met the *Livre blanc* of the chapter, a register compiled in c.1332 during the episcopate of Louis d'Erquery (1346-1370/71). It was lost during the Revolution, recovered by François-Augustin Delamare in the nineteenth century, but destroyed at Rennes train station in 1944.⁵¹ The remaining cartulary of the diocese, cartulary B, which had been recovered by l'abbé Delamare in 1837, was destroyed during World War 2.⁵²

The impact of these losses on this study is difficult to determine. Several copies exist of both the 'De statu' and the 'Miracula', and the text of each document as it was copied into the *Livre noir* in the thirteenth century has been published, albeit imperfectly.⁵³ Similarly, Duke William's confirmation charter of the church's possessions and Geoffrey's grant of Winterborne Stickland survive as copies. The list of 'signa' in the latter document is incomplete, and in the case of Duke William's confirmation charter, Fontanel's suggestion that it may have been revised in the twelfth century in its current form has made the lack of an original a significant problem.⁵⁴ Many of the church's oldest charters that would have been relevant to this study were lost during the French Revolution when cartulary C, the

⁴⁹ Gilles Désiré dit Gosset, 'Les *Livres noirs* et les *Livres blancs* de l'ancien diocèse de Coutances', *RdM* 39 (1997), pp. 7-21, at p. 10; Hersent, 'Notices sur le Livre-Noir du chapitre, le Livre-noir de l'évêche et le Livre blanc du chapitre de l'église cathédrale de Coutances', *Mémoires de la société académique du Cotentin* 1 (1875), pp. 198-206, at pp. 199-200. For its contents, B. Jacqueline, 'Institutions et état économico-social du diocèse de Coutances de 836 à 1093 d'après les 'Gesta Gaufridi' du 'Livre noir' du chapitre coutançais', *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 58 (1980), pp. 227-39, at p. 228, n. 4.

⁵⁰ Gosset, 'Les *Livres noirs*', pp. 10-11; Fontanel, pp. 38-39; Hersent, 'Notices sur le Livre-Noir', p. 202.

⁵¹ Gosset, 'Les *Livres noirs*', pp. 11-12; Fontanel, p. 39; Hersent, 'Notices sur le Livre-Noir', p. 205.

⁵² Deslondes-Fontanel, 'Le cartulaire B', p. 74.

⁵³ See below, p. 26.

⁵⁴ Fontanel, nos. 278 (Winterborne Stickland) and 340 (Coutances cathedral); Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse', pp. 189-208. For Léopold Delisle's copy of the Winterborne Stickland charter, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. nov. acq. lat. 1018, fol. 9r.

largest of the chapter's cartularies, which contained nine hundred and thirty acts dating as far back as the ninth century, probably disappeared.⁵⁵ Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to form an impression of liturgical life in the cathedral during Geoffrey's episcopate because none of its liturgical books from this period have survived. The inventory of the episcopal 'mensa' compiled in 1440 includes references to gospel books and a psalter, as well as 'the book of Saint Lô', but there is no indication of the provenance of these books.⁵⁶ The liturgical calendar of the eleventh-century cathedral can only be imperfectly reconstructed from liturgical books written in the later Middle Ages.⁵⁷

This dissertation uses evidence drawn from a range of sources. The most important source for Geoffrey's career between his consecration in 1048 and the Conquest is the 'De statu' which is discussed in Chapter 1. There are only passing references to Geoffrey's post-Conquest career in the principal narrative sources for the period. The earliest reference to Geoffrey's participation in the Conquest is an allusion to his role in the king's coronation on 25 December 1066 in Bishop Guy of Amiens' *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*.⁵⁸ Bishop Guy's poem is probably based on eyewitness knowledge of the events provided by his nephew, Hugh, who fought at Hastings.⁵⁹ The poem was described by Orderic Vitalis in the early twelfth century who used it as a source for his account of the battle, but it remained lost

⁵⁵ Deslondes-Fontanel, 'Le cartulaire B', p. 73; Fontanel, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁶ *La mense épiscopale de Coutances en 1440*, ed. Gilles Désiré Dit Gosset (Saint-Lô, 1998), p. 27, nos. 152, 153, 154 and 155; p. 26, nos. 147: 'le livre saint Lo', and 145.

⁵⁷ The following liturgical books have been consulted: a thirteenth-century pontifical which had belonged to William de Thiéville, bishop of Coutances, Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 539; a mid-fifteenth century breviary for use at Coutances cathedral, Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 350; an early thirteenth-century lectionary from the priory of Saint-Lô de Rouen, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 131; a fourteenth-century missal from the priory of Saint-Lô de Rouen, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 94; and the ordinary of Louis d'Équerry, bishop of Coutances, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 1301.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey is the 'certain Norman bishop' who asked the Frenchmen for their approval of Duke William's elevation as king, *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (Oxford, 1999), pp. 48-49: 'Normannus quidam presul'. The identity of this bishop as Geoffrey is confirmed by William of Poitiers at *WP*, pp. 150-51: 'sermocinato ad eos ac sententiam percunctato Constantiniensi praesule'.

⁵⁹ *Carmen*, p. xlv; pp. 32-33: 'Pontiui nobilis heres [...] Hugo'.

until 1826 when it was discovered in the Royal Library at Brussels.⁶⁰ R.H.C. Davis doubted the identification of this text as Bishop Guy's poem and its usefulness as a source for the battle, but its authenticity has been supported by L.J. Engels and Elisabeth van Houts, and its most recent editor, Frank Barlow, has described the *Carmen* as the 'fons et origo' of the version of events recorded in the earliest Norman accounts of the Conquest. Indeed, Barlow argued that the poem was written by 1070 at the latest.⁶¹

Further information about Geoffrey's role in the Conquest is provided in the *Gesta Guillelmi* of William of Poitiers, which was probably written between 1071 and 1077.⁶² According to Orderic, William of Poitiers was archdeacon of Lisieux at the start of Gilbert Maminot's episcopate in 1077, an office which he still held in 1087.⁶³ In addition, Orderic stated that William had been the king's chaplain 'for many years', an assertion doubted by R.H.C. Davis on the basis of William's apparent absence from charter attestations before and after 1066 and the lack of any evidence to corroborate Orderic's claim within the text of the *Gesta*.⁶⁴ As an archdeacon and possibly a royal chaplain whose position meant that he must have been 'in the know at court', William had probably met Geoffrey and may even have known him personally.⁶⁵ The *Gesta Guillelmi* has been criticised as 'a biased, unreliable

⁶⁰ *OV*, ii, pp. 184-87: 'Guido etiam præsul Ambianensis metricum carmen edidit, quo Maronem et Papinium gesta heroum pangentes imitatus Senlacium bellum descripsit Heraldum uituperans et condempnans, Guillelmum uero collaudans et magnificans'; *Carmen*, p. xiii.

⁶¹ R.H.C. Davis, 'The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*', *EHR* 93 (1978), pp. 241-61; L.J. Engels, 'Once more: The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*', *ANS* 2 (1979), pp. 3-18; Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman Court 1066-1135: The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*', *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989), pp. 39-62, at pp. 53-57; *Carmen*, pp. xc and xl.

⁶² *WP*, pp. xx-xxi.

⁶³ *OV*, iii, pp. 20-21: 'In æcclesia Luxouiensi eo tempore honorabiles erant personæ et illustres archidiaconi atque canonici [...] Guillelmus Pictauinus'; David S. Spear, *The Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals during the Ducal Period, 911-1204* (London, 2006), p. 174. For the dates of Gilbert Maminot's episcopate, Pierre Bouet and Monique Dosdat, 'Les évêques normands de 985 à 1150' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 19-37, at pp. 31-32.

⁶⁴ *OV*, ii, pp. 184-85: 'Ipse siquidem prædicti regis capellanus longo tempore extitit'; R.H.C. Davis, 'William of Poitiers and his History of William the Conqueror' in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill with the assistance of R.J.A.I. Catto and M.H. Keen (Oxford, 1981), pp. 71-100, at pp. 88-89.

⁶⁵ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p. 100.

account of events' intended to flatter Duke William.⁶⁶ However, given that his audience expected the *Gesta* to be aesthetically pleasing, this judgement is unfair.⁶⁷ Furthermore, John Gillingham has argued that his descriptions of warfare were authentic, since they were informed by his own experiences as a soldier.⁶⁸

Geoffrey is briefly mentioned in William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* in an account of the dedication of the church of Saint Mary on 1 July 1067. This section belongs to the additions made by William between 1067 and early 1070 to the original version of the *Gesta*, which he had completed shortly before 1060.⁶⁹ Little is known about William. Orderic referred to him on two occasions as a monk of Jumièges called 'Calculus'. The precise meaning of this name is unknown, but van Houts has suggested that it reflected William's responsibility for keeping the abbey's calendars up to date.⁷⁰ Since it is likely that William was present at the dedication of the church of Saint Mary, he had at least seen Geoffrey, but he did not include any further information about him. Indeed, William's tendency to provide only 'minimal commentary' on the events he recorded reflected his concern to avoid the enmity of the men at court. In his account of Duke William's minority, William omitted the names of the troublemakers since they were 'the very men who now claim to be the most faithful and have received so many honours from the duke'.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 102. John Gillingham described its tone as 'nauseatingly sycophantic' at 'William the Bastard at War' in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 141-58; reprinted in *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 143-60, at p. 143.

⁶⁷ R.W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 20 (1970), pp. 173-96, at p. 178.

⁶⁸ Davis, 'William of Poitiers', pp. 71-72; Gillingham, 'William the Bastard'; *OV*, ii, pp. 258-59: 'In rebus bellicis ante clericatum asper extitit et militaribus armis protectus terreno principi militavit'.

⁶⁹ *WJ*, i, p. xxxii. For the dedication, ii, 172-73.

⁷⁰ *WJ*, i, p. xxxi.

⁷¹ Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 53-54; *WJ*, ii, pp. 92-93: 'hi qui fideliores se profitentur, et quos nunc maioribus dux cumulavit honoribus'.

Geoffrey appears once in the ‘E’ version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in its account of the rebellion against William Rufus in 1088. This version of the chronicle was copied at Peterborough Abbey in c.1121, presumably as part of an attempt to restore the abbey’s library which had been destroyed by a fire in 1116, from a copy probably held at Saint Augustine’s, Canterbury.⁷² This evidence of Geoffrey’s participation in the 1088 rebellion was repeated with minor modifications by William of Malmesbury in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and Henry of Huntingdon in the *Historia Anglorum*.⁷³ William of Malmesbury was a monk at the abbey of Malmesbury who began work on the *Gesta Regum* after 1118. He also included an account of an exchange between Geoffrey and Saint Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, in the *Vita Wulfstani*, which he completed during the tenure of Warin as prior at Worcester (c.1124-c.1142). Since the *Vita* was a translation of Colman the monk’s Old English life of Wulfstan, it is likely that the story was based on an actual event.⁷⁴ Henry of Huntingdon succeeded his father Nicholas as archdeacon of Huntingdon in 1110 and had completed the first version of his *Historia Anglorum* by 1129.⁷⁵ Diana Greenway has estimated that approximately forty per cent of the *Historia* derives from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁷⁶ Hence Henry repeated its information about the 1088 rebellion, but he provided no further information about Geoffrey’s activities.

⁷² *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition, Volume 7, MS. E*, ed. Susan Irvine (Cambridge, 2004), p. xiii. The annals are written in the same hand up to 1121 with some additional entries made for the years between 1122 and 1131, at p. xix. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Michael Swanton (London, 1996), p. xxvi.

⁷³ The version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* used by Henry of Huntingdon has been linked to the ‘E’ version discussed above by Diana Greenway, at Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996), p. xci. For the practice of improving source material in twelfth-century English historical writing, Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments. The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 206-7.

⁷⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Saints’ Lives*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R.M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), pp. xiv-xv. William of Malmesbury alludes to the exchange in the *Gesta Pontificum*, which was written in the 1120s, William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, i, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom with the assistance of R.M. Thomson (Oxford, 2007), pp. 428-29. The earliest version of the *Gesta Pontificum* was completed in mid-1125, William of Malmesbury, *Saints’ Lives*, p. xv.

⁷⁵ *HH*, pp. xxvii and lxvi. For Henry’s succession as archdeacon, pp. 590-91: ‘Cuius circa transitum [...] archidiaconus ei ipse successi’.

⁷⁶ *HH*, p. lxxxv.

The most significant narrative source which is in part based on a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the chronicle of John, an English monk at Worcester. According to Orderic, John was instructed to continue the chronicle of Marianus Scotus which ended in 1073 by Saint Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester.⁷⁷ This would place the inception of John's work at some point before Saint Wulfstan's death in 1095.⁷⁸ If the 'D' version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was composed at Worcester, it is possible that John consulted it, but P. McGurk has played down its influence.⁷⁹ Furthermore, despite similarities between John's chronicle and the annals in version 'E', he did not appear to rely on its evidence.⁸⁰ Indeed, John seems to have reorganised the evidence of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and supplemented it with information drawn from other sources, which probably included the personal recollections of Saint Wulfstan.⁸¹ It is this supplementary information that makes the evidence from his chronicle so valuable to this study, for John provides information about Geoffrey's role in the suppression of the 1075 rebellion and his participation in the 1088 rebellion not found elsewhere.

The most important narrative source for Geoffrey's post-Conquest career is Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Its importance not only derives from the factual information about Geoffrey provided by Orderic, but also from Orderic's depiction of Geoffrey as a warrior bishop. Although Orderic was English by birth, his father gave him to the abbey of Saint-

⁷⁷ *OV*, ii, pp. 186-87: 'Ioannes Wigornensis a puero monachus, natione Anglicus [...] Quem prosecutus Iohannes acta fere centum annorum contexuit, iussuque uenerabilis Wlfstani pontificis et monachi'.

⁷⁸ Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester c.1008-1095* (Oxford, 1990), p. 257.

⁷⁹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition, Volume 6, MS. D*, ed. G.P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996), pp. lxxv-lxxvi; *JW*, iii, p. xxii.

⁸⁰ *JW*, iii, pp. xxii-xxiii; Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his Contemporaries' in *Writing of History*, pp. 101-26, at p. 111, n. 3.

⁸¹ *JW*, iii, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

Evrout in southern Normandy as an oblate at the age of ten.⁸² Orderic wrote the *Historia* at Saint-Evrout, where he was probably in charge of the scriptorium, between 1114-15 and 1141, more than twenty-five years after William I's death but within living memory of the events of his reign.⁸³ In reference to the parts of the *Historia* containing information about Geoffrey, Marjorie Chibnall has estimated that the books three and four were completed by 1123 or 1124 and 1125, and books seven and eight were written between 1130 or 1131 and 1133, and between 1133 and 1135.⁸⁴ Since Orderic used the *Carmen* and the *Gesta Guillelmi* as sources for the conquest of England, he repeated the information provided by Bishop Guy and William of Poitiers.⁸⁵ The inclusion of an account of the siege of Montacute, which Geoffrey helped to relieve, may derive from the lost ending of the *Gesta Guillelmi*.⁸⁶ Orderic had certainly seen John of Worcester's work for he referred to it in the *Historia*, and it has been suggested that he may have used William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* and *Gesta Pontificum*.⁸⁷ But the depiction of Geoffrey as a warrior bishop was probably shaped by the oral traditions passed on to Orderic by the abbey's benefactors or visitors. It is also possible that it derived from Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux, who must have known Geoffrey personally. As Chibnall pointed out, although Orderic probably did not have much contact with Bishop Gilbert, he is known to have visited the abbey, and his stories may have circulated amongst the monks.⁸⁸

⁸² Orderic was born in Shropshire, *OV*, iii, pp. 6-9: 'Tandem ego de extremis Merciorum finibus decennis Angligena huc aduectus [...] Vndecimo autem ætatis meæ anno pro amore Dei a proprio genitore abdicatus sum et de Anglia in Normanniam tenellus exul ut æterno regi militare destinatus sum'; Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 3-16.

⁸³ Chibnall, *World of Orderic*, p. 33; *OV*, i, pp. 31-34.

⁸⁴ *OV*, ii, p. xv; iv, p. xix.

⁸⁵ *OV*, ii, pp. 172-73 and 184-85; see above, pp. 14-16.

⁸⁶ *OV*, ii, pp. 228-29; Davis, 'William of Poitiers', p. 100.

⁸⁷ See above, n. 77; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 158.

⁸⁸ Chibnall, *World of Orderic*, pp. 186 and 202.

Another important source for this study is Wace's *Roman de Rou*. Wace was born in 1110 on the island of Jersey and was therefore a native of the diocese of Coutances. He began work on the *Roman de Rou* after 1155 and at some point in the 1160s he was granted a prebend at Bayeux cathedral by Henry II, king of England and duke of Normandy. He continued writing the work until 1173 or 1174 when Henry II ordered him to stop before asking Benoît de Saint-Maure to complete it.⁸⁹ The value of the *Roman de Rou* as a source for the Norman Conquest remains in doubt, but it is invaluable as a source for the history of the Cotentin during the eleventh century because Wace preserved the oral traditions of the region. These traditions are reflected in the incidental details of Wace's account of the battle of Val-ès-Dunes in 1047.⁹⁰

The most important source for Geoffrey's career is charter evidence. Geoffrey can be identified in sixty-eight charters between his consecration as bishop in 1048 and his death in 1093. The majority belong to the Conqueror's reign, but he also appeared in nine charters from his sons' reigns.⁹¹ His earliest appearance was in a ducal confirmation of a donation made to Mont-Saint-Michel in 1054 and his final appearance was in a charter preserved in a twelfth-century document which recorded the dedication of the church of Saint-Pierre de Marigny performed by Geoffrey between 1091 and 1093.⁹² The documents may be divided

⁸⁹ Elisabeth van Houts, 'Wace as Historian' in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: The Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 103-32, at pp. 105-6.

⁹⁰ Wace, lines 3585-4226; van Houts, 'Wace as Historian', pp. 108-9; Matthew Bennett, 'Poetry as history? The 'Roman de Rou' of Wace as a source for the Norman Conquest', *ANS* 5 (1982), pp. 21-39, at pp. 25-26.

⁹¹ For the period 1048-1066, Fauroux, nos. 141, 163, 181 and 227; Fontanel, no. 340; *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Donington, 2006), no. 43. For the period 1066-1087, *Regesta*, nos. 39, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 57, 60, 68, 69, 81, 83, 87, 88, 92, 95, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 138, 146, 156, 167, 174, 175, 181, 193, 201, 215, 217, 232, 235, 253, 254, 256, 257, 265, 278, 315, 346, 347, 348, 349 and 350; Fontanel, no. 278; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 6. For the period 1087-1093, *RRAN*, i, nos. 306, 315, 320, 323 and 346; C. H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1925), p. 68, no. 8; *DS*, col. 223; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77. Geoffrey also appears in the following spurious or suspicious charters: *Regesta*, nos. 77, 104, 109, 110, 133, 150, 152, 194, 290, 294, 301, 303, 305, 306, 317, 322 and 331.

⁹² *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 43, p. 127; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77.

into categories, each of which has its associated problems. Thirty are diplomas, documents which usually concern only one transaction and include a small number of 'signa'.⁹³ Nine are confirmation charters or 'pancartes' which record numerous grants to an ecclesiastical institution and include many 'signa'.⁹⁴ Eight are records of pleas which often included records of grants within a narrative of a dispute settlement and 'signa'.⁹⁵ Twenty-two are writs issued after 1066 which record instructions sent by the king to his subordinates. Only some of these writs include witnesses.⁹⁶ Geoffrey's name is most frequently found amongst the witnesses and 'signa' in these documents. These appearances undoubtedly reflect his influence in political affairs, but each attestation needs to be considered in the context of each document.⁹⁷ Some of the charters, such as the records of pleas, provide information about his activities that are not recorded in the narrative sources. But the evidence of these records is often undermined by the problem of dating the pleas and their lack of detail.

The most significant problem is that only six have survived as originals and one of these was destroyed in 1944.⁹⁸ The majority have been preserved in cartularies compiled between the late eleventh and fourteenth centuries.⁹⁹ Some exist as copies made in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while others were copied in the seventeenth and

⁹³ Fauroux, nos. 132, 141, 163, 181 and 227; *Regesta*, nos. 39, 51, 54, 60, 68, 81, 92, 95, 138, 156, 174, 181, 193, 232, 253, 254 and 256; Fontanel, no. 278; *RRAN*, i, nos. 315, 320 and 323; Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 68, nos. 8 and 9; *DS*, col. 223; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77.

⁹⁴ Fontanel, no. 340; *Regesta*, nos. 49, 50, 53, 57, 167, 175, 215 and 217.

⁹⁵ *Regesta*, nos. 69, 117, 146, 201, 214, 235, 257 and 349.

⁹⁶ *Regesta*, nos. 83, 87, 88, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 265, 278, 315, 346, 347, 348 and 350; *RRAN*, i, 306 and 346.

⁹⁷ David Bates, 'Charters and Historians of Britain and Ireland: Problems and Possibilities' in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Marie Therese Flanagan and Judith A. Green (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 1-14, at p. 10.

⁹⁸ *Regesta*, nos. 49, 50, 51, 138, 214 (destroyed in 1944) and 254. No. 120 is possibly an original (see p. 423) and no. 175 is either an original or an early copy; the original was destroyed in 1944, see p. 579. The charter for Saint-Pierre de Marigny may also have survived as an original until 1944, see Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77, at p. 475.

⁹⁹ The charters that have survived in cartulary copies are *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, nos. 43 and 6; *Regesta*, nos. 53, 60, 83, 87, 88, 117, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 156, 167, 193, 232, 235, 278, 315, 346, 347, 349 and 350.

eighteenth centuries.¹⁰⁰ A small number were preserved in registers or as an ‘inspeximus’ or a ‘vidimus’ of one of the late medieval kings of France.¹⁰¹ The difficulty in using these copies is that the text may have been altered, either accidentally or deliberately, during the copying process. Furthermore, without the original version, it is impossible to know if the document copied was a genuine eleventh-century charter or a forged one.¹⁰² It was customary for medieval copyists to amend the charters they were copying. This is particularly relevant to the charters copied into cartularies, since a cartulary was carefully put together in order to support the needs of an institution at the time of its composition.¹⁰³ In this way, charters belong to what historians have called a ‘living tradition’.¹⁰⁴ Therefore each charter needs to be examined as a ‘text’ in the same way as a literary source in order to make effective use of its evidence.¹⁰⁵

Only thirteen of the charters include a dating clause.¹⁰⁶ This date may refer to the year in which the transaction occurred or it may be more specific. For example, Geoffrey subscribed King William’s confirmation of the grant of land made by Emmelina, wife of Walter de Lacy, to the abbey of Saint Peter in 1085, whereas he subscribed the king and queen’s grant of the church of Deerhurst to the abbey of Saint-Denis in 1069, ‘in the third

¹⁰⁰ For the eleventh-century copies, *Regesta*, nos. 39, 57, 68, 69 (I) and 348. The twelfth-century copies are Fauroux, no. 141; *Regesta*, nos. 54 and 81 (I) (the latter is dated late twelfth or early thirteenth century); *DS*, col. 223; for a twelfth-century enrolled copy, *Regesta*, no. 194. One charter exists as a thirteenth-century enrolled copy, *Regesta*, no. 146. For seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century copies, Fauroux, nos. 163, 181 and 227; *Regesta*, nos. 174, 201, 217 and 257; Fontanel, no. 278. The charter for Saint-Pierre de Marigny is extant only as a nineteenth-century copy, Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, pp. 475-77.

¹⁰¹ One charter survives in a fifteenth-century register, *Regesta*, no. 69 (II). For charters preserved in fourteenth-century ‘inspeximus’ and ‘vidimus’ records, Fontanel, no. 340; *Regesta*, nos. 181, 215, 253, 256 and 265.

¹⁰² V.H. Galbraith noted that a Henry II confirmation of a charter for Battle Abbey ‘does not, of itself, prove this (William I’s grant), though it may be considered to increase the probability’, at V.H. Galbraith, ‘A New Charter of Henry II to Battle Abbey’, *EHR* 52 (1937), pp. 67-73, at p. 69.

¹⁰³ For example, Francesca Tinti, *Sustaining Belief. The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 85-147.

¹⁰⁴ Marjorie Chibnall, ‘Charter and Chronicle: The Use of Archive Sources by Norman historians’ in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. C.N.L. Brooke, D.E. Luscombe, G.H. Martin and Dorothy M. Owen (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 1-17, at p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ Bates, ‘Charters and Historians of Britain and Ireland’, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Fontanel, no. 340; *Regesta* nos. 39, 68, 83, 156, 181, 193, 201, 215, 235, 254 and 257; *RRAN*, i, no. 315.

year of King William's reign, on the second day of Easter', that is 13 April.¹⁰⁷ Some charters, such as those relating to the plea presided over by Geoffrey at Worcester, can be dated to a period of a couple of years. In this case, the most likely date for the plea is between 1083 and 1085.¹⁰⁸ But some, such as the charters for Cerisy which were subscribed by Geoffrey, cannot be dated more precisely than the Conqueror's reign.¹⁰⁹ The problem of dating most of the charters relevant to this study means that it is difficult to establish an accurate itinerary for Geoffrey. It also undermines any attempt to trace the development of his political influence through his appearances as a witness or signer.

Geoffrey appears as a witness in nineteen charters and a signer in twenty-nine.¹¹⁰ As a witness, Geoffrey was more than likely present at the time of the action recorded in the charter. But as a signer, he was not necessarily present at the time the recorded action took place, for the function of a signer was slightly different to that of a witness.¹¹¹ Witnesses were included in order to support the recipient's title to the land if it was challenged.¹¹² Signers were usually people of a higher status whose 'signa' provided the transaction with greater security. The status of many signers suggests that their 'signa' held a value of their own that was unrelated to the act of signing.¹¹³ Signers appear to have been carefully selected with the content of each charter in mind. This is clearly demonstrated in the pre-Conquest charters attested by Geoffrey that nearly all concern land located within his

¹⁰⁷ *Regesta*, nos. 156 and 254, p. 768: 'regni vero Willelmi regis tertio, in secunda die Pasche'.

¹⁰⁸ *Regesta*, nos. 347-349; the result of the plea is confirmed in no. 350. For the date, see pp. 993-94.

¹⁰⁹ *Regesta*, nos. 92 and 95.

¹¹⁰ For Geoffrey's appearances as a witness: Fauroux, nos. 163 and 181; *Regesta*, nos. 53, 81, 87, 88, 146, 278, 315, 346, 347, 348 and 350; *RRAN*, i, nos. 306 and 346; Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 68, no. 8; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77. For Geoffrey as a signer: Fauroux, no. 141; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 43; *Regesta*, nos. 39, 49, 50, 51, 54, 57, 60, 68, 92, 95, 138, 156, 167, 174, 175, 181, 193, 215, 217, 232, 253, 256 and 257; *RRAN*, i, nos. 315, 320 and 323; Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 68, no. 9. Geoffrey appears as a witness and signer at Fauroux, no. 227 and *Regesta*, no. 254.

¹¹¹ David Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters' in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 89-102, at p. 92.

¹¹² Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 147-48.

¹¹³ Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp. 158-61.

diocese.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, ‘signa’ were collected over time to lend greater weight to the content of a charter. This is particularly true of ‘pancartes’ or confirmation charters. For example, the abbey of Lessay’s confirmation charter, on which Geoffrey’s ‘signum’ appears, contains numerous ‘signa’, including two bishops of Bayeux, which proves that the abbey added the ‘signa’ of important dignitaries over time. The ‘signa’ of bishops were a desirable addition to this type of charter.¹¹⁵

It is tempting to use charter evidence as a way of tracing the growth of Geoffrey’s political influence. But it is important to note that the extant charters form only a proportion of an unknown quantity of documents produced in the eleventh century, many of which may have been lost in the intervening years.¹¹⁶ Since most charters do not exist as originals, it is impossible to determine whether witnesses and signers have been omitted in the copying process. This can be seen in the extant version of the ducal confirmation of Coutances cathedral’s possessions which does not include any ‘signa’.¹¹⁷ In addition, witnesses and signers were not essential parts of every charter. As noted above, Norman diplomas frequently included the ‘signa’ of individuals connected to the transaction, but in England, diplomas were not used as frequently as writs, which did not usually include witnesses or signers.¹¹⁸ Therefore the political influence of an individual such as Geoffrey, who spent much of the post-Conquest period in England, cannot be determined accurately.

¹¹⁴ Fauroux, nos. 141 and 163; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 43; Fontanel, no. 340. Also, no. 227, which records a ducal confirmation made at Bayeux concerning land in the Bessin. No. 181, which records a ducal confirmation made at Brionne, is the only exception. For the selection of signers, Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p. 159. Bates made this point in relation to Norman diplomas, *Regesta*, p. 19 and Bates, ‘Prosopographical Study’, pp. 93-94.

¹¹⁵ *Regesta*, no. 175 and pp. 579-80; David Bates, ‘Le rôle des évêques dans l’élaboration des actes ducaux et royaux entre 1066 et 1087’ in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 103-15, at pp. 109-10.

¹¹⁶ Bates, ‘Prosopographical Study’, p. 90.

¹¹⁷ *Regesta*, p. 28; Cassandra Potts, ‘The Early Norman Charters: A New Perspective on an Old Debate’ in *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Carola Hicks (Stamford, 1992), pp. 25-40, at p. 35; Fontanel, no. 340.

¹¹⁸ Bates, ‘Prosopographical Study’, p. 90. For the lack of witnesses in Latin writs, *Regesta*, p. 60.

Thesis Outline

The foundation of this study will be an analysis of the ‘*De statu huius ecclesiae*’ and the ‘*Miracula ecclesiae Constantiensis*’, which forms the content of Chapter 1. Since these texts provide almost all of the evidence for Geoffrey’s diocesan activities, a discussion of the value of each work as a source for this study is essential. Chapters 2 and 3 provide detailed examinations of two key aspects of Geoffrey’s career as bishop of Coutances. Chapter 2 looks at Geoffrey’s elevation to the episcopate, which occurred in the reconciliatory atmosphere in the duchy after Duke William’s victory at Val-ès-Dunes in 1047. Chapter 3 consists of an examination of the principal elements of Geoffrey’s restoration of the church of Coutances and the contributions of his predecessors. Chapter 4 builds on the evidence of Geoffrey’s role in the restoration of the church, which is discussed in Chapter 3, by considering the evidence of Geoffrey’s activities as a diocesan bishop. Chapter 5 considers the broader significance of Geoffrey’s ecclesiastical reforms in the context of his relationship with the duke. Chapter 6 examines Geoffrey’s enrichment in England through an analysis of the evidence of Domesday Book in particular. Chapter 7, which looks at Geoffrey’s participation in the king’s affairs, assesses his post-Conquest career in the context of his relationship with the king. Finally, in Chapter 8, the impact of the Conqueror’s death on the final years of Geoffrey’s life will be examined.

Chapter 1: The Works of Canon John

The starting point for a study of Geoffrey's career is an assessment of the short history of the diocese which was published in *Gallia Christiana* under the title 'De statu huius ecclesiæ ab anno 836 ad 1093', and the collection of Marian miracles that occurred at Coutances cathedral during his episcopate and in the early twelfth century which was published as an appendix in E.-A. Pigeon's history of the cathedral.¹ Neither document survives in its original form. The earliest, albeit incomplete, version of the 'De statu' is a sixteenth-century copy bound within a collection of documents copied or calendared by Léchaudé d'Anisy in the nineteenth century (Fig. 1).² Pigeon's edition of the 'Miracula' derived from the earliest surviving copy made by Arturo Du Monstier in 1641.³ As noted in the Introduction, these documents were copied into the *Livre Noir* of the chapter. Since it was lost in c.1820, its contents are known only through copies.⁴ Therefore the extant versions of the 'De statu' and 'Miracula' contain the texts as they were copied into the *Livre Noir* at the end of the thirteenth century.

In the context of this study, the evidence of both texts is vital because it provides an insight into ecclesiastical life in the diocese in the second half of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries and Geoffrey's activities as a diocesan bishop. However, despite the panegyrical tone of the 'De statu' and the relationship between the two texts identified by

¹ 'De statu huius ecclesiæ ab anno 836 ad 1093' in *GC*, xi, 'Instrumenta', cols. 217-224; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 367-83. An improved version of the text has been produced by Richard Allen at 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 483-502. Since it remains the only published version, Pigeon's text will be used in this study unless stated otherwise in the footnotes.

² Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10068, f. 101r-104r; Léopold Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits latins conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale sous les numéros 8823-18613, et faisant suite à la série dont le catalogue a été publié en 1774* (Paris, 1863-71), p. 59. For its date, Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 184.

³ Allen, 'The Norman Episcopate', p. 483. Du Monstier also made a copy of the 'De statu', part of which survives, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10049, f. 420r-422r; Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits*, p. 58.

⁴ Gosset, 'Les Livres noirs et les Livres blancs', p. 10; Hersent, 'Notices sur le Livre-Noir', pp. 199-200.

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Fig. 1 - Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10068, f. 101r

Léopold Delisle, neither source has been subjected to rigorous critical analysis.⁵ In particular, modern historians have neglected the context in which each work was produced and the extent to which the vision of the past preserved in them, especially in the ‘*De statu*’, was shaped by the circumstances in which they were written.⁶ For example, John Le Patourel noted ‘it rarely passes the bounds of the credible, and no anachronisms have been found in it’.⁷ Majorie Chibnall concurred, stating that ‘one can accept the evidence of the *De statu* for Geoffrey’s episcopate’.⁸ Lucien Musset recognised its role as a record of the traditions of the church of Coutances, but he used its evidence without properly considering its limitations.⁹ Bernard Jacqueline adopted a similar approach in his reconstruction of ecclesiastical life in the diocese between 836 and 1093.¹⁰ Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to examine the value of the ‘*De statu*’ and the ‘*Miracula*’ as sources for Geoffrey’s career by considering the reasons for their composition and the extent to which the author moulded the history of the diocese to meet his objectives.

Authorship and Date

The author of the ‘*Miracula*’ identified himself as John, a canon of the cathedral, and the son of Geoffrey’s chamberlain, Peter.¹¹ The ‘*De statu*’ lacks a similar statement, but Delisle suggested that John was also its author. Since the documents were known to be next to each other in the *Livre Noir*, he thought that the opening words of the prologue of the ‘*Miracula*’,

⁵ See below, n. 12.

⁶ This is the principal theme of Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of First Millenium* (Princeton, 1994). An example of this principle is the abbey of Saint-Ouen’s transformation of Saint Nigasius, bishop of Rouen, into an apostolic era figure in order to undermine the status of the cathedral clergy at Rouen in the eleventh century, Felice Lifshitz, ‘The Politics of Historiography. The Memory of Bishops in Eleventh-Century Rouen’, *History & Memory* 10 (1998), pp. 118-37.

⁷ Le Patourel, ‘Geoffrey of Montbray’, p. 131.

⁸ Chibnall, ‘Geoffroi de Montbray’, at p. 282: ‘on peut accepter le témoignage du *De statu* pour l’épiscopat de Geoffroi’.

⁹ Musset, ‘Un grand prélat’, p. 5.

¹⁰ Jacqueline, ‘Institutions et état économique-social’, pp. 227-39.

¹¹ ‘*Miracula*’, ‘Prologus’, p. 368: ‘ego Johannes, prædicti Petri camerarii filius, et ejusdem ecclesiæ, licet indignus, canonicus’.

‘Cum igitur’, suggested that the work was a continuation of the ‘De statu’. He also noted the author’s use of the word ‘prædicti’ to describe Peter the Chamberlain in the prologue. This is clearly a reference to the ‘De statu’ in which Peter is mentioned on two occasions.¹² Indeed, the praise lavished on Peter in the ‘De statu’ is the most convincing evidence that John was the author of both works. Peter is described as a wise man, ‘upstanding, noble in spirit, kind, rational, prudent [and] hard-working’, whom Geoffrey entrusted with the government of the church and its affairs as his deputy.¹³

Little is known about John other than the information he provided about his family in the ‘Miracula’. In one of the stories, the sight of a priest and canon of the church called Walter, whom John identified as ‘my uncle’, is restored to his weak eye by the touch of the Virgin’s hair which Geoffrey had found amongst the church’s relics.¹⁴ Another features an archdeacon called Richard, whom John described as ‘my brother’.¹⁵ His date of birth is unknown, but he was probably educated at one of the schools established by Geoffrey at Coutances, since his description of Geoffrey’s provision of compositions for use in the schools and his reference to Geoffrey’s praise for verses which pleased him have the appearance of personal recollections.¹⁶ He must have become a canon during Geoffrey’s episcopate, but he cannot be identified in any charter during this period. The date of his death is also unknown, but David Spear thought that he was still alive in 1134 since a

¹² Léopold Delisle, ‘Notice sur un traité inédit du douzième siècle intitulé: *Miracula ecclesiæ Constantiensis*’, *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes*, deuxième série, 4 (1847-48), pp. 339-52, at p. 341 and p. 343, ns. 1 and 3; ‘Miracula’, ‘Prologus’, pp. 367-68. For the position of the texts in the *Livre Noir*, Hersent, ‘Notices sur le Livre-Noir’, p. 201. For Peter’s appearances in the ‘De statu’, *DS*, cols. 220 and 222.

¹³ *DS*, col. 220: ‘Petrus camerarius prudentem virum, ecclesiasticum, magnanimum, benignum, rationabilem, prudentem, operosum, vicarium suum et ecclesiæ decanum in rectorem præposuit’.

¹⁴ ‘Miracula’ no. xxii, p. 379: ‘Patruus meus Galterus, sacerdos et canonicus’.

¹⁵ ‘Miracula’ no. xxviii, p. 381: ‘Richardis fratris mei archidiaconi’.

¹⁶ *DS*, col. 220: ‘ut pius pater interdum precibus et admonitionibus satagebat, et præmissis ad scholarum doctrinam et ecclesiæ frequentiam concitare minis et terroribus, ab omnibus segnitie et inhonestate revocare [...] Si cuilibet et eorum scriptum vel versus, vel thirotinum, vel aliquid utile videbat, congratulans ei sublimiter illud collaudabat’.

‘Johanne canonico’ witnessed a grant made by Bishop Algar to the abbey of Lessay in that year.¹⁷ John may have written a ‘vita’ of Saint Lô, and it is tempting to attribute the poem addressed to Matilda, abbess of La Trinité de Caen, which was copied into her mortuary roll, to John.¹⁸

Neither the ‘De statu’ nor the ‘Miracula’ can be accurately dated. In one of the stories recorded in the ‘Miracula’, John refers to an epidemic that swept through France during the reigns of King Louis of France and Henry, king of the English and duke of Normans, a period which he described as ‘recent times’.¹⁹ Whilst this may be a reference to the pestilence of 1130, as Jean Fournée suggested, this particular miracle can be only broadly dated to the period between Louis VI’s coronation in 1108 and Henry I’s death in 1135.²⁰ Dating the ‘Miracula’ is made more complicated by the fact that the work was completed in two phases. In the prologue, John stated that ‘a certain presumptuous young man’ who was ‘a relative of the great persons of the church’ had compiled a miracle collection which had displeased his ‘lords’ because of its style and the author’s tendency to digress and abbreviate the stories. As a result, this work was omitted from the extant version.²¹ Delisle, Pigeon and Fournée took this story at face value and assumed that John began a new collection.²² But the description

¹⁷ Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 115; Archives départementales de la Manche, 2 Mi 175 (R1), pp. 18-20, quotation at p. 19. There are no page numbers in this document; I have followed Spear’s pagination which is set out at p. 130.

¹⁸ Bernard Jacqueline, ‘Saint Lô, évêque de Coutances et Briovère (VI^e siècle)’, *RdM* 35 (1993), pp. 36-53, at p. 45 and p. 52, ns. 58 and 60. For the ‘vita’, E.-A. Pigeon, ‘Saint Lo, évêque de Coutances’, *Mémoires de la Société académique du Cotentin* 8 (1892), pp. 1-60, at pp. 25-32. For Abbess Matilda’s mortuary roll, Léopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des morts du IX^e au XV^e siècle* (Paris, 1886), pp. 177-279, at pp. 218-19.

¹⁹ ‘Miracula’, no. xxvii, p. 381: ‘Ubi noviter temporibus, regnantibus rege Ludovico, Anglorumque rege et duce normannorum Henrico [...] cum per totam pene Franciam, miseranda et horrenda lues prædicta [...] effrenis desæviret’.

²⁰ Jean Fournée, ‘Les miracles de Notre Dame aux XI^e et XII^e siècles’, *Cahiers Léopold Delisle* 29 (1980), pp. 3-38, at p. 25.

²¹ ‘Miracula’, p. 367: ‘quidam juvenis præsumptuosus, majorum ecclesiæ personarum consanguinens (Pigeon’s italics) [...] quoniam verborum phaleris solitisque digressionibus et syrmatibus, compendiosæ rei modum excessit, sententiæ et gravitati dominorum displicuit, et sic ex toto remansit’.

²² Delisle, ‘Notice sur un traité inédit’, p. 342; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 96; Fournée, ‘Les miracles de Notre Dame’, pp. 15-16.

of this author as a ‘young man’ during Geoffrey’s episcopate and a relative of members of the cathedral chapter suggests that John was referring to himself in the third person for stylistic reasons.²³

Furthermore, the bulk of the miracles occurred during Geoffrey’s episcopate; there is a clear break in the collection at miracle number twenty-six, when John referred generally to other miracles that took place in the cathedral during Geoffrey’s lifetime which he chose to omit because they had occurred many years ago and he had no recollection of them.²⁴ Fournée suggested that John used a written source for the miracles that occurred during Geoffrey’s episcopate, ‘a kind of report’ which Geoffrey entrusted to a member of his entourage.²⁵ But it is more likely that John simply edited the first collection and added more miracles at some point after Geoffrey’s death. A possible context for the second phase of the work is the miraculous activity that occurred at the nearby church of Saint Peter, which was recorded by Orderic Vitalis. At the council of Rouen in 1108, Bishop Ralph of Coutances, Geoffrey’s successor, consulted Bishop Serlo of Sées, ‘who was more deeply learned than he’, about this supernatural activity. One of these events bears a striking similarity to a miracle recorded in the ‘Miracula’. At Saint Peter’s, three candles descended from the heavens and hovered above the great altar.²⁶ A story in the ‘Miracula’ also features three candles that descended from above; one candle hovered above the great altar, another before

²³ Since arriving at this conclusion, I have discovered that Cédric Devos has also made this point in an unpublished Masters dissertation, cited at Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 195.

²⁴ ‘Miracula’, no. xxvi, p. 381: ‘sed quoniam pluribus evolutis scilicet mensibus et annis, nomina et notitiam personarum et locorum, seriem gestorum nec tenaci memoria, nec scripto penes nos retinemus’.

²⁵ Jean Fournée, *La spiritualité en Normandie au temps de Guillaume le Conquérant*, Le Pays Bas-Normand, Société d’art et d’histoire 186 (Flers, 1987), p. 41: ‘une sorte de rapport’.

²⁶ *OV*, iv, pp. 264-67: ‘qui sapientior erat [...] tres cereos clare ardentes desursum usque ad altare demitti’.

the image of the Virgin, and the third above the well.²⁷ Therefore it is possible that the miraculous activity at Saint Peter's prompted John to revise his miracle collection.

Although there is no clear indication within the 'De statu' of when it was written, it has been broadly dated to the early twelfth century, when canon John was known to be working.²⁸ The context of its production may be inferred from its focus on Geoffrey's deeds as bishop of Coutances and its detailed description of his death, which included an account of a vision of Geoffrey's entrance into heaven experienced by a monk of Cerisy. These features suggest that the 'De statu' was written as a reaction to the loss of the chapter's beloved founder. Indeed, in the text, Geoffrey is remembered as the 'paterfamilias', or father, of Coutances' clerics.²⁹ In this way, the 'De statu' commemorated Geoffrey, who had brought about the honour and prosperity enjoyed by the chapter after his death.³⁰ This would locate the composition of the 'De statu' to a period soon after 1093.

Another clue is provided by the link established in the monk's vision between Geoffrey and the Virgin. The description of Geoffrey's final moments, which includes this vision, is imbued with a sense of imminent threat to the church and its possessions. As Geoffrey lay dying, he had a charter drawn up, which John copied into the text, in which he condemned anyone who despoiled the church to perpetual damnation. As if to reinforce its message, John stated that Geoffrey ordered the charter to be recited many times in his

²⁷ 'Miracula', no. iii, p. 369: 'tresque candelas ardentes et sine humano sustamento stantes reppererunt, unam scilicet ante majus altare, alteram coram imagine, tertiam quidem super puteum ipsius ecclesiae'.

²⁸ Jacqueline implied that it was written between 1108 and 1135, at the same time as the 'Miracula', at 'Institutions et état économique-social du diocèse de Coutances', p. 228; Le Patourel dated both texts to the early twelfth century, at 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 132; Musset proposed a date of c.1120 without providing supporting evidence, at 'Un grand prélat', p. 5.

²⁹ *DS* col. 221. For 'pater', *DS*, cols. 220, 222 and 224.

³⁰ For the 'Commemorative Pattern' of biography, but in a monastic context, R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 323-25.

presence.³¹ In this context, the monk's vision served to remind the reader that the anathema pronounced by Geoffrey was supported by the Virgin's power.

This concern for the protection of the church suggests that the work was completed at a time when the title to its possessions was vulnerable. The church of Coutances had suffered as a result of Geoffrey's refusal to acknowledge Henry after he had acquired the diocese from his brother in 1088. John refers to the 'frequent depredations of his possessions, the burning up of his homes, [and] the destruction of his parks' endured by Geoffrey.³² Although Henry was driven out of western Normandy by his brothers after the siege of Mont-Saint-Michel in 1091, Robert de Torigni stated that he regained his position 'over the greater part of the Cotentin' soon after William Rufus returned to England, probably from the middle of 1092.³³ The manner in which Henry reasserted his authority is suggested by Orderic, who described how he 'gained control of a large part of Normandy either by influence or by arms'.³⁴ By 1096, Henry's authority over western Normandy had been confirmed by William Rufus.³⁵ According to Orderic, the people of the Cotentin were still suffering in 1105. Although he may have exaggerated the disorder in order to undermine Robert Curthose's reputation as a crusader, in a sermon delivered at Carentan on Easter Sunday, Bishop Serlo of Sées lamented the general condition of the Church in Normandy and pitied the people of the Cotentin, who

³¹ *DS*, cols. 223-24, at col. 224: 'pluriesque coram se recitari fecit'.

³² *DS*, col. 221: 'Quapropter ipsius domini, potentium quoque baronum et parochianorum longas inimicitias, bonorum suorum crebras deprædationes, domorum concremationes, parcorum suorum destructorias confractiones viriliter diuque sustinuit'.

³³ *WJ*, ii, pp. 208-9: 'Redeunte autem Willelmo rege in Angliam, Henricus haud segniter comitatum Constantiniensem [...] ex maiori parte in ditionem suam reuocauit'; C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I*, edited and completed by Amanda Clark Frost (New Haven and London, 2001), pp. 88-89.

³⁴ *OV*, v, pp. 26-27: 'Henricus frater ducis Damfrontem fortissimum castrum possidebat, et magnam partem Neustriæ sibi fauore uel armis subegerat'.

³⁵ *WJ*, ii, pp. 210-13: 'rex comitatum Constantiniensem et Baiocensem, preter ciuitatem Baiocas et oppidum Cadomi, concessit ex integro'.

had been ‘miserably uprooted’.³⁶ Therefore the ‘De statu’ was probably written between 1093 and 1105, most likely soon after Geoffrey’s death, as Henry gradually extended his authority in the region.

The ‘De statu’

Before examining the ‘De statu’ in detail, it is necessary to provide a brief summary of its content. The ‘De statu’ may be described as a local chronicle consisting of two sections.³⁷ In the first part, John provides an account of the diocese’s history from the start of the Danish attacks in 836 until the consecration of Bishop Geoffrey in 1048.³⁸ In this part, which is shorter than the second section, John explains how the church of Coutances was ‘utterly destroyed’ and ‘oppressed by the shame of idolatry and the wrath of the pagans’ during the Danish attacks.³⁹ In the general disorder, the diocese lost the bodies of its saints, but following Rollo’s baptism, the bodies of Saints Lô and Romphaire were installed in the church of Saint-Sauveur at Rouen in 913. Rollo subsequently gave this church to Bishop Theoderic of Coutances who decided to reside at Rouen because of the paganism in his own diocese. The church was renamed after Saint Lô and four of Theoderic’s successors resided there: Herbert, Algerund, Gilbert and Hugh. Hugh’s successors, Herbert and Robert, returned to the diocese and established their seat at Saint-Lô. At this point, John provides some information about the canons, including a reference to a charter of Duke Richard I and Bishop Hugh which confirmed their prebends.⁴⁰ Hugh transferred seven of the canons to the church of Saint-Lô at Rouen. Herbert expelled the unworthy canons and confiscated their

³⁶ *OV*, vi, pp. 60-63: ‘miserabiliter depopulatur Constantini regio’; William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, c.1050-1134* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 228-31.

³⁷ Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles* (Turnhout, 1995), p. 14.

³⁸ For the first section, *DS*, cols. 217-18; it ends at ‘regimine Gaufridi præsulis’.

³⁹ *DS*, col. 217: ‘funditus evertitur [...] fœditate idololatriæ et pagani furibus conculcator’.

⁴⁰ Since John identified ‘Richard, son of William [Longsword]’ as the duke who installed canons at Coutances, this charter must belong to him rather than his son, Duke Richard II, *DS*, col. 218: ‘Richardus huius Willelmi filius’.

prebends in order to distribute them to more worthy replacements. When he was transferred to the bishopric of Lisieux, his successor, Robert, gave these prebends to his relatives. Robert began a new cathedral with the help of Duchess Gunnor, the canons and the local people. However, on the eve of Geoffrey's appointment, the church of Coutances was in a poor condition. The cathedral was incomplete and it was served by only five canons who lacked bibles and canonical books. As a consequence, God took pity on the church and placed it under the governorship of Geoffrey whose episcopate was marked by miracles and signs of divine favour.

In the second part, John described Geoffrey's deeds as bishop of Coutances, his character and lifestyle, and his death and entrance into heaven.⁴¹ It begins with a brief description of Geoffrey's physical appearance and familial background before moving on to his fund-raising trip to southern Italy. This is followed by a description of the building projects he initiated at Coutances, including the completion of the cathedral and the construction of an episcopal residence, the parks he created, the land he acquired for the cathedral, and the ecclesiastical clothing and ornaments he provided for the canons. An account of Geoffrey's reorganisation of the chapter follows before the section concludes with a brief description of the dedication of the cathedral in December 1056.

The dedication ceremony is followed by a section focused on Geoffrey's devotion to the church. A description is provided of Geoffrey's grant of the manor of Winterborne Stickland to the chapter. Geoffrey's devotion to the church is also expressed through an account of his refusal to recognise Henry's authority over the diocese following his

⁴¹ For Geoffrey's deeds, *DS*, cols. 218-22, ending at 'totum tollebatur similiter'; for his character and lifestyle, col. 222, ending at 'crudis tantum herbis'; for Geoffrey's death, cols. 222-24.

acquisition of it from Curthose and the attacks on his property he endured. Then John addresses Geoffrey's character and lifestyle. The 'De statu' concludes with an account of Geoffrey's death, which begins with a vivid description of the earthquake on 2 November 1091. Geoffrey was struck with his final illness in August 1092. The pain became so acute that he could not perform the dedication Mass at a local church on 14 September. He took to his deathbed from where he oversaw the composition of the charter referred to above and witnessed the completion of the repairs to the cathedral following the earthquake. Five days before his death, a monk of Cerisy experienced a vision of Geoffrey's entrance into heaven. The 'De statu' ends with a description of the funeral rites and the procession performed in commemoration of Geoffrey.

The first point to consider is the title of the work. The title given to it by its author cannot be established with any certainty. It was included in the *Livre noir* under the title 'Historia foundationis Ecclesiae Constantiensis sive Gesta Gaufridi'.⁴² The title is usually shortened to 'Gesta Gaufridi' and as a result the 'De statu' has been located in the genre of historical writing known as 'gesta episcoporum'.⁴³ However, it fits only awkwardly into this genre. A 'gesta episcoporum' may be defined as a historical work made up of a series of notices recording the deeds of a succession of bishops of a particular city.⁴⁴ At a basic level, 'gesta' were works of chronology, written in order to establish a continuous link between the origins of a see, which were often found in the apostolic age, and the present.⁴⁵ But they also

⁴² *RHGF*, xxiii, p. 493, n. 3. Cf. Hersent who described it as the 'history of the church of Coutances from 836 to 1093' in his inventory of the contents of the *Livre noir*, Hersent, 'Notices sur le Livre-Noir', p. 201: 'L'histoire de l'Eglise de Coutances, de 836 à 1093'.

⁴³ Jacqueline, 'Institutions et état économique-social', p. 229; Allen, citing Jacqueline, also placed it in this genre, at 'Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium', p. 2 and n. 4. Extracts of the 'De statu' have been published under the title 'Gesta Gaufridi Constantiensis episcopi', at *RHGF*, xiv, pp. 76-80, at p. 76.

⁴⁴ Michel Sot, *Gesta episcoporum Gesta abbatum* (Turnhout, 1981), p. 13.

⁴⁵ Michel Sot, 'Arguments hagiographiques et historiographiques dans les 'Gesta episcoporum'' in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés IV^e-XII^e siècles*, ed. Évelyne Patlagean and Pierre Riché (Paris, 1981), pp. 95-

served a historical function as a means of preserving copies of important documents, and a commemorative purpose as a way of remembering significant figures in the institution's history. These features can be clearly seen in the earliest example of a 'gesta episcoporum' written in Normandy, the *Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*, which was composed at Rouen cathedral during the archiepiscopate of John d'Ivry in c.1070.⁴⁶ The most important purpose of the *Acta* was the establishment of a chronology of the archbishops. It begins with a brief description of the Roman province of the Second Lyonnais and the city of Rouen. This is followed by a verse biography of the fourth-century archbishop Mallonus followed by a list of his successors, some of which are expanded into brief biographies, up to the archiepiscopate of John.⁴⁷ The date of the consecration of each archbishop is omitted, but there are frequent references to the reigns of kings and popes which help to contextualize some of their lives.⁴⁸ Its historical function is highlighted by the inclusion of several papal letters which were held dear by the community, and references to grants of land to the cathedral which were probably based on charters held in the cathedral's archive.⁴⁹ Its commemorative purpose is most effectively demonstrated in the author's eulogy of the 'venerable bishop' Maurilius.⁵⁰ 'Gesta episcoporum' also contain hagiographical elements. The author of the *Acta* skipped over those bishops whose lives were the subjects of 'vitae',

104, at p. 95. For 'gesta' as works of chronology, Sot, *Gesta episcoporum*, pp. 15-16. For example, in the 'gesta' of Metz, the church was established by Clement, who had been sent by Saint Peter from Rome, at p. 17.

⁴⁶ Allen, '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', p. 5. A 'gesta abbatum' was written at the abbey of Saint-Wandrille, probably between 823 and 833, at Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: the 'Inventio et miracula sancti Vulfranni'', *ANS* 12 (1989), pp. 233-51, at p. 233.

⁴⁷ For the description of the province, Allen, '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', pp. 32 and 45; for the verse biography of Mallonus, pp. 33 and 46.

⁴⁸ For example, Avidianus 'who ruled the church under Pope Sylvester and Emperor Constantine', Allen, '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', pp. 33 and 47: 'qui sub beato papa Silvestro et Constantino imperatore pefatam rexit ecclesiam'.

⁴⁹ Pope Innocent I to Victricius, Allen, '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', pp. 33-34 and 47; Pope Alexander II to John, at pp. 40-41 and 54; for donations of Grimo and Rainfredus, pp. 36 and 49-50. Some *gestas* contained so many documents that they have been confused with cartularies, Sot, *Gesta episcoporum*, pp. 20-21. Folquin, the author of the tenth-century cartulary of the abbey of Saint Bertin, described his work as a *gesta abbatum*, but it was published under the title of 'cartulary' by its modern editor, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Guérard (Paris, 1840), pp. 15 and 155, cited at Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 102.

⁵⁰ Allen, '*Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', pp. 39-40 and 53-54, at pp. 40 and 54: 'venerabili antistite'.

but he did include the story of Archbishop Remigius' attempt to bring the back the body of Saint Benedict from Fleury to the abbey of Monte Cassino, which ended in failure when the saint blinded them as they approached his resting place.⁵¹

The 'De statu' cannot be described as a 'gesta episcoporum'. Although it fulfilled a historical function by preserving copies of several important charters and a commemorative purpose by recording Geoffrey's role in the restoration of the church, it was not a work of chronology and therefore did not fulfil the principle function of the genre.⁵² John certainly had access to a list of the bishops of Coutances because he stated at the beginning of the 'De statu' that at the time of the Scandinavian attacks the church of Coutances had 'for a long time flourished and faithfully fought for God under thirty-three bishops', but he did not use it as the structure of the work.⁵³ He also included a short list of the bishops who had resided at Saint-Lô de Rouen, information which may have been preserved in an archive at the church itself or which John had established by visiting the church, for these bishops were apparently buried in the choir. But this list was only mentioned as John explained the origin of the bishop of Coutances' use of the title 'bishop of Saint-Lô'.⁵⁴ John's decision not to expand the episcopal list that he had access to may be partly attributed to a lack of information about the diocese's earliest bishops, but it also may be attributed to one of the purposes of the 'De statu', which was to highlight Geoffrey's achievements as the restorer of the church.

⁵¹ The author stated that he was skipping over the lives of Romanus, Ouen, Ansbertus and Gildardus 'because we have their deeds in the splendidly composed works of trustworthy men', Allen, *Acta archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*, pp. 36 and 49: 'quia eorum gesta a probatissimis viris luculenter apud nos conscripta habentur'. For the story about Remigius, pp. 36-37 and 50. For the hagiographical elements of the genre, Sot, *Gesta episcoporum*, pp. 18-19; Sot, 'Arguments hagiographiques', p. 95.

⁵² For a discussion of the charters included by John, see below, pp. 39-40.

⁵³ *DS*, col. 217: 'quæ præterito iam multo tempore floruerat, iamque sub 33 episcopis Deo fideliter militaverat'. John's calculation is fairly accurate. According to Pigeon's episcopal list, there had been thirty bishops by the end of the ninth century, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 386-88.

⁵⁴ Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 158; *DS*, cols. 217-18: 'Hæc igitur est vera et certa ratio qua nunc usque Constantiensis præsul nominatur episcopus de S. Laudo. Sederunt itaque ibi præcipue quam Constantiis quinque episcopi, prædictus videlicet Theodericus, Herbertus, Algerundus, Gilbertus et Hugo'.

The value of the 'De statu' as a source for Geoffrey's career lies in the way John blended evidence from written sources with personal recollections and oral testimony provided by the older members of the chapter. These canons must have included his father, Peter, and his uncle, Walter.⁵⁵ As noted above, John's use of an episcopal list and his knowledge of the bishops who resided at Saint-Lô de Rouen suggest that he used archival sources held at either Coutances or the church of Saint-Lô. This suggestion is supported by the reference to Duke Richard I's charter which confirmed the canons' oldest prebends and the inclusion of Geoffrey's deathbed charter which John copied into the work. John's description of Geoffrey's grant of Winterborne Stickland to the chapter may have been based on the charter recording the donation that has survived in a fragmentary form.⁵⁶ The dating of Rollo's grant of the church of Saint-Sauveur (which eventually took the name of Saint-Lô) with its appurtenant land to 913, 'two years after he made peace with King Charles', suggests that the information may have derived from an extant charter held in an archive at the church Saint-Lô or perhaps at the cathedral.⁵⁷ Fontanel has suggested that the composition of the 'De statu' was inspired by the ducal confirmation charter of the church's possessions produced soon after the cathedral's dedication on 8 December 1056.⁵⁸ Whilst it is likely that John's list of the properties acquired or restored to the church by Geoffrey was based on the charter, the discrepancies between it and the 'De statu' suggest that John also had access to a collection of documents that have since been lost which preserved records of individual transactions. In the 'De statu', John stated that Blainville was recovered 'by surety', an

⁵⁵ See above, ns. 13 and 14.

⁵⁶ *DS*, col. 218: 'quod etiam chartula Richardi marchionis et Hugonis episcopi testatur usque hodie'; for Geoffrey's deathbed charter, *DS*, col. 223; for the grant of Winterborne Stickland, Fontanel, no. 278 and *DS*, col. 221.

⁵⁷ *DS*, col. 217: 'Igitur Rollo [...] dedit eamdem ecclesiam [...] domino Theoderico [...] terram quoque juxta prædictam ecclesiam'; 'post biennium cum Carlo rege pacificato'.

⁵⁸ Fontanel, p. 38; no. 340.

arrangement that probably produced a written record, and a mill at ‘Holmetellum’ was purchased by Geoffrey from his brother Mauger, another transaction which may have been recorded in a separate charter.⁵⁹

Evidence from archival sources was supplemented by information drawn from chronicles. In his account of the Scandinavian attacks, John provided evidence of his own use of narrative sources by advising the reader that information about the destruction they wrought ‘may be read in chronicles’.⁶⁰ Since he included the Hasting legend in the ‘De statu’, John probably used Dudo of Saint-Quentin’s *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* or William of Jumièges’ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* for this part of the work. Dudo’s *De moribus* was the principal source for this legend, but it also appeared in William of Jumièges’ more popular history, since it was based on Dudo’s *De moribus*.⁶¹ It is possible that Duchess Gunnor, who laid the first stone of the Romanesque cathedral started by Bishop Robert, donated a copy of Dudo’s history to the canons at Coutances before her death in 1031, for she provided Dudo with information.⁶² But John may have used copies of these chronicles held at the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen or in the cathedral’s library.

The ‘De statu’ is infused with John’s personal recollections and the oral testimony of the older canons. The information about Geoffrey’s predecessors, Herbert and Robert, was

⁵⁹ *DS*, col. 219: ‘Blainvillam de vadimonio acquietavit, molendinum quoque eius quod est apud Holmetellum a Maugero fratre suo in dominio ecclesiæ comparavit’.

⁶⁰ *DS*, col. 217: ‘ut legitur in chronicis’.

⁶¹ For the Hasting legend, *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum auctore Dudone Sancti Quentin decano*, ed. Jules Lair (Caen, 1865), *Liber primus* (pp. 129-38) and pp. 154-55; *WJ*, i, pp. 10-11, 22-27 and 52-57. Also, Frederic Amory, ‘The Viking Hasting in Franco-Scandinavian Legend’ in *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of C. W. Jones*, ed. Margot H. King and Wesley M. Stevens, 2 vols. (Collegeville, 1979), ii, pp. 265-86. For William of Jumièges’ use of Dudo’s *De moribus*, *WJ*, i, pp. xxxv-xxxix. On the popularity of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, pp. 51-53.

⁶² Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: ‘cum primam posuerit petram in fundamentis predictæ ecclesiæ’. Gunnor possessed ‘a treasury of capacious memory and recollection’, *De moribus*, p. 289: ‘capacisque memoriæ et recordationis thesauro’. For Gunnor, Elisabeth van Houts, ‘Countess Gunnor of Normandy (c.950-1031)’, *Collegium Medievale* 12 (1999), pp. 7-24.

probably provided by the older members of the chapter, but most of the descriptions of Geoffrey's building works and parks, as well as school life at Coutances and events such as the earthquake in 1091, derive from John's personal experiences.⁶³ These descriptions provide invaluable evidence of the development of Coutances during Geoffrey's episcopate. John had seen the names of the local people who had contributed to the cost of the first phase of the cathedral's construction inscribed on the arches of the arcades in the nave.⁶⁴ He probably frequently visited the episcopal hall and walked through its garden and vineyard. The detailed descriptions of the parks at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé and Coutances and the information he provided about the episcopal manor at Valognes suggest that he had also visited these places.⁶⁵ He had probably frequently crossed the stone bridge Geoffrey had built at Saint-Lô and it is possible that his knowledge of the increase in the town's tolls reflects a role he played in the collection of episcopal income from the town.⁶⁶ John may have witnessed Geoffrey's final illness and death first hand, but it is more likely that his account of these events derives from information provided by John's father. If the church Geoffrey dedicated vicariously after he had been taken ill was Saint-Pierre de Marigny, Peter the Chamberlain attended the ceremony and probably stayed with Geoffrey at Saint-Lô before he returned to Coutances.⁶⁷

However, the value of the 'De statu' as a source for Geoffrey's career is undermined by John's decision to shape his portrait of Geoffrey around an ideal of episcopal conduct that

⁶³ *DS*, cols. 218, 219, 220 and 222.

⁶⁴ *DS*, col. 218: 'quod usque hodie contestantur aliquot ipsorum nomina insculpta lapidibus in ecclesiæ arcubus'.

⁶⁵ For example, at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé, Geoffrey established 'a most opulent park with stags, boars, bulls, cows and horses', *DS*, col. 219: 'parcum opulentissimum cervis et apris, tauris et vaccis et equis constituit'.

⁶⁶ *DS*, col. 219: 'burgum vero sancti Laudi qui est supra Viram fluvium adeo viriliter incrementavit ut teloneum quod erat 15 librarum, fieret 220 librarum ibique stagnum cum molendino et lapideum pontem supra Viram condidit'.

⁶⁷ *DS*, col. 223: 'sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit, ipseque interim iuxta aram resedit. Recessit itaque idem, et apud S. Laudum diebus aliquibus iacuit'. For the dedication of Saint-Pierre de Marigny, see Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77, at p. 476: 'Petro camerario episcopi Gaufridi'.

combined dedication to inner contemplation with a commitment to pastoral care and the well-being of his church. This ideal was based on references to the characteristics and lifestyle appropriate to the episcopal office in the epistles of Saint Paul to Timothy and Titus, and the story of Mary and Martha in the gospels of John and Luke, which provided an allegory of the mixed life of action and contemplation. According to Saint Paul's letter to Timothy, a bishop ought to be 'blameless [...] vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach', characteristics Saint Paul repeated in his letter to Titus.⁶⁸ Mary and Martha are identified by John as the sisters of Lazarus who attended Jesus when he visited their home in Bethany. Martha, who busied herself with domestic chores, represented the active life associated with pastoral care, while Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him, represented the contemplative life of prayer, meditation and isolation from secular affairs.⁶⁹ The most influential expression of this ideal is found in Gregory the Great's *Liber regulæ pastoralis*, a treatise on the duties incumbent on a bishop. Since the work is addressed to Bishop John of Ravenna, it is assumed that it was written for an episcopal audience, but Gregory may also have been addressing kings. Nevertheless, it was treated almost as a textbook on episcopal duties in the early Middle Ages.⁷⁰ Gregory advised bishops to 'consider without pause' the lives of the saints, since by careful study he is able to 'irrigate

⁶⁸ 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, at verse 2, *Biblia Sacra Latina: ex Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ Editionis Sixti V. et Clementis VIII.* (London, 1970), p. 151: 'Oportet ergo episcopum irreprehensibilem esse, unius uxoris virum, sobrium, prudentem, ornatum, pudicum, hospitem, doctorem'; *The Bible. Authorized King James Version*, with an introduction and notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford, 1997), p. 259. Also, Titus 1: 7-9, *Biblia Sacra Latina*, p. 156; *The Bible*, p. 266. For Mary and Martha, St. John 11: 1-3; 12: 1-8, *Biblia Sacra Latina*, pp. 73-74; St. Luke 10: 38-42, *Biblia Sacra Latina*, p. 52.

⁶⁹ St. John, 11: 3: 'Therefore his sisters sent unto him', *Biblia Sacra Latina*, p. 73: 'Miserunt ergo sorores ejus ad eum dicentes'; *The Bible*, p. 131; St. Luke, 10: 39-40, *Biblia Sacra Latina*, p. 50: 'Et huic erat soror nomine Maria, quæ etiam sedens secus pedes Domini, audiebat verbum illius. Martha autem satagebat circa frequens ministerium'; Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 2-142, at p. 15.

⁷⁰ Gregory the Great, 'Liber regulæ pastoralis' in *PL* lxxvii, cols. 9-128, at col. 13: 'Reverentissimo et sanctissimo fratri Joanni coepiscopo, Gregorius'; John Moorhead, *Gregory the Great* (Abingdon, 2005), p. 13; R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 86. For its importance in the late eighth and ninth centuries, St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*, ed. and trans. Henry Davis (New York, 1978), pp. 10-11.

the dry hearts of others with streams of learning'.⁷¹ He urged bishops to avoid becoming preoccupied with worldly affairs, 'for while the mind of the pastor is occupied with a devotion to earthly matters, dust, driven by the wind of temptation, blinds the eyes of the Church'.⁷² According to Gregory, contemplation prepared the bishop for the rigours of pastoral care and remained the unifying factor in his life by providing a refuge from the diversions of the active life.⁷³

By focusing on the restoration of the church of Coutances, John emphasised Geoffrey's commitment to the active life. This aspect of John's portrait of Geoffrey is emphasised at the end of the 'De statu', when Geoffrey is propped up on his deathbed so that he might witness the completion of the repairs to the cathedral following the earthquake of 2 November 1091.⁷⁴ Geoffrey is also depicted vicariously dedicating a local church, which may be identified as Saint-Pierre de Marigny, and performing the funeral of vicomte Nigel II.⁷⁵ Geoffrey's dedication to the contemplative life is addressed in a passage describing his ascetic practices. According to John, after 1066, Geoffrey often wept during Lent when he was preoccupied with the king's affairs, presumably because he was conscious of the sin inherent in his participation in secular affairs at a time when he should have been contemplating the death and resurrection of Christ.⁷⁶ He attended Matins and heard the vigils

⁷¹ 'Liber regulæ pastoralis', col. 27: 'antiquorum vitam sine intermissione cogitare'; col. 23: 'ut proximorum quoque corda arentia doctrina valeat fluentis irrigare'.

⁷² 'Liber regulæ pastoralis', col. 39: 'dum pastoris sensus terrena studia occupant, vento tentationis impulsus Ecclesiæ oculos pulvis cæcat'.

⁷³ Markus, *Gregory the Great*, p. 26.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey witnessed the installation of the weather-vane, *DS*, col. 223: 'Ut ergo agnovit quia gallus fulgidus tutus esset et superimpositus loco suo, iussit se manibus ambabus ex brachiis in sellum suum erigi'.

⁷⁵ *DS*, cols. 222-23, 'Eadem namque nocte Assumptionis celeriter expetitus, ut Nigellum vicecomitem consanguineum suum defunctum sepeliret, summo mane ipsius festivitatis profectus est. Igitur die 15 qui est XVIII calendas Septemb. cum quamdam ecclesiam ipso die dedicare deberet [...] sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit, ipseque interim iuxta aram resedit'. For the identification of this church, see above, n. 67.

⁷⁶ *DS*, col. 222: 'tempore namque Quadragesimali, quocumque erat, sive ad curiam, sive in alia regni occupatione, quammultoties flebat (solebat) segniter irretiri'. For a similar point about Bishop Gundulf of Rochester, William M. Aird, 'The Tears of Bishop Gundulf: Gender, Religion, and Emotion in the Late

of the dead daily, after which he said Mass and sung the whole of the psalter with many tears. He was also accustomed to observe three Lents each year when he would fast on bread and water three days each week; on the fourth and sixth days, and throughout the year on the sixth day, he would fast on bread and water with raw herbs.⁷⁷ It is also reflected in the evidence of Geoffrey's provision of alms, which highlighted his humility. According to John, Geoffrey generously refreshed the poor in England and Normandy.⁷⁸ After he was carried to Coutances prior to his death, Geoffrey made a public confession of sins and distributed alms. On each day of his illness, his chaplain washed the feet of three poor people on his behalf.⁷⁹ A story in the 'Miracula' refers to an individual who was supported by Geoffrey's alms, and in another story, Geoffrey is described as 'comforter of the unfortunate, rod of the weak'.⁸⁰

Other elements of this ideal are reflected in Geoffrey's defence of the diocese against secular oppression. In the 'De statu', John described how Geoffrey 'manfully' sustained the attacks of Count Henry, the barons and the local people.⁸¹ Furthermore, as noted above, Geoffrey issued a charter on his deathbed in which he blessed the defenders of the church of

Eleventh Century' in *Intersections of Gender, Religion, and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 62-84, at p. 68.

⁷⁷ *DS*, col. 222: 'quotidieque in antedialibus matutinis et vigiliis defunctorum auditis, ipse missam totumque psalterium cum orationibus multis decantabat [...] His quoque diebus, tribus in hebdomada diebus abstinebat in pane et in aqua, tresque Quadragesimas in anno faciebat, quarta scilicet et sexta feria duarum et reliqui temporis feria sexta in pane et aqua, et crudis tantum herbis'.

⁷⁸ *DS*, col. 222: 'pauperesque large reficiebat, exceptis præbendariis quos pascebat et vestiebat assidue per Normanniam et Angliam'.

⁷⁹ *DS*, col. 223: 'ibi publicam confessionem peccaminum suorum faciens et satisfactionem pro posse suo [...] eleemosynæ [...] et quotidie coram se quod per seipsum facere non poterat, per manum sui capellani tribus pauperibus pedes abluens'.

⁸⁰ 'Miracula', no. xi, p. 374: 'quidam contractus debilis, quem, per annos VII prædictus et sæpe memorandus Gaufridus Episcopus eleemosina sua paverat et vestierat'; no. xii, p. 375: 'solator miserorum, baculus imbecillium'.

⁸¹ For this aspect of the ideal, John S. Ott, 'Both Mary and Martha': Bishop Lietbert of Cambrai and the Construction of Episcopal Sanctity in a Border Diocese around 1100' in *The Bishop Reformed*, pp. 137-60, at p. 149; *DS*, col. 221: 'Quapropter ipsius domini, potentium quoque baronum et parochianorum longas inimicitias [...] viriliter diuque sustinuit'.

Coutances and anathematized its enemies.⁸² John also glossed over or omitted aspects of Geoffrey's career that contradicted the ideal. He distorted the circumstances surrounding Geoffrey's promotion to the episcopate and his fund-raising trip to southern Italy, and it is likely that he minimised Bishop Robert's contribution to the restoration of the church in order to extol Geoffrey's achievement.⁸³ He also did not directly discuss Geoffrey's participation in the Conquest and the settlement of post-Conquest England or the extent of his enrichment. He simply referred to Geoffrey's preoccupation with English affairs after 1066 and his participation in the king's affairs in passing, and he rejected the suggestion that Geoffrey enriched the church of Coutances from the spoils of England 'as others believed'.⁸⁴

John's use of this ideal as a framework for his portrait of Geoffrey formed part of an attempt to depict him as a saint-bishop. The principle evidence of the saintliness attributed to Geoffrey by John is the language he employed. In the aftermath of his death, Geoffrey is described as a 'vir Dei', a title commonly attributed to saints.⁸⁵ The monk of Cerisy's vision is referred to as evidence of Geoffrey's 'blessedness'.⁸⁶ Geoffrey's final illness and death is described as the 'moment of his glorification', which is presaged by the earthquake on 2 November 1091.⁸⁷ Indeed, Geoffrey's death, which constituted an important element of the portrayal of Geoffrey as a saint-bishop since the moment 'served as a bridge between heaven

⁸² *DS*, col. 223: 'defensores et consolatores Constantiensis ecclesiae benedixit, invasores vero et devastatores eius anathemate perpetuae maledictionis percussit'.

⁸³ These aspects of Geoffrey's career are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

⁸⁴ *DS*, col. 220: 'Cum autem post Anglicum bellum [...] in Anglia pluries moraretur'; col. 222: 'tempore namque Quadragesimali, quocumque erat, sive ad curiam, sive in alia regni occupatione'; col. 220: 'Venerabilis quidem et memorandus episcopus non, ut aliqui putant, de copiosa abundantia Anglicae superfluitatis omnia haec operabatur'.

⁸⁵ *DS*, col. 224; Maureen C. Miller, 'Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era', *Church History* 72 (2003), pp. 25-52, at p. 44.

⁸⁶ *DS*, col. 224: 'Sed quid de beato sine ipsius praesulis ostenderit Dominus, omnino silere non debemus'.

⁸⁷ *DS*, col. 222: 'Appropinquante autem tempore glorificationis suae, luctus et desolatio Constantiensis ecclesiae evidentibus pronunciata fuit signis; anno namque Dominicæ Incarnationis M. XCI, indictione XV, IV nonas Novemb. cum esset idem praesul Constantiis in aula episcopali quam fecerat et plantaverat, terrae motus factus est et fulgura extiterunt nimia'.

and earth' in a saint's life, may be described as a 'good' one, for he died surrounded by ecclesiastical dignitaries and was honoured with a procession after his death.⁸⁸ According to John, Geoffrey was buried in the churchyard as he had instructed.⁸⁹

The depiction of Geoffrey in this way was motivated to a great extent by a desire to commemorate him as the bishop who had restored the fortunes of the church of Coutances.⁹⁰ However, it also served a broader purpose by contributing to the development of the Virgin's cult at Coutances. Indeed, the 'De statu' and the 'Miracula' were probably written as complementary works. As it has been noted above, Delisle established a connection between the final words of the 'De statu' and the prologue of the 'Miracula', a relationship that is also suggested by their position next to each other in the *Livre Noir*.⁹¹ Furthermore, the 'De statu' includes a miracle which may be attributed to the Virgin. During the earthquake, canon Averedus was protected from falling debris by a 'large, black balloon, made of linen'.⁹² Although John did not explicitly attribute the protection of Averedus to the Virgin, in light of her prominence in the 'De statu' and its connection to the 'Miracula', it should probably be interpreted as a Marian miracle. The connection between the two works is also reflected in the special nature of Geoffrey's relationship with the Virgin. John used the metaphor of a sailor who safely reached port by using the 'star of the sea' as a guide to describe Geoffrey's

⁸⁸ Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 321. For the notion of a 'good death', see David Crouch, 'The Culture of Death in the Anglo-Norman World' in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, ed. C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 157-80, at pp. 158-62. For a more detailed discussion of Geoffrey's death, see below, pp. 254-60.

⁸⁹ *DS*, col. 224: 'festivaque processione decorari promeruit [...] Sequentē vero die [...] sepelierunt eum honorifice in stillicidio ecclesiæ, sicut ipse præceperat vivens adhuc in corpore'. The burial of a saint was an important liturgical ceremony attended, as in this case, by ecclesiastical dignitaries, Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints. The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 133. The bishops were Odo of Bayeux, Bishop Michael of Avranches and William of Durham; the abbots were Gilbert of Saint-Étienne de Caen, Roger of Lessay and Roger of Montebourg, *DS*, col. 224.

⁹⁰ In this way, the 'De statu' followed the 'Commemorative Pattern' of biography, Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 324.

⁹¹ See above, n. 12.

⁹² *DS*, col. 222: 'moxque in eodem dorsi loco quædam magna vesica scilicet nigra, lineisque quibusdam intermissa apparuit quam nos vidimus et alii multi'.

unwavering faith in Mary's protection while Henry and his followers attacked his possessions.⁹³ When Geoffrey was taken ill after vicariously dedicating a local church, he retired to Saint-Lô for a few days before being carried to the church 'of his beloved Lady' at Coutances.⁹⁴ After his death, John described Geoffrey as 'a faithful and prudent servant of Saint Mary'.⁹⁵ But the clearest expression of this special relationship is the monk of Cerisy's vision in which the Virgin led Geoffrey into heaven and seated him beside her. According to John, following his experience, it occurred to the monk that Geoffrey was 'being taken up by the queen of the angels whom he devotedly served'.⁹⁶

This relationship is set in the broader context of the growth of her power in the cathedral. Although the 'De statu' is ostensibly focused on the restoration of the church of Coutances, the work was intended to strengthen the connection between the Virgin and Coutances cathedral. The most striking feature of the 'De statu' is the symmetry between key moments in Geoffrey's life and the principal Marian feast days. Indeed, when the symbolic significance of these feasts is considered in the context of the church's history, it appears that the 'De statu' represents an attempt by John to manipulate the history of the church in order to create a vision of the past that would be useful to the chapter's promotion of the cult after Geoffrey's death. According to John, Geoffrey was struck by his final illness on the vigil of the Virgin's Assumption, when her ascent into heaven was celebrated. By linking Geoffrey's impending death to the vigil of this feast, John presaged the monk of Cerisy's vision of

⁹³ *DS*, col. 221: 'Nec mirum si prudens nauta fideliter pervenerit ad portum, qui neque ventis, neque fluctibus confractus, in illam præcelsam maris stellam quæ verum peperit solem totum suæ mentis infixerat oblectamentum'.

⁹⁴ *DS*, col. 223: 'sed capellenum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit, ipseque interim iuxta aram resedit. Recessit itaque idem, et apud S. Laudum diebus aliquibus iacuit. Deinde Constantias ad ecclesiam dilectæ suæ dominæ deportari se fecit'.

⁹⁵ *DS*, col. 224: 'fidelis servus et prudens beatæ Mariæ fuit'.

⁹⁶ *DS*, col. 224: 'manuque præsulis dextera manu sua comprehensa per ascensus graduum duxit eum in palatium et secum consedere fecit. Cum autem prædictus frater visionem huiusmodi confratribus retulisset, adfuit qui diceret [...] suscipietur ab angelorum regina cui devote servivit'.

Geoffrey's entrance into heaven and connected Geoffrey's life to the Virgin's.⁹⁷ Geoffrey's death occurred on 2 February, the date of the feast of her Purification, the celebration of the ritual completion of her childbirth. As such, it also marked the completion of the rebirth of the church of Coutances which Geoffrey had overseen, as well as Geoffrey's own purification.⁹⁸ In addition, although John did not identify the exact date of the ceremony, according to the ducal confirmation charter of the church's possessions, the cathedral was dedicated on 8 December 1056, the date of the feast of the Virgin's Conception, which celebrated her freedom from original sin.⁹⁹ Therefore in the context of the church's restoration, through its coincidental occurrence with this feast, its dedication marked the moment of the inception of her cult in the cathedral. The omission of this date from the 'De statu' is strange, but it may be attributed to the fact that John's audience, which would have consisted of the canons of the cathedral, did not need to be reminded of such an important date. The use of these feasts established a subtext which strengthened the relationship between the cathedral and the Virgin by associating Geoffrey's life with her cult.

That John may have manipulated the evidence of these events in order to forge stronger links between Geoffrey's life and the Virgin's cult is suggested by the confusion over the date of his consecration and the evidence of a now lost obituary from Coutances cited by Toustain de Billy. John recorded the date of Geoffrey's consecration as 10 April 1048, twelve days before the end of the year.¹⁰⁰ Although this date concords with his

⁹⁷ *DS*, col. 222: 'In vigilia namque Assumptionis beatæ et gloriosæ Dei genitricis Mariæ in eiusdem ecclesia vespas festine cantavit'.

⁹⁸ *DS*, col. 224: 'IV nonas Februarii vespere feria quarta [...] vitam reliquit transitoriam'.

⁹⁹ *DS*, col. 220: 'celebremque dedicationem ecclesiæ magnis multisque sumtibus celebravit [...] anno Incarnationis Dominicæ M. LVI, indictione X'; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'Preterea ipsa die dedicationis que acta est .VI. idus decenbris'. Geoffrey's introduction of the feast of the Conception is discussed in more detail below, at pp. 131-34.

¹⁰⁰ *DS*, col. 218: 'Anno igitur Dominicæ Incarnationis M. XLVIII, duodecim tantum diebus ipsius anni restantibus, id est IV idus Aprilis, indictione II, venerandus Gaufridus post Robertum Constantiensis episcopus Rotomagi consecratur'.

assertion at the end of the work that Geoffrey ruled the church for forty-five years less sixty-six days, it is inconsistent with his statement that Geoffrey was consecrated twelve days before the end of the year.¹⁰¹ Since the year ended at Coutances on 24 March until 1465, Geoffrey may have been consecrated on 12 March 1048, which would place his death on 5 January 1093 if his episcopate lasted forty-five years less sixty-six days.¹⁰² This confusion may also be reflected in the obituary cited by Toustain de Billy who recorded the ‘public commemoration of Bishop Geoffrey’ on 12 July.¹⁰³ This ‘Bishop Geoffrey’ must be Geoffrey de Montbray because Bishop Geoffrey Herbert (1480-1510), who is the only other medieval bishop of the diocese to bear the name Geoffrey, died on 4 February.¹⁰⁴ This date contradicts the evidence of the ‘De statu’ and an unidentified document held in the archives cited in the *Gallia Christiana* which provides evidence of Geoffrey’s commemoration on 3 February.¹⁰⁵ Richard Allen proposed that Toustain de Billy confused the date of Geoffrey’s public commemoration with the date of the dedication of the new cathedral in the thirteenth century, which is recorded in calendar preserved in a fifteenth-century breviary from Coutances.¹⁰⁶ However, without examining the obituary, which is impossible since it is now lost, Toustain de Billy’s suggestion cannot be rejected.

The portrayal of Geoffrey as a saint-bishop may also have served a practical purpose. In a study of the origins of the cult of Saint Aubert at the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel, Katherine Allen Smith proposed that the cult was developed by the monks in an attempt to

¹⁰¹ *DS*, col. 224: ‘ecclesiam locupletem et gloriosam feliciter rexit annis 45, sexaginta sex diebus minus’.

¹⁰² *La mense épiscopale*, p. viii, n. 44.

¹⁰³ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 145: ‘Commemoratio Gaufridi episcopi communis’.

¹⁰⁴ Toustain de Billy, ii, pp. 313-96, at p. 387.

¹⁰⁵ *GC*, xi, col. 873: ‘In hujus episcopatus initio decretum est canonicorum constitutione et ejusdem episcopi inenodabili sanctione ut anniversaria dies Gaufridi episcopi solennis in ecclesia Constantiensi et in ejus diœcesi perenniter celebretur III nonas Februarii’; *DS*, col. 224: ‘Sequente vero die est 111 nonas Februarii, episcopi et abbates præscripti una cum clero et populo [...] sepelierunt eum honorifice’.

¹⁰⁶ Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 202. For the identification of 12 July as the date of the new cathedral’s dedication, Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 185; Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 350, fol. 186r.

find ‘a more accessible intermediary through whom their formidable and often frightening angelic patron (Saint Michael) could be approached’.¹⁰⁷ The special relationship between Geoffrey and the Virgin established by John in the ‘De statu’ and the ‘Miracula’ may represent a similar attempt to promote Geoffrey as a mediator between the Virgin and her supplicants. The Virgin was the pre-eminent saint who had become the queen of heaven following her Assumption, and in this role she was uniquely placed to intercede with God.¹⁰⁸ By highlighting Geoffrey’s devotion to the Virgin and the favour she showed towards him by personally welcoming him into heaven, John was making a clear statement about the unique relationship between the queen of heaven and Coutances cathedral. It is clear from two stories in the ‘Miracula’ that Coutances competed with Bayeux cathedral for pilgrims during and after Geoffrey’s episcopate.¹⁰⁹ In this context, John asserted Coutances’ pre-eminence by promoting Geoffrey as a saint-bishop.

The ‘Miracula ecclesiæ Constantiensis’

The ‘Miracula’ is a collection of thirty-two stories of which thirty-one record Marian miracles that occurred mainly in Coutances cathedral during and after Geoffrey’s episcopate.¹¹⁰ According to the statutes of the chapter published by Bishop William de Thieuville (1315-1345) in 1330, it was the responsibility of the guardian of the lamps to record the miracles as they occurred. Since this office was created by Geoffrey, it is likely that the ‘Miracula’ was based on some sort of register updated by the guardians of the

¹⁰⁷ Katherine Allen Smith, ‘An Angel’s Power in a Bishop’s Body: the Making of the Cult of Aubert of Avranches at Mont-Saint-Michel’, *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), pp. 347-60, at p. 349.

¹⁰⁸ Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind* (Aldershot, 1982), pp. 132-33; Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex. The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1985), pp. 103 and 286.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Miracula’, nos. vi and xviii.

¹¹⁰ The exceptions are ‘Miracula’, no. ix, which occurred outside the cathedral; no. xi, which took place in a house near the cathedral; and no. xxiii, which occurred in a Breton prison.

church.¹¹¹ As noted above, John completed the work in two phases. The reference to Geoffrey's death in the opening sentence of the twenty-seventh story implies that the preceding twenty-six stories occurred during his episcopate.¹¹² The remaining miracles took place after Geoffrey's death, possibly as late as 1135, since John referred to the reign of Henry I in the same story.¹¹³

The miracles are largely curative, but some feature supernatural phenomena such as celestial lights and doves appearing in the cathedral.¹¹⁴ Following Jean Fournée's analysis, the maladies may be divided into four categories: neurological afflictions, such as epilepsy;¹¹⁵ paralysis;¹¹⁶ blindness or deafness;¹¹⁷ and ergotism.¹¹⁸ Precedents may be found for some of the stories. Fournée suggested that the legends about the heavenly lights that appeared in the cathedral may derive from Gregory of Tours' story about the light he witnessed at an oratory dedicated to the Virgin at Marsat, which he recorded in his *Glory of the Martyrs* between 585 and 588. Gregory's story was depicted in the liturgical books belonging to Le Mans cathedral, and Fournée suggested that it may have featured in Coutances' liturgical books.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ Fontanel, no. 242, p. 377: 'Item ordinamus quod omnia miracula quae decetero evenient in ecclesia, per custodem luminaris in uno libro ad hoc deputato, perpetuo erunt scripta'; *DS*, col. 220: 'custodes ecclesiae [...] constituit'. An official who 'guarded the candle of Saint Nicholas, and day and night carried it to the altar of the same saint' is recorded at 'Miracula', no. xxv, p. 380: 'qui custodiebat cereum sancti Nicolai et die ac nocte ferebat ad altare ejusdem'.

¹¹² 'Miracula', no. xxvii, p. 381: 'Post illius reverendi pontificis ex hoc mundo transitum'.

¹¹³ 'Miracula', nos. xxvii, p. 381: 'Ubi noviter temporibus, regnantibus rege Ludovico, Anglorum rege et duce normannorum Henrico'.

¹¹⁴ The curative miracles are 'Miracula', nos. iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, xxii, xxiv, xxv, xxvii, xxviii and xxix. For supernatural phenomena, nos. i, ii, iii, xx, xxiii, xxx, xxxi and xxxii. No. xxi has curative and supernatural elements.

¹¹⁵ 'Miracula', nos. xiv and xviii; Fournée, 'Les miracles de Notre Dame', p. 20.

¹¹⁶ 'Miracula', nos. v, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xxiv and xxix; Fournée, 'Les miracles de Notre Dame', pp. 21-23.

¹¹⁷ 'Miracula', nos. vii, xvii, xxii and xxvii; Fournée, 'Les miracles de Notre Dame', pp. 23-24.

¹¹⁸ 'Miracula', nos. xv, xvi, xix, xxvii, xxviii and xxix; Fournée, 'Les miracles de Notre Dame', pp. 24-26.

¹¹⁹ 'Miracula', nos. i and xxxii; Fournée, 'Les miracles de Notre Dame', p. 17. Gregory of Tours, 'Liber in Gloria martyrum' in *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis miracula et opera minora*, ed. Bruno Krusch, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum I (Part II) (Hannover, 1885), p. 43: 'Cumque per obscuram noctem properarem oratorium, suspicio a longe per fenestras ita immensam claritatem effulgere, ut putaretur ibi multitudo lignorum ac cereorum esse accensa'. Gregory revised the work in the early 590s. For its date, Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. with an introduction by Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool, 1988), p. 3.

A version of the story about canon Theodelinus, who doubted the real presence in the Mass only to find real flesh and blood in the chalice, appeared in the Fécamp chronicle which was composed between 996 and 1001.¹²⁰ The story of the prisoner whom the Virgin released from his shackles appears to have been a version of a popular story in England and Normandy in the early twelfth-century, for a similar miracle is attributed to Saint Æthelthryth at Ely Abbey during Henry I's reign.¹²¹ The legend of a man who was punished for having lewd thoughts while looking at a statue of the Virgin must have also been popular at the time, for it formed part of the 'TS' series of Marian miracles that developed in the twelfth century, which may have been composed by Anselm, Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury's nephew.¹²²

As a source for Geoffrey's career, the 'Miracula' complements the 'De statu' by providing information about the condition of ecclesiastical life in the diocese. The collection itself is testament to the vibrancy of popular Christianity during Geoffrey's episcopate and in the early twelfth century. In one of the stories, John referred to the great number of pilgrims in the city who were occupying 'diverse and agreeable lodgings'.¹²³ Another story provides evidence of the observance of the Pentecost procession.¹²⁴ It includes references to the feasts observed in the cathedral, but only the Virgin's Assumption is identified.¹²⁵ The 'Miracula' also casts light on diocesan administration during Geoffrey's episcopate. Archdeacons feature in two of the stories, and one of the miracles occurred 'in the days of synods', a reference to the diocesan synods prescribed in a canon of the council of Lillebonne in

¹²⁰ Mathieu Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum* and beyond Dudo: Some Evidence on Early Norman Historiography', *ANS* 22 (1999), pp. 29-48, at p. 34 and Appendix Two, pp. 45-46; for its date, p. 31.

¹²¹ *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd series, vol. xcii (London, 1962), pp. 266-69; *OV*, iii, pp. 346-59; *HH*, pp. 662-63.

¹²² 'Miracula', no. xiv; 'TS', no. 7, at *The 'Stella Maris' of John of Garland*, ed. Evelyn Faye Wilson (Cambridge [Mass.], 1946), p. 13; for its date, p. 5; R.W. Southern, 'The English Origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin'', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958), pp. 176-216, at pp. 188-92.

¹²³ 'Miracula', no. xxv, p. 380: 'cujus clientibus infra civitatem diversa et congrua capientibus hospitia'.

¹²⁴ 'Miracula', no. vi; Delisle, 'Notice sur un traité inédit', pp. 345-50.

¹²⁵ 'Miracula', nos. iv (unspecified), vi (general reference to the Virgin's feasts), vii (Virgin's Assumption), xii (Pentecost) and xxv (unidentified Marian feast).

1080.¹²⁶ There is also valuable evidence in the ‘Miracula’ of the architectural design and internal decoration of Geoffrey’s cathedral. The internal arrangement of the cathedral may be inferred from one of the stories in which a woman witnessed a brilliant light fill its interior and a procession of ‘resplendent wives’ emerge from the altar of Saint John and move through the interior of the church.¹²⁷ In addition to this reference to an altar of Saint John, the ‘Miracula’ also includes references to the main altar, and altars dedicated to the Virgin and Saint Nicholas.¹²⁸ Furthermore, an image of the Virgin was positioned near her altar, and there was at least one decorative cross in the cathedral.¹²⁹ There was also a well in the south transept that contained water which, according to John, cured many sick people.¹³⁰ The ‘Miracula’ provides important information about the life of the canons. There are frequent references to the hours observed by the canons, and their prominence in the stories suggests that the canons’ perceived their role in her cult at Coutances as a conduit for her power. The clearest expression of the latter is found in two of the stories in which two sick people were cured as the canons sang evening hymns and canon Theodelinus successfully interceded with the Virgin on behalf of boy with ergotism by performing a Mass.¹³¹

As a source for Geoffrey’s career, its significance derives from the evidence it provides of his devotion to the Virgin. As one of the earliest collections of Marian miracles

¹²⁶ For archdeacons, ‘Miracula’, nos. xix and xxviii; no. v took place ‘in the days of synods’, at p. 370: ‘(erat enim tunc dies synodorum) (Pigeon’s italics)’; *OV*, iii, pp. 32-33, c. 16: ‘Presbiteri qui ad sinodum uenire neglexerint’.

¹²⁷ ‘Miracula’, no. xxxi, pp. 382-83: ‘ecclesia tota inæstimabili lumine subito resplenduit, et ecce ab altari S. Johannis processio veneranda uxorū fulgentium cereos ferentium progrediens, ac per circuitum interiorem ecclesiae’.

¹²⁸ For the main altar, ‘Miracula’, nos. ii, iii, iv, v, vi, ix, x, xii, xix, xxiii and xxxi. For the Virgin’s altar, nos. i, xvii and xxxi. For Saint Nicholas’ altar, no. xxv.

¹²⁹ ‘Miracula’, no. iii, p. 369: ‘alteram coram imagine’; for further references to the image, nos. i, vii, xii, xiv, xxix, xxxi and xxxii. For the cross, nos. xxiv and xxix. A cross was also positioned above the altar of Saint Nicholas, no. xxv, p. 380: ‘cui sancto superpositus erat crucifixus’.

¹³⁰ ‘Miracula’, nos. iii, xxi and xxxii; no. xxi, p. 378: ‘De cujus putei latice, infirmi multi bibentes sanabantur’. For the identification of the well’s location, Pigeon, *Histoire cathédrale*, p. 109, n. 1.

¹³¹ ‘Miracula’, nos. xvi and xix. For miracles occurring after the services of the canons or in their presence, nos. vii, viii, xii, xiv, xxii and xxix. For the hours observed by the canons, nos. iii, vii, viii, xi, xvi, xxix, xxx, xxxi and xxxii.

in Europe, its existence is testament to the strength of his devotion to Mary because Geoffrey's initiative lay behind its composition.¹³² Geoffrey also featured in two of the stories. In one, 'by Divine will', he discovered a hair of Virgin amongst the cathedral's relics, which remained in the possession of the bishop until at least 1440, when it appeared in an inventory of the episcopal 'mensa'.¹³³ In the other, a paralysed woman's body regains the use of her limbs in the presence of Geoffrey and the canons on the sixth day of Pentecost.¹³⁴ These appearances strengthened the link between Geoffrey and the Virgin established by John in the 'De statu'.

The purpose of the collection was to highlight the efficacy of the Virgin's power at Coutances cathedral. The celestial lights that appeared in the cathedral reflected God's approval of it as a venue for the Virgin's miracles.¹³⁵ It is significant that in the first story a piece of the light fell to the floor and emitted a sweet smell, for this story may have been intended to convey the impression that the cathedral had been imbued with sanctity by this material.¹³⁶ The curative miracles provided evidence of the potency of her power at Coutances and her willingness to help those who visited the cathedral.¹³⁷ This message was reinforced by the range of maladies that were cured and the distance travelled by some of the pilgrims. The cathedral attracted people from Brittany, Avranches, Bayeux and even as far

¹³² *Stella Maris*, pp. 3-4; 'Miracula', 'Prologus', p. 367: 'predictus episcopus [...] constituit ut virtutum miracula, quæ in eadem viderant (*ou* videram), ad laudem Domini et honorem gloriose Domine sue, Dei genitricis, et edificationem successorum, veraci et competenti calamo conscriberentur'.

¹³³ 'Miracula', no. xxii, p. 378: 'episcopus Gaufridus reliquias sanctas ecclesiæ, Dei nutu, reviseret, et inter alias de capillis Beatissimæ Dei Genitricis Mariæ unum [...] inveniret'. By 1440, the cathedral possessed more than one hair, *La mense épiscopale*, p. 25, 'Ung vaessel d'argent cristalle a IIII piés d'argent, dedens le quel a dez cheveulx Notre Dame'. Pigeon suggested that this relic had been held in the pre-Romanesque cathedral and was brought back to Coutances from Saint-Lô de Rouen, at *Histoire cathédrale*, p. 110, n. 1.

¹³⁴ 'Miracula', no. xii, p. 375: 'Quadam vero die, quæ est Sexta Pentecostes, deposita coram imagine Virginis, astante reverendo episcopo Gaufrido et canonicis, accepit divinitus integerrimam sanitatem corporis'.

¹³⁵ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 98, n. 1.

¹³⁶ 'Miracula', no. i, pp. 368-69: 'de materia quidem ipsius angelici luminaris, sive cera sive alia, Deus scit, quasi gutta paululum in terram cecidit, quod mox ignis de ipso luminari visibiliter delapsus, concremavit; ipsaque dominica die tota, ab eodem loco suavissimus odor emanavit'.

¹³⁷ Pigeon, *Histoire cathédrale*, p. 98, n. 1; Pierre-André Sigal, 'Histoire et hagiographie: les 'Miracula' aux XI^e et XII^e siècles', *Annales de Bretagne* 87 (1980), pp. 237-57, at pp. 241-42.

away as Amiens, as well as local people.¹³⁸ It is also reflected in the sense of competition between the communities at Coutances and Bayeux that emerges from two of the stories. In one, a man from Isigny in the diocese of Bayeux is punished for not making an additional procession to Coutances cathedral at Pentecost, since he thought it was unnecessary to make the journey because both cathedrals were dedicated to the same Virgin. He was cured after being placed before the altar of Coutances cathedral.¹³⁹ In the second story, a woman from Bayeux is cured in Coutances cathedral after failing to obtain the restoration of her health at Bayeux.¹⁴⁰ Therefore the 'Miracula' was compiled in order to provide a record of the miracles that occurred in the cathedral and to promote it as the principal 'locus' of her power in Lower Normandy.

Conclusion

The works of canon John formed part of an attempt to develop the cult of the Virgin at Coutances during and after Geoffrey's death. They provide a rich source of information about Geoffrey's diocesan activities and the development of ecclesiastical life in the diocese during his episcopate. However, although much of this evidence derives from John's personal experiences and recollections, as well as the oral testimony of the older canons, as sources for Geoffrey's life, the 'De statu' and 'Miracula' need to be used carefully. The evidence of the 'Miracula' is undermined by its lack of dates, and the image of Geoffrey in the 'De statu' was shaped by an ideal of episcopal conduct that required John to provide

¹³⁸ For pilgrims from Brittany, 'Miracula', nos. ix, xii, xv, xvii and xxiii (featuring a Norman soldier who was captured in Brittany); from Avranches, no. xiii; from Bayeux, nos. vi and xviii; and from Amiens, no. viii. For the categories of maladies in the 'Miracula', see ns. 115-18.

¹³⁹ 'Miracula', no. vi, p. 371: 'quod Beata Maria Bajocensis et Beata Maria Constantiensis una eademque Dei Genitrix est, nec ipsam clementiorem vel majoris esse potestatis Constantiis quam Bajocis'.

¹⁴⁰ 'Miracula', no. xviii, p. 377: 'in ecclesiam B. Dei Genitricis eam intulerunt Bajocis, ibique pluribus diebus eam conservantes, misericordiam Beatæ Virginis super eam precibus flagitabant. Verum ipsa gloriosa et præpotente Virgine preces eorum non exaudiente, sed adhuc benignitatem misericordiæ suæ differente, adducta est eadem mulier Constantias ad ecclesiam ejusdem Virginis, ibique paucis admodum diebus evolutis, recepit sanitatem sensus et corporis'.

evidence of Geoffrey's attention to pastoral duties as well as inner contemplation. He omitted elements of Geoffrey's career that did not accord with this image. The following chapter will consider one of these episodes: Geoffrey's simoniacal promotion to the episcopate.

Chapter 2: The Bishop of Coutances

The merciful and compassionate Lord, patient and most merciful, at length having pitied this holy and poor church, for the time had come for his mercy, as he stirred up the weak from the ground and raised the poor from the filth [...] he began to glorify it with various signs of virtues and miracles and to strengthen it with the love of princes and the rule of Bishop Geoffrey.¹

In Canon John's version of the church of Coutances' history, Geoffrey's accession formed part of God's plan to raise it 'from the filth'. According to John, Geoffrey was consecrated at Rouen on 10 April 1048, presumably by Archbishop Mauger, who was not deposed until 1055. As his first action as bishop, he travelled to Apulia and Calabria where he secured funds from Robert Guiscard and his followers which enabled him to restore his 'famous and glorious church'.² John's account of this part of Geoffrey's career provides a clear example of the way he omitted evidence that would contradict the image he created of Geoffrey as a saint-bishop. He did not mention that Geoffrey was accused of simony in September 1049 by Pope Leo IX and as a result was summoned to appear at a papal council at Reims in October. He also overlooked the political context of Geoffrey's promotion. In 1047, Geoffrey's relative, Nigel II, vicomte of the Cotentin, had participated in Count Guy de Brionne's rebellion against Duke William, which had ended with a ducal victory at Val-ès-Dunes. Therefore this chapter will examine the circumstances surrounding Geoffrey's appointment as bishop. Geoffrey's itinerary after the council of Reims as he accompanied the papal entourage around southern Italy will also be considered in order to determine the location of

¹ *DS*, col. 218: 'Miserator autem et misericors Dominus, patiens et multum misericors, huius sanctæ pauperis ecclesiæ tandem misertus, quia venerat tempus miserendi eius, ut suscicaret a terra inopem, et de stercore erigeret pauperem [...] cœpit eam multimodarum virtutum illustrare signis et miraculis, et corroborare caritate principum et regimine Gaufridi præsulis'.

² *DS*, cols. 218-19: 'Anno igitur Dominicæ Incarnationis M. XLVIII, duodecim tantum diebus ipsius anni restantibus, id est IV idus Aprilis, indictione II, venerandus Gaufridus post Robertum Constantiensis episcopus Rotomagi consecratur [...] ut eandem ecclesiam celebrem gloriosamque restitueret, in Apuliam et Calabriam adire Robertum cognomine Guiscardum parochianum suum, aliosque barones consanguineos suos, et alumnos, et notos peregre profectus'. The date of Geoffrey's consecration is discussed at pp 48-49 and 70-71. For Mauger's archiepiscopate, Bouet and Dosdat, 'Les évêques normands', pp. 19-20.

his meeting with the Normans and the identity of the men he met. However, the first issue that will be addressed is his familial background.

Family Background

Geoffrey acquired the toponym 'de Montbray' as a result of his identification as the uncle of Robert de Montbray by Orderic Vitalis, John of Worcester and William of Malmesbury.³ However, he did not use the toponym during his lifetime and it is not attributed to him in any late eleventh or early twelfth-century source. Canon John and Orderic are the only chroniclers who commented on Geoffrey's background, but both authors simply noted his noble lineage.⁴ It is the identification of Geoffrey as Roger de Montbray's brother, simply on the basis of the identification of Robert as his nephew, which is most problematic about his link to the Montbray family. Éric Van Torhoudt has urged historians to abandon the identification of Geoffrey as a member of the Montbray family because of the uncertainty surrounding his link to Robert.⁵ Instead, Van Torhoudt suggested that Geoffrey belonged to a family whose 'caput' was at Soulles, south-west of Saint-Lô. In support of his suggestion, he cited the unusual sentence in the ducal confirmation charter of the cathedral's possessions, produced after 8 December 1056, in which Geoffrey appears to be attributed with the toponym 'de Soulles'. Since Soulles was one of the prebends of the cathedral and according to Canon John Geoffrey had a brother called 'Mauger', a name that also appears in the Soulles family in the twelfth century, Van Torhoudt argued that it is possible to link Geoffrey

³ *OV*, ii, pp. 266-67: 'nepoti suo Rodberto de Molbraio'; iv, pp. 278-79: 'Roberto nepoti suo comiti Nordanhimbrorum'; *JW*, iii, pp. 48-49: 'cum Rotberto, nepote suo, comite Northymbrie'; *WM*, *GR*, i, pp. 544-45: 'cum nepote Rotberto comite Humbrensium'.

⁴ *DS*, cols. 218-19: 'nobilium baronum prosapia ortus'; *OV*, ii, pp. 266-67: 'de nobili Normannorum progenie ortus'; and that he was 'a man of noble birth', *OV*, iv, pp. 278-79: 'nobilitate cluebat'.

⁵ Éric Van Torhoudt, 'Les sièges du pouvoir des Néel, vicomtes dans le Cotentin' in *Les lieux de pouvoir au Moyen Âge en Normandie et sur ses marges*, ed. Anne-Marie Flambard Héricher (Caen, 2006), pp. 7-35, at p. 19, n. 51.

to the family.⁶ However, in its extant form, the text of this act may be unreliable. Fontanel has argued that in its current form the act bears the hallmarks of revision in the twelfth century.⁷ Furthermore, the earliest extant version of the charter is an enregistered copy of a lost ‘vidimus’ of Philip V, dated March 1319. In addition, there are variations in the spelling of Soulles in this sentence in two later copies of the charter. In a sixteenth-century copy from which the *Gallia Christiana* version derived, it is spelt ‘Solet’; and in a seventeenth-century copy it appears as ‘Foleil’.⁸ Therefore it is possible that the text of this sentence was corrupted as it was copied in the twelfth century or later. Van Torhoudt also thought that Geoffrey might have been of Breton descent. This suggestion is based on the identification of the Soulles family as Breton, a link between vicomte Nigel I, to whom Geoffrey must have been related since he is described as a blood-relative of Nigel II by Canon John, and the family of Judith of Rennes, and a blood relationship between Robert de Montbray and Nigel d’Aubigny, whose family Van Torhoudt thought was Irish-Breton, which is inferred in Orderic’s story of Nigel’s repudiation of Robert’s wife Mathilda on the ground of consanguinity.⁹ But this evidence rests on too many assumptions. Consequently, it seems fruitless to argue against the identification of Geoffrey as a member of the Montbray family.

⁶ Éric Van Torhoudt, ‘Les Bretons dans les diocèses d’Avranches et de Coutances (950-1200 environ): une approche onomastique de la question de l’identité’ in *Bretons et Normands au Moyen Âge. Rivalités, malentendus, convergences*, ed. Joëlle Quaghebeur and Bernard Merdrignac (Rennes, 2008), pp. 113-44, at pp. 139-40; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 493: ‘terram etiam de Crapolt quam Gaufridus episcopus de Solel ad opus Sancte Marie acquisivit’; for Geoffrey’s brother, *DS*, col. 219: ‘a Maugero fratre suo’.

⁷ Fontanel, ‘La réorganisation religieuse’, pp. 195-96 and 204.

⁸ For a French translation of the ‘vidimus’, Toustain de Billy, ii, pp. 120-27; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 490; p. 494, n. cc: ‘Solet *a*, Foleil *H*’.

⁹ Van Torhoudt, ‘Les Bretons dans les diocèses d’Avranches et de Coutances’, pp. 137-40; Nigel is described as Geoffrey’s ‘consanguineum’ at *DS*, col. 222; *OV*, iv, pp. 282-85: ‘eamque quia consanguinei sui coniunx fuerat repudiavit’.

Since Geoffrey's relationship with Robert de Montbray is corroborated by three different authors, it should not be in doubt.¹⁰ Moreover, Orderic may have been well-informed about Robert and his family, for Saint-Évroult was involved in at least one business transaction with him when the abbey purchased his consent to Richard of Coulonces' grant of the church of Étouvy.¹¹ However, as Chibnall noted, it is difficult to place Geoffrey within the family's genealogy because the identity of his mother's kin in particular is unknown. She suggested that Geoffrey may have been the half-brother or bastard brother, rather than the uncle, of Robert de Montbray, whereas Le Patourel and Musset identified him as Roger de Montbray's legitimate brother.¹² According to Canon John, Geoffrey had a brother called Mauger who held a mill at 'Holmetellum' and a sister who held land in the 'pagus' of Bayeux with other unnamed brothers.¹³ Geoffrey had a niece, to whom he gave Kimworthy in Devon. It is possible that this niece is Roger de Montbray's daughter who became a nun at La Trinité de Caen before 18 June 1066.¹⁴ As noted above, Canon John also described vicomte Nigel II as Geoffrey's 'consanguinem'. Musset interpreted 'consanguinem' as 'cousin', but it did not necessarily convey such a specific meaning. John probably used it in the sense of 'kinsman'.¹⁵

¹⁰ It is possible that Orderic and John shared information, since they met probably after 1119, *OV*, ii, pp. 186-89; Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 36-37. John and William of Malmesbury worked independently, but shared common sources, Brett, 'John of Worcester and His Contemporaries', pp. 113-17.

¹¹ *OV*, iii, pp. 230-31: 'Rodberto etiam de Molbraio qui capitalis dominus erat centum solidios dederunt'. The grant is not dated.

¹² Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 281; Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 133; Musset, 'Un grand prélat', p. 7.

¹³ *DS*, col. 219: 'molendinum quoque eius quod est apud Holmetellum a Maugero fratre suo in dominio ecclesiæ comparavit [...] In pago Bajocensi terram quæ dicitur *Uncei* in dominio et hereditate ecclesiæ a sorore sua et a fratribus comparavit'.

¹⁴ *DB Devon*, 3.89 (*Domesday*, f. 103r, p. 288); Fauroux, no. 231, p. 445: 'Rogerius de Molbrai dedit Sancte Trinitati illam terram quam habebat in Grainvilla pro filia sua ibi facta monacha'. The same grant is also noted in a confirmation charter dated 1082, *Regesta*, no. 59, p. 279.

¹⁵ *DS*, col. 222: 'Nigellum vicecomitem consanguineum suum'; Musset, 'Un grand prélat', p. 7; *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume 1: A-L*, ed. R.E. Latham and D.R. Howlett (London, 1975-97), p. 445.



Fig. 2 – Montbray, motte.



Fig. 3 – Montbray, earthworks.

Montbray is located in the south-east corner of the diocese of Coutances. A motte with the remains of earthworks can still be seen there today (see Figs. 2 and 3). Roger de Montbray is the first lord of Montbray identified in the sources, but little is known about him. He gave land at Grainville-sur-Odon in the Bessin to La Trinité de Caen when his daughter joined the community before its dedication on 18 June 1066.¹⁶ According to Orderic, he attended the council which discussed the invasion of England.¹⁷ Wace included the ‘lord of Montbray’ amongst the combatants at Hastings in his *Roman de Rou*, but he is not mentioned by William of Poitiers or Guy of Amiens in their accounts of the battle.¹⁸ If Roger was the first member of his family to use the toponym ‘de Montbray’, it is likely that Roger’s father had received the family’s lands in the early eleventh century.¹⁹

The family’s interests appear to have been focused on the diocese of Bayeux. It is possible that Roger’s father had donated some of the revenue from the estate at Montbray to Bayeux cathedral, since the customs from its wood are included in a list of the cathedral’s possessions compiled between 1035 and 1037.²⁰ The extent of the family’s lands before Robert de Montbray forfeited them in 1095 cannot be determined precisely. He had probably held Coulonces and Étouvy in the vicinity of Montbray.²¹ Saint-Vigor-des-Monts may have been a family possession, since one of the witnesses to Roger de Montbray’s gift to La Trinité was ‘Droco de Sancto Vigore’.²² From the evidence of charters from the second half

¹⁶ Fauroux, no. 231, p. 445: ‘Rogerius de Molbrai dedit Sancte Trinitati illam terram quam habebat in Grainvilla pro filia sua ibi facta monacha’. The same grant is also noted in a confirmation charter dated 1082, *Regesta*, no. 59, p. 279.

¹⁷ *OV*, ii, pp. 140-43.

¹⁸ Wace, line 8576: ‘cil de Monbrai’.

¹⁹ For the model on which this argument is based, J.C. Holt, ‘What’s in a Name? Family Nomenclature and the Norman Conquest’ in J. C. Holt, *Colonial England 1066-1215* (London, 1997), pp. 179-96, at pp. 186-89.

²⁰ *Antiquus cartularius ecclesiae Baiocensis*, ed. V. Bourrienne, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1902-3), i, no. xxi, p. 28: ‘consuetudinem de bosco de Molbrai’.

²¹ See n. 11.

²² Fauroux, no. 231, p. 445; *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray 1107-1191*, ed. D. E. Greenway (London, 1972), p. xix, n. 4.

of the twelfth century, Diana Greenway added Beaumesnil, Beslon, Landelles and Pontfarcy to this list.²³ But the estates that can be explicitly linked to Roger and Robert are located in the diocese of Bayeux: Grainville-sur-Odon, which Roger donated to La Trinité, and Bucéels and Étouvy, which belonged to Robert's fief.²⁴ The exception is Villers-sur-Mer, which Robert granted to Saint-Étienne de Caen before the period 1081 and 1087, which is located just beyond the diocese's eastern border on the northern coast of the Lieuvin.²⁵ In light of this evidence, his sister and brothers' possession of 'Uncei' in 'the 'pagus' of Bayeux', which, according to the 'De statu', Geoffrey acquired for the church, provides further evidence of his link to the Montbray family.²⁶

Chibnall speculated that the name of Geoffrey's brother, Mauger, which rarely occurs outside the ducal family, links the Montbray family to the ducal dynasty.²⁷ Geoffrey may have been related to the duke in one of several ways. He may have been a descendant of one of the daughters of Sprota, Duke Richard I's mother, by Esperling, her companion after the death of William Longsword in 943. These daughters were mentioned by Robert of Torigni in his interpolations into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, which were written in the mid-twelfth century, but he does not identify them or describe their genealogies.²⁸ The link between Montbray and Bayeux cathedral in the early eleventh century provides evidence in favour of this connection, since Bishop Hugh of Bayeux was the grandson of Esperling and

²³ *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray*, pp. xviii-xix.

²⁴ For Grainville-sur-Odon, see n. 16. For Bucéels, *Regesta*, no. 48, p. 226: 'de quorum foedio predictae ville terram et ecclesiam teneo'; the same grant is recorded in *Regesta*, no. 49. For Étouvy, see n. 11.

²⁵ *Regesta*, no. 49, p. 233: 'id quod habeo in territorio de Vileris'.

²⁶ *DS*, col. 219: 'In pago Bajocensi terram quæ dicitur *Uncei* in dominio et hereditate ecclesiæ a sorore sua et a fratribus comparavit'. *Uncei* may be Fresnay-le-Puceux, south of Caen, Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 281.

²⁷ Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 281; for Mauger, see n. 13.

²⁸ *WJ*, ii, pp. 174-75: 'filias plures, que postea per Normanniam nobilium matrimonio sunt copulate'.

Sprota.²⁹ It is possible that Hugh established his relatives on land that had originally belonged to the cathedral. Another possibility is that Geoffrey descended from an illegitimate branch of the ducal dynasty. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan proposed that the descendants of vicomte Nigel I were related to the ducal family through Robert, count of Avranches, the illegitimate son of Duke Richard I.³⁰ Since Geoffrey is described as vicomte Nigel II's 'consanguineum' by Canon John in the 'De statu', Keats-Rohan's proposal also links the Montbray family to Count Robert.³¹ However, the link established by Keats-Rohan between Nigel I and Robert of Avranches rests upon the coincidental occurrence of the name 'Bilehilde' in both families and the assumption that Nigel named his daughter after Robert's wife.³² Furthermore, the precise nature of Geoffrey's relationship to Nigel cannot be determined because of the vagueness of the term 'consanguineus', which may simply mean 'kinsman'.³³

It is more likely that Geoffrey was connected to the ducal house through Gunnor, Duke Richard I's wife, and her family. Little is known about the origins of Gunnor and her family beyond Dudo of Saint-Quentin's assertion that she 'sprung from the most famous family of Danish nobles', but charter evidence suggests that the family held lands in the Cotentin.³⁴ David Douglas identified the monk Herfast, who donated possessions in the Cotentin to the abbey of Saint-Père at Chartres before 1028, as Gunnor's brother, from whom William fitz Osbern descended. According to the charter recorded in the abbey's cartulary,

²⁹ See above, n. 20. Bishop Hugh was the son of Count Rodulf d'Ivry and therefore the grandson of Esperleng and Sprota, David Bates, 'Notes sur l'aristocratie normande', *AdeN* 23 (1973), pp. 7-38, at p. 7; *WJ*, ii, pp. 174-75: 'Genuit (Esperleng) itaque ex Sprota filium Rodulfum'.

³⁰ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Bilichildis. Problèmes et possibilités d'une étude de l'onomastique et de la parenté de la France du nord-ouest' in *Onomastique et parenté dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan and C. Settapani (Oxford, 2000), pp. 57-63, at pp. 62-63. For Count Robert of Avranches, Cassandra Potts, 'The Earliest Norman Counts Revisited: The Lords of Mortain', *HSJ* 4 (1992), pp. 23-35.

³¹ *DS*, col. 222: 'Nigellum vicecomitem consanguineum suum'.

³² Keats-Rohan, 'Bilichildis', pp. 62-63.

³³ This problem is noted by Pierre Bauduin in relation to the use of the term by William of Poitiers and Dudo of Saint-Quentin, 'Désigner les parents: le champ de la parenté dans l'oeuvre des premiers chroniqueurs normands', *ANS* 24 (2001), pp. 71-84, at pp. 74-75; see above, n. 15.

³⁴ *De moribus*, p. 289: 'ex famosissima nobilium Dacorum prosapia exortæ'; followed by William of Jumièges, *WJ*, i, pp. 128-29 and Wace, lines 235-40.

these possessions were situated at Le Ham, Saint-Jean-de-la-Rivière and Barneville-sur-Mer.³⁵ Although Douglas admitted that Herfast's description of these lands as 'hereditatis meae' may indicate that he had received them as a gift from Duke Richard I, the fact that Herfast had secured the consent of Duke Richard II, Gunnor and their sons suggests, as van Houts noted, that the possessions belonged to the family.³⁶ Herfast also refers to a nephew, Bosolinus, to whom he left two villeins at Saint-Jean-de-la-Rivière and two salt-pits.³⁷ Furthermore, Gunnor's dower included lands in the Cotentin. A charter of the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel records donations made by Gunnor in 1015 of her lands at Bretteville-sur-Odon on the outskirts of Caen and Domjean in the diocese of Coutances, 'which my husband of holy memory Count Richard gave to me with many others in dower'.³⁸ Gunnor also played a prominent role in the construction of Bishop Robert's Romanesque cathedral at Coutances. According to Canon John, the project was 'initiated and supported' by Gunnor, 'handmaid of God', and she granted the land of Rodulf of 'Forcivilla' to the cathedral when she laid the first stone.³⁹ Her involvement suggests that she had a personal interest in ecclesiastical affairs at Coutances which may reflect her family's status in the Cotentin.

³⁵ David Douglas, 'The Ancestors of William fitz Osbern', *EHR* 59 (1944), pp. 62-79, at pp. 63-64 and 67-68. *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père de Chartres*, ed. Guérard, 2 vols. (Paris, 1840), i, p. 108: 'in pago Constantinensi [...] Hams [...] Torgis Villa [...] Barna Villa'. Douglas was uncertain about the identity of 'Torgis Villa' (at p. 68, n. 1), but it has been identified as Saint-Jean-de-la-Rivière at Jean Adigard des Gautiers, 'Les noms de lieux de la Manche attestés entre 911 et 1066', *AdeN* 1 (1951), pp. 9-44, at p. 40.

³⁶ Douglas, 'Ancestors of William fitz Osbern', p. 68, n. 2; van Houts, 'Gunnor of Normandy', p. 17; *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père*, i, p. 108: 'pro salute comitis Richardi et matris suæ Gonnoridis, et filiorum utriusque, quorum consilio et favore id facio'.

³⁷ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père*, i, p. 108: 'hospitibus exceptis duobus [...] cum illorum duabus salinis'.

³⁸ *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 4, p. 80: 'duo aloda Brittauillam uidelicet et Donnum Iohannem que michi meus sancte recordationis uir Richardus comes cum plurimis in dotalicium dedit'.

³⁹ *DS*, col. 218: 'fundante et coadiuvante Gonorra comitissa'; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'terram etiam Rolphi de Forcivilla quam dedit Gonnor ancilla Dei cum primam posuerit petram in fundamentis predictæ ecclesie'.

The proximity of the lands donated to Saint-Père by Herfast to Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte led Eleanor Searle to connect Gunnor's family to the lineage of vicomte Nigel I.⁴⁰ Since Geoffrey is described as a 'blood-relative' of Nigel II in the 'De statu', this connection would place him within Gunnor's kin-group. Van Torhoudt, having noted the family's earliest use of 'Saint-Sauveur' as a toponym in 1135-38, argued that the early twelfth-century tradition preserved by the abbey of Saint-Sauveur, which linked the family to its canonical community during the reign of Duke Richard I, has exaggerated the importance of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte to the family in the eleventh century.⁴¹ But the charter recording Nigel II's decision to install monks from Jumièges in the church of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, which was confirmed by King William between 1080 or 1081 and 1085, provides evidence of his possessions in the vicinity of the church.⁴² In addition, although there is no clear evidence to confirm Searle's suggestion, her contention that '[i]t is difficult to believe that such a chieftain (Nigel I) would allow any but close kin to occupy lands lying so strategically with his own' is logical.⁴³ Nigel I and his family were the dominant kin-group in the region from the reign of Duke Richard II until 1034 or 1035 when Countess Adeliza of Burgundy's purchase of the ducal castle of Le Homme, of which Nigel I, as vicomte, had been the custodian, diminished his status and marked the beginning of the decline in the family's standing.⁴⁴ His status as a ducal relative is suggested by his prominence as a supporter of Dukes Richard II and his son Duke Robert. According to William of Jumièges, during Duke

⁴⁰ Eleanor Searle, 'Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *Viator* 15 (1984), pp. 119-37, at pp. 135-36; Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 840-1066* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), p. 103 and n. 11; p. 111, n. 6 (at p. 292).

⁴¹ Van Torhoudt, 'Les sièges du pouvoir des Néel', pp. 24-25; Léopold Delisle, *Histoire du château et des sires de Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte* (Valognes, 1867), pièces justificatives, no. 48, p. 59: 'a tempore vetuli Ricardi comitis et Rogeri vicecomitis, qui ecclesiam inchoavit et liberam eam construxit'.

⁴² In addition to the church itself, the charter refers to Nigel's mill at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, *Regesta*, no. 260, p. 785: 'in molendino ville Sancti Salvatoris'.

⁴³ Searle, 'Fact and Pattern', p. 135.

⁴⁴ *Regesta*, no. 58: 'comitissa Adeliz [...] contra eundem predictum fratrem suum, scilicet Robertum comitem, castrum quod dicitur Hulme in Constantino situm [...] de auro suo mercata est'; Van Torhoudt, 'Les sièges du pouvoir des Néel', pp. 12-13. For the history of the estate of Le Homme in the eleventh century, Elisabeth van Houts, 'Les femmes dans l'histoire du duché de Normandie', *Tabularia "Études"* 2 (2002), pp. 19-34, at pp. 21-23.

Richard II's reign, Nigel I repelled an English invasion near Val-de-Saire in the Cotentin and participated in the duke's war against Count Odo II of Chartres in 1013-14, when he was entrusted with the castle at Tillières-sur-Avre with Rodulf of Tosny and his son Roger.⁴⁵ During Duke Robert's reign, he defended the county of Avranches with Alfred the Giant against Count Alan III of Brittany's invasion in the early 1030s.⁴⁶

Therefore it is likely that Geoffrey, as a blood-relative of Nigel II, was related to Duke William through Duchess Gunnor. The identification of this link between Geoffrey and the ducal family provides supporting evidence for the prominence afforded by Searle to Gunnor's kin in the rise of Normandy during Duke William's reign.⁴⁷ The link between Gunnor and the Montbray family is unclear because so little is known about Geoffrey's ancestors, but it is possible that Geoffrey descended from one of Gunnor's unidentified nieces. In his interpolations in William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Robert de Torigni traced the descent of several aristocratic families from Gunnor's nieces, but he admitted that he knew of the marriages of only five of these women.⁴⁸ The most prominent families whose descent from Gunnor's nieces was traced by Robert de Torigni were Montgomery, Warenne and possibly Mortemer. He also traced the descent of Baldwin of Reviers from one of Gunnor's nieces, but the link between this man and the Richard of Reviers, lord of Vernon, cannot be established.⁴⁹ The accuracy of these genealogies has been

⁴⁵ For the English invasion, *WJ*, ii, pp. 10-15, at pp. 12-13: 'Nigellus [...] militibus Constantiniensibus congregatis cum multitudine uulgi, repentino impetu super eos irruit'. For the Chartres campaign, *WJ*, ii, pp. 22-25, at pp. 22-23: 'Nigellum Constantiniensem atque Rodulfum Totiniensem necnon Rogerium filium eiusdem cum eorum militibus custodes in ea relinquens'.

⁴⁶ *WJ*, ii, pp. 56-59, at pp. 58-59: 'Cui Nigellus atque Aluredus cognomento Gigas pretitulati castelli custodes, cum suis occurrentes, et cum eo commisso certamine'. For the date, p. 57, n. 8.

⁴⁷ Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 98-107.

⁴⁸ *WJ*, ii, pp. 272-73: 'Neptes uero plures predicta Gunnor habuit, sed solummodo de quinque, quibus maritis nupserint audiui'.

⁴⁹ *WJ*, ii, pp. 264-67 and 272-75. For the difficulty in establishing a link between Baldwin de Reviers and Richard of Reviers, lord of Vernon, see p. 275, n. 6. For the early history of this family, see *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon 1090-1217*, ed. Robert Bearman (Exeter, 1994), pp. 1-5.

doubted by G.H. White, David Bates and K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, but Elisabeth van Houts concluded that Robert de Torigni is a 'reliable genealogist'.⁵⁰ There is no evidence that Geoffrey or his 'consanguineus', Nigel II, claimed kinship with the duke, but the precise nature of their relationship with Duke William may have been less important than the belief that they were in some way related. Indeed, as Robin Fleming suggested, it is possible that Geoffrey thought he was a cousin of the duke.⁵¹

Geoffrey's association with warfare suggests that he may have received some military training in his youth.⁵² It is likely that he also received some sort of education since it is possible that Geoffrey was literate. In a letter written to the archdeacons of Bayeux between 1082 and 9 September 1087, Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, refers to a letter he had received from Geoffrey.⁵³ Two fragments of letters written by Pope Alexander II in response to enquiries made by Geoffrey presumably through letters have also survived.⁵⁴ Although it is possible that Geoffrey dictated his letters to a scribe, his composition of prayers and admonitions for use in the schools at Coutances and his interest in the pupils' work attested by Canon John, as well as the evidence of his autograph cross, suggest that he was literate.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ G.H. White, 'The Sisters and Nieces of Gunnor, Duchess of Normandy', *The Genealogist*, New Series 37 (1921), pp. 57-65 and 128-32; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp. 108-9; K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Aspects of Robert of Torigni's Genealogies Revisited', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 37 (1993), pp. 21-27; Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, 'Robert of Torigni as Genealogist' in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C. Holdsworth and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 215-33, at p. 233.

⁵¹ Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 217.

⁵² Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 281.

⁵³ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 51, pp. 162-63: 'Indicauit michi litteris suis Constantiensis episcopus'.

⁵⁴ *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, S. Loewenfeld, Ferdinand Kaltenbrunner and Paul Ewald, vol. i (Second edition, Leipzig, 1885), nos. 4479, 4480. No. 4480 is also published at *PL* 146, no. cxxviii, col. 1408 and Mansi, xix, col. 980. No. 4479 is published at P. Ewald, 'Die Papstbriefe der Brittischen Sammlung', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde* 5 (1880), pp. 275-414, 503-96, at no. 6, p. 330.

⁵⁵ Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (Turnhout, 1976), p. 43; *DS*, col. 220: 'iuvenesque et adolescentes ecclesiae ut pius pater interdum precibus et admonitionibus satagebat, et praemissis ad scholarum doctrinam [...] Si cuilibet et eorum scriptum vel versus, vel thirotinum, vel aliquid utile videbat, congratulans ei sublimiter illud collaudabat'. He added his own cross to a charter for Saint-Étienne de Caen between 1066 and 1083, *Regesta*, no. 51.

It is possible that Geoffrey was educated in the household of the pre-eminent bishop in Lower Normandy in the early eleventh century, Hugh d'Ivry, bishop of Bayeux. Although there is no evidence of the school which became famous under his successor, Bishop Odo, during Hugh's episcopate, Geoffrey may have been sent to Bayeux as a young boy.⁵⁶ An example of this practice is recorded in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. Henry was taken to Lincoln by his father in c.1100 where he joined the household of Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln. Amongst the other young men in the household was Richard, the illegitimate son of Henry I.⁵⁷ Hugh was related to the ducal family through his father, Count Rodulf d'Ivry, who was the half-brother of Duke Richard I. As such, he was one of the most prominent members of the Norman aristocracy in the early eleventh century.⁵⁸ A connection between the Montbray family and Hugh has already been established through the cathedral's possession of the customs of the wood at Montbray. It may be significant that Hugh was one of the Norman bishops who accompanied Geoffrey to the council of Reims in 1049.⁵⁹ But it is also possible that Geoffrey was raised in the ducal household where, according to William of Poitiers, Odo was brought up. If Geoffrey had also joined it as a young boy, it would partly account for his prominence amongst the king's followers after 1066.⁶⁰

Appointment

The date of the death of Geoffrey's predecessor, Bishop Robert, is unknown. Whereas Lecanu and Pigeon assumed that he died in 1048, Toustain de Billy stated that his death

⁵⁶ Bates, 'Notes sur l'aristocratie', p. 16.

⁵⁷ *HH*, pp. xxix-xxx. For Richard, pp. 594-95: 'Ricardus quoque, filius regis nothus, ab episcopo nostro Roberto festiue nutritus'. For Henry's recollections of his life in Bloet's household, pp. 586-587.

⁵⁸ For Count Rodulf and his children, *WJ*, ii, pp. 174-77; Bates, 'Notes sur l'aristocratie', p. 7. Véronique Gazeau thought that Hugh's influence at the ducal court declined during the reigns of Robert the Magnificent and William II, but his lineage remained prestigious, at 'Le patrimoine d'Hugues de Bayeux' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 139-47, at p. 147.

⁵⁹ 'Anselme de Saint-Remy, Histoire de la dédicace de Saint-Remy', ed. and trans. Jacques Hourlier in *Contribution à l'année Saint Benoît (480-1980). La Champagne Benedictine*, Travaux de l'Académie Nationale de Reims 160 (Reims, 1981), pp. 179-297, at pp. 236-37.

⁶⁰ *WP*, pp. 90-91: 'Odonem ab annis puerilibus optimorum numero consona praeconia optimorum inseruerunt'.

occurred in 1047 without indicating the source of his information.⁶¹ Robert was certainly alive at the time of Archbishop Mauger's provincial synod at which simony was condemned, since he is addressed in the letter issued by the archbishop. It has been suggested that this synod took place in *c.*1045. It could not have taken place after the death of Bishop Hugh of Évreux, who is also addressed in the letter, which occurred on 16 April 1046.⁶² He also subscribed a ducal confirmation of a grant of land by Count William of Arques and Archbishop Mauger to the abbey of Saint-Ouen which may have been issued as late as 1047. The 'terminus ad quem' provided by Marie Fauroux is 1048, which she thought was the year of Robert's death. But this date should be revised in light of the subscription of Gradulphe, abbot of Saint-Wandrille, who died on 6 March 1047.⁶³ Therefore if there was a vacancy before Geoffrey's accession, it could not have been long.

The date of Geoffrey's consecration is also difficult to determine because of the inaccuracy of Canon John's information.⁶⁴ Instead of 10 April 1048, the date provided by Canon John, Le Patourel proposed 12 March 1049 for Geoffrey's consecration, which was followed by Musset and Chibnall.⁶⁵ But Le Patourel's proposition assumes that the date, month, indiction and year provided by Canon John are all wrong, a series of errors which seems unlikely. Given the inherent weaknesses of Le Patourel's alternative, there seems little

⁶¹ Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques*, p. 117; Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 162; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 38; Toustain de Billy, i, p. 109.

⁶² Bessin, p. 40: 'Rotbertus Constantiæ sedis Episcopus'. Raymonde Foreville dated the synod to *c.*1045, at 'The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', trans. Geoffrey Martin, in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin and Dorothy Owen (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 19-39, at pp. 27-28. For the date of Bishop Hugh's death, Bouet and Dosdat, 'Les évêques normands', p. 29.

⁶³ Fauroux, no. 112, p. 273: '[...] mais avant la mort de Robert, évêque de Coutances, en 1048'. For the date of Gradulphe's death, Véronique Gazeau, *Normannia monastica*, 2 vols. (Caen, 2007), ii, p. 335.

⁶⁴ See above, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁵ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 134 and n. 2; Musset, 'Un grand prélat', p. 8; Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 280; cf. Lecanu, who suggested 10 April 1049 at *Histoire des évêques*, p. 119, and 12 March 1048 at *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 171.

reason to amend canon John's date.⁶⁶ Geoffrey was consecrated at Rouen by Archbishop Mauger who was not deposed until 1054.⁶⁷ The archbishop may have objected to Geoffrey's promotion since he had condemned simony at the council held at Rouen in c.1045. The canons of this council provide an insight into the poor condition of the church on the eve of Geoffrey's appointment. Simony was an evident problem, as was the 'pernicious custom' of bribing the duke or those close to him in order to secure promotion to an episcopal office.⁶⁸ Although this council was held several years before Geoffrey's consecration, it is interesting to note that the manner in which Geoffrey's family secured his promotion was apparently not unprecedented.

Geoffrey's promotion should be seen in the context of Duke William's consolidation of his authority in Lower Normandy after his victory over Count Guy and his allies at Val-ès-Dunes in 1047. This rebellion marked the apogee of the factional conflicts that dominated the duke's minority.⁶⁹ According to William of Poitiers, Count Guy, who was a grandson of Duke Richard II, 'desired to get either the ducal office or the greater part of Normandy'.⁷⁰ He secured the support of a number of magnates from Lower Normandy, the most prominent of whom was Nigel II, who is the only conspirator named by William of Jumièges. William

⁶⁶ This is also the conclusion reached by David Spear at *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 90, n. 5.

⁶⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'venerandus Gaufridus post Robertum Constantiensis episcopus Rotomagi consecratur'. For the date of Mauger's deposition, Foreville, 'Synod of the Province of Rouen', Table I and n. c at pp. 22-23.

⁶⁸ See canons ii, iv, vi, xiv, xv, xvi and xviii, Bessin, pp. 41-42. Canon ii, p. 41: 'illa perniciosa consuetudo [...] quibus principem regni et familiares eius corrumpere valeant, ut ad episcopatus honorem valeant pervenire'.

⁶⁹ For this interpretation of the minority, David Bates, 'The Conqueror's Adolescence', *ANS* 25 (2002), pp. 1-18; Guy's revolt is discussed at pp. 13-15. Cf. David Douglas who described the period as 'one of the darkest periods of Norman history', at *William the Conqueror*, p. 41.

⁷⁰ *WP*, pp. 8-9: 'aut principatum, aut maximam portionem Normanniae ambiebat'. William of Malmesbury thought that Guy intended to make himself duke, at *GR*, i, pp. 428-29: 'inani spe ad comitatum illectus'. William of Jumièges attributed Guy's revolt to his 'pride and arrogance', *WJ*, ii, pp. 120-21: 'fastu inuectus superbie'. According to Orderic, Guy had called the duke illegitimate and unworthy of ruling, *OV*, iv, pp. 82-83: 'Ille uero uerbis et actibus michi derogauit, me nothum degereremque et principatu indignum detestatus indicauit et hostiliter diffamauit'. Wace's account combined all of these motives: Guy's arrogance and ambition, and the duke's illegitimacy, Wace, lines 3611-16: 'commença sei a orguillier / e Normendie a chalengier; / de Guilleame aveit grant envie, / qui sur lui aveit seignorie, / reprovout li sa bastardie, / guerre en esmut par felonie'.

of Poitiers also identified Ranulf vicomte of Bayeux, Haimo ‘Dentatus’ ‘and other powerful men’ as rebels, and Wace added Ralph Taisson, Grimoald of Plessis and two obscure figures, Hardret of Bayeux and Serlo of Lingèvres.⁷¹

Count Guy had secured Nigel’s support by giving him the castle of Le Homme which his mother, Countess Adeliza of Burgundy, had purchased from Duke Robert.⁷² But Nigel’s decision to support Guy was also prompted by Duke William’s attempts to circumscribe the family’s power after the duke came of age in c.1042.⁷³ Charter evidence suggests that Duke William was trying to undermine the family’s domination of the Cotentin by granting some of Nigel’s vicomital rights to the ducal abbey at Cerisy. A charter for the abbey, dated 20 April 1042, recording grants made by the duke includes the tithe of the vicomte of the Cotentin’s income. The subscription of Nigel II is notably absent from this charter, which suggests that he may have been unwilling to recognise the duke’s grant.⁷⁴ Since Nigel II is identified by William of Jumièges and Orderic Vitalis as ‘vicomte of the Cotentin’, the duke’s grant undermined the family’s position in western Normandy.⁷⁵ Therefore Nigel II’s participation in the revolt may be attributed to a desire to maintain the family’s pre-eminent position in the Cotentin.

⁷¹ He adds ‘with many others’, *WJ*, ii, pp. 120-21: ‘Nigellum Constantiniensem [...] cum multis aliis’; *WP*, pp. 8-9: ‘Nigellum praesidem Constantini pagi, Ranulphum Baiocensem uicecomitem, et Haimonem agnomine Dentatum, et alios potentes’; followed by William of Malmesbury, at *GR*, i, pp. 428-29 and Orderic Vitalis, at iv, pp. 84-85; Wace, lines 3589 (‘Neel de Costentin’), 3590 (‘*Ranof* de Beessin’), 3620 (‘Hamon as Denz parla’), 3621 (‘Grimout del Plaisseiz’), 4061-62 (‘Hardrez, de Baieues’) and 4211-12 (‘Salle aveit non, de *Lingievre*’).

⁷² See n. 44.

⁷³ For this date, Bates, ‘Conqueror’s Adolescence’, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Fauroux, no. 99, p. 255: ‘decimam omnium denariorum vicecomitatus Constantini et decimam vicecomitatus Constanciarum et decimam vicecomitatus Waretii, in molendinis, in luco’.

⁷⁵ *WJ*, ii, pp. 120-21: ‘Nigellum Constantiniensem presidem’; pp. 134-35 (Orderic): ‘Nigellus, uicecomes Constantiniensis’.

No member of the Montbray family is mentioned as a conspirator in any of the accounts of the rebellion, but as part of Nigel's kin-group, it is likely that some of Geoffrey's family participated. Furthermore, the complicity of the Montbray family is suggested by Wace's reference to the participation of Serlo of Lingèvres. Although Wace was writing over one hundred years after the event, he provided the most detailed account of the battle and its aftermath which was based in part on the oral traditions of Lower Normandy.⁷⁶ According to Wace, while in the duke's custody, Grimoald of Plessis admitted that he had intended to murder the duke at Valognes, and he named Serlo of Lingèvres as his accomplice. Serlo offered to defend himself against this accusation, but on the day of battle he was found dead in the prison. Wace described Serlo as 'the father of Hugh' but provided no further details of his family.⁷⁷ However, a 'Serlo of Lingèvres' appears as the holder of a fief belonging to Robert de Montbray in a charter for Saint-Étienne de Caen which has been dated 1079-1082. This Serlo, who may have been a son of the Serlo who died in custody after the rebellion, granted the church of Bucéels, with certain specified lands and rights, to the abbey with Robert's agreement, 'from whose fief I hold the aforesaid town, land and church'.⁷⁸ This link between the families of Montbray and Lingèvres strongly suggests that Geoffrey's family was involved in the rebellion.

Following the battle, Duke William attempted to reconcile the families from Lower Normandy who had rebelled against him to his rule. The duke's objective was to restore the

⁷⁶ Bennett, 'Poetry as history?', pp. 25-26.

⁷⁷ Wace, lines 4203-17: 'Grimout del Plaiseiz a pris / e a Roem en prison mis; / se il le prist il out raison, / ker il l'eüst par traïson, / ço dist, a Valoignes mordri / [...] Grimout conut la felonie, / sin apela de compaignie / un chevalier, Salle aveit non, / de *Lingievre*, pere Huon; / Salle s'en offri a defendre, / si l'en estut bataille prendre / Al jor qui(l) vint de la bataille, / qu'ele deveit estre sanz faille, / fu trovez morz en la gaole'.

⁷⁸ *Regesta*, no. 48, p. 226: 'de quorum foedio predictae ville terram et ecclesiam teneo'. The same grant is recorded in *Regesta*, no. 49.

‘status quo’ rather than punish the losers.⁷⁹ With the exception of Grimoald of Plessis who was imprisoned at Rouen, the principal conspirators were treated with mercy.⁸⁰ Count Guy fled to his castle at Brionne following the battle where he was besieged by Duke William. He eventually surrendered and was allowed to remain at the ducal court, but he soon returned to Burgundy where, according to William of Malmesbury, he lived out his days in obscurity.⁸¹ Ranulf vicomte of Bayeux performed homage to the duke and appears to have escaped further punishment.⁸² According to Wace, Nigel II spent a short time in exile in Brittany before returning to the duchy. William of Poitiers alluded to this exile, but William of Malmesbury stated that Nigel performed homage with Ranulf, an outcome also implied by William of Jumièges.⁸³ By treating the rebels with mercy, Duke William was trying to bind these magnates to him through personal relationships that would guarantee their loyalty in the future. Indeed, Thomas Bisson has argued that peace in Normandy after the battle of Val-ès-Dunes and the imposition of the Truce of God derived from the ‘affective fidelities’ created by the duke with his magnates.⁸⁴

Geoffrey’s simoniacal promotion to the episcopate occurred in this reconciliatory atmosphere. The agreement created a personal relationship between the duke and Geoffrey as a representative of the Montbray family and the kin-group of Nigel II. According to

⁷⁹ For this interpretation of conflict resolution in the tenth century, Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 128.

⁸⁰ For Grimoald, see n. 71. His lands were given to Bayeux cathedral, *Regesta*, no. 27.

⁸¹ Wace, lines 4173-74: ‘De Valesdunes *estort* Gui, / en Brione s’en est fui’; 4189-94: ‘ne mais que od le duc sereit / e li ducs le conreereit; / mais il n’i a gaires esté / [...] en Borgoigne s’en est alez’. *WP*, pp. 10-13: ‘Guido Brionium [...] contendit [...] Recepto castro, in curia sua commanere eum concessit [...] Guido in Burgundiam sponte rediit propter molestiam probri’; *WM, GR*, i, pp. 428-29: ‘Guido uix elapsus Brionio se recepit; inde per Willelmum expulsus, non ferens probri famam, ultro Burgundiam, natium scilicet solum, contendit [...] incompertum quem finem habuit’. William of Jumièges thought that the duke had put Guy under house arrest after his surrender, *WJ*, ii, pp. 122-23: ‘cum suis domesticis eum in sua manere domo iussit’.

⁸² *WM, GR*, i, pp. 428-29: ‘Nigellus et Rannulfus in fidem recepti’.

⁸³ Wace, lines 4169-72: ‘Neel ne se pout acorder / n’el país n’osa converser; / en Bretagne fu longuement / ainz qu’il feïst acordement’; *WP*, pp. 12-13: ‘Nigellum alio tempore, quoniam improbe offensabat, exilio punitum fuisse comperio’; *WM, GR*, i, pp. 428-29: ‘Nigellus et Rannulfus in fidem recepti’; *WJ*, ii, pp. 122-23: the rebels ‘datis obsidibus colla rigida ei ut domino suo subdidere’.

⁸⁴ Bisson, *Crisis of the Twelfth-Century*, p. 168.

Anselm of Saint-Rémy, whose account of the dedication of the new cathedral at Reims and the council convened after the ceremony by Pope Leo IX provides the only evidence of the simony that secured his appointment, one of Geoffrey's brothers purchased the see for him.⁸⁵ Anselm does not reveal the name of this brother, but he may be identified as Roger de Montbray, whom Orderic included amongst the magnates who discussed the invasion of England with the duke, rather than Mauger, who appears as Geoffrey's brother only in the 'De statu'.⁸⁶ Simony was the name given to the crime of purchasing the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷ It became one of the principal targets of the eleventh-century reformers after the deposition of Pope Gregory VI, who was accused of simony at the synod of Sutri in 1046, for in the minds of the reformers it was closely associated with secular interference in ecclesiastical affairs.⁸⁸ It is implied in the second canon of Mauger's council at Rouen in c.1045 that simony was widespread in Normandy at this time, but only one other example may be found during the Conqueror's lifetime.⁸⁹ According to Eadmer, Bishop Remigius of Lincoln was accused of effectively buying his bishopric by Pope Alexander II when he appeared before the pope at Rome with Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury and Archbishop Thomas of York. He had allegedly received his bishopric from the king in return for a large contribution towards the Hastings campaign.⁹⁰ Eadmer's story is supported by William of Malmesbury, who reported in the *Gesta Pontificum* that Remigius had been accused of securing his episcopal office through acts of war, and the evidence of the 'ship list', a contemporary record of individual

⁸⁵ 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 248-49: 'a quodam fratre suo emptum sibi episcopium fuisse'.

⁸⁶ For Roger de Montbray, see above, p. 62. For the identification of this brother as Mauger, Douglas, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 103; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 177.

⁸⁷ It took its name from the biblical story of Simon Magus who tried to buy the Holy Spirit from Saint Peter, at Acts 8.18-24.

⁸⁸ Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 95-98. For the synod of Sutri, see pp. 63-64.

⁸⁹ See above, n. 68.

⁹⁰ Eadmer, *Historia novorum in Anglia, et opuscula duo de vita Sancti Anselmi et quibusdam miraculis ejus*, ed. Martin Rule (London, 1884), p. 11: 'Sequens vero pro eo quod, facta conventione, illum a Willelmo, post rege facto, emerit, officio videlicet quo ei in excidium Angliæ properanti multifaria intentione ac multiplicibus impensis deservierat'. For an overview of this episode, David Bates, *Bishop Remigius of Lincoln 1067-1092* (Lincoln, 1992), pp. 4-6.

contributions to the invasion fleet which was probably compiled at the abbey of Fécamp where Remigius was almoner, in which Remigius is recorded as donating one ship with twenty knights.⁹¹ Therefore the apparent rarity of simony in Normandy and England during the Conqueror's lifetime suggests that it represented an extraordinary response to the exceptional circumstances created by Count Guy's rebellion.

The bargain struck between the duke and Geoffrey's brother contributed to the restoration of the 'status quo', just as the duke's merciful treatment of the rebels had done. Indeed, the bishopric of Coutances may have been in the possession of the Montbray family or the kin-group of Nigel II before the rebellion, since it is implicit in the family's purchase of the see that they felt entitled to it.⁹² The family background of Geoffrey's predecessor, Bishop Robert, is unknown, but Toustain de Billy suggested that he was from the Cotentin. This suggestion is supported by the evidence of Duchess Gunnor's patronage of Robert's new cathedral, and his ability to secure financial support for the project from the local noble families.⁹³ Therefore the duke acknowledged the family's right to the see by accepting the payment for Geoffrey's promotion. This arrangement reconciled the duke and the Montbray family by re-establishing the mutual faith of the lord-follower relationship.⁹⁴ The exchange of gift and counter-gift in the form of the cash payment and the bishopric signified the

⁹¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, pp. 90-91: 'secundus pro auxiliis Willelmo uenienti Angliam prebitis factus esset episcopus, diuinum munus bellicosis laboribus nundinatus'; Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, 'The Ship List of William the Conqueror', *ANS* 10 (1987), pp. 159-83, Appendix 1, p. 176: 'A Romo elemosinario Fescanni, postea episcopo Lincoliensi, unam nauem cum .xx. militibus'.

⁹² Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 197.

⁹³ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 109; *DS*, col. 218: 'ex parte constructa est Constantiensis ecclesia, fundante et coadiuvante Gonorra comitissa [...] cooperantibus quoque baronibus et parochianis fidelibus'.

⁹⁴ For the role of disputes in redefining social relationships, Patrick Geary, *Living With The Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 138-41. For mutual fidelity in the Germanic relationship between lord and follower, Schlesinger, 'Lord and Follower', p. 70; F. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im früheren Mittelalter. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Monarchie*, ed. R. Buchner (Second edition, Münster and Cologne, 1954), p. 254, cited at Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 109.

compromise represented by this renewed relationship.⁹⁵ As a compromise settlement, it also ensured that both parties emerged from the agreement with their pride intact, a solution that would contribute to the longevity of the peace it restored. The Montbray family maintained their hold on the bishopric and the duke's authority was acknowledged through the act of simony.⁹⁶ But the most important effect of the arrangement was its creation of a bond of friendship between the duke and Geoffrey. As Patrick Geary has noted, conflict resolutions were often secured through the establishment of this type of bond which was based on promises to provide mutual assistance.⁹⁷ Therefore the purchase of the bishopric by the Montbray family created an affective bond between the duke as lord and Geoffrey as follower.

However, Geoffrey's appointment should also be seen in an ecclesiastical context. Although, as Fontanel has argued, the ducal confirmation charter of the church's possessions may reflect an attempt made by the chapter in the twelfth century to enhance the duke's role in the church's restoration at the expense of the bishop's, the scale of the duke's benefactions to the church suggests that he was genuinely concerned about the condition of ecclesiastical life in the diocese.⁹⁸ Geoffrey's promotion coincided with the proclamation of the Truce of God in the duchy. The Truce of God was a more developed form of the Peace of God, a movement sponsored by bishops at its inception that emerged from a provincial synod in 989 at the abbey of Charroux in Aquitaine. The purpose of the Peace was to protect the Church's

⁹⁵ For a similar argument about property exchanges in the creation of social relationships, Stephen D. White, '“*Pactum ... Legem Vincit et Amor Judicium.*” The Settlement of Disputes by Compromise in Eleventh-Century Western France', *American Journal of Legal History* 22 (1978), pp. 281-308, at p. 302.

⁹⁶ For the importance of subjective feelings in conflict resolution, White, 'Settlement of Disputes', p. 283. It was unusual for one side to emerge from the resolution as a 'clear winner', Geary, *Living With The Dead*, p. 154.

⁹⁷ Geary, *Living With The Dead*, p. 155.

⁹⁸ Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse', at pp. 195-96 and 204.

personnel, its possessions and the economic resources of the peasants.⁹⁹ The Truce of God, in addition to upholding these principles, prohibited fighting between Wednesday evening and Monday morning, as well as on certain feast days and at Advent and Lent.¹⁰⁰ Although an initial attempt to introduce the Truce into Normandy had been made in 1041 or 1042 by Richard, abbot of Saint-Vanne de Verdun, it was not until after the defeat of Count Guy's rebellion that it was formally introduced, at a council convened in October 1047 outside Caen, probably at the ruins of the church of Sainte-Paix.¹⁰¹ As William of Poitiers implied, its introduction was connected to the duke's victory in the rebellion. According to the first canon of the council of Lillebonne the Truce was introduced by the duke himself.¹⁰² As such, its proclamation was symbolically important as a statement of the scope of his authority and in this way it provided the duke with a means of consolidating his power in the Lower Normandy.¹⁰³ After the council of Lisieux in 1064, responsibility for upholding the Truce was gradually subsumed in the duke's duty to maintain peace, but at its inception, its implementation required strong episcopal authority. This is evident in the first canon of the council of Lillebonne which states that '[a]ll who refuse to observe it, or break it in any way, shall receive just sentence from the bishops according to the ordinance already established'.¹⁰⁴ Since Geoffrey's family had participated in the rebellion, and he was related to vicomte Nigel II, Geoffrey would have been effectively responsible for ensuring that his kin observed the Truce in the aftermath of the rebellion.

⁹⁹ Thomas Head, 'The Development of the Peace of God in Aquitaine (970-1005)', *Speculum* 74 (1999), pp. 656-86, at pp. 656-57.

¹⁰⁰ H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Peace and Truce of God in the Eleventh Century', *Past and Present* 46 (1970), pp. 42-67, at pp. 52-53.

¹⁰¹ Michel de Bouïard, 'Sur les origines de la Trêve de Dieu en Normandie', *AdeN* 9 (1959), pp. 169-89, at pp. 170-73. For Richard of Saint-Vanne, Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Middle Ages* (Revised edition, Princeton, 1990), pp. 65-74.

¹⁰² *WP*, pp. 12-13: 'Gaudebant dehinc ecclesiae, quia diuinum in tranquillitate celebrare misterium licebat'; *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27, c. 1: 'sicut ipse princeps Guillelmus eam in inicio constituerat'.

¹⁰³ Cowdrey, 'Peace and Truce of God', pp. 59-60; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 286; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 176.

¹⁰⁴ *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27, c. i: 'Qui uero seruare contempserint, uel aliquatenus fregerint episcopi secundum quod prius statutum est eos iudicando iusticiam faciant'; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp. 163-64.

Pope Leo IX and the Normans of Southern Italy

Approximately fifteen months after his consecration, Geoffrey was summoned to appear before Pope Leo IX at the council of Reims in 1049 to answer a charge of simony. The letters were sent after the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September, which Pope Leo celebrated at Toul.¹⁰⁵ Geoffrey attended the council with four of his episcopal colleagues. The most senior member of the Norman delegation was Hugh d'Ivry, bishop of Bayeux, who had been in office since 1015 at the latest and was related to the ducal line as a son of Count Ralph; he was accompanied by Ivo of Sées, who was accused of burning down his cathedral, Herbert of Lisieux and Hugh of Avranches.¹⁰⁶ Only Geoffrey and Ivo had been summoned to answer accusations of wrong-doing. The attendance of the other bishops was probably prompted by a combination of respect for Pope Leo and concern over the pope's attitude towards the duke's proposed marriage with Matilda, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders.¹⁰⁷ The pope had dissolved consanguineous unions at the council of Rome held in April, and in light of Emperor Henry III's campaign in Flanders in the summer 1049, which had ended a rebellion supported by Baldwin V, Duke William and his advisors may have anticipated the prohibition of his proposed marriage with Baldwin's daughter pronounced at the council and attempted to prevent it by sending a delegation of bishops.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 216-17: 'Tullum in Exaltatione dominicae crucis venit, indecque circum jacentium regionum episcopis et abbatibus litteris suae auctoritatis mandari praecipit, ut in praefixa die sibi occurrent, ad synodum celebrandam in basilica praefati Francorum Apostoli'.

¹⁰⁶ 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 236-37. For Bishop Hugh, Bouet and Dosdat, 'Les évêques normands', p. 24; Bates, 'Notes sur l'aristocratie normande', p. 7. For the charge against Bishop Ivo, whom the pope described as a 'wicked man', *WJ*, ii, pp. 116-19, at pp. 116-17: 'Quid fecisti, perfide?'.

¹⁰⁷ Abbot John of Fécamp praised Pope Leo for his care of churches north of the Alps, 'Epistola Joannis I abbatis Fiscamnensis ad S. Leonem IX' in *PL* 143, cols. 797-800, at col. 797: 'qui non eo contentus in propria sede urbis Romae uni populo consulere, aut solam frugum fertilem Italiam imbre coelestis verbi irrigare, verum etiam Cisalpinas Ecclesias synodali scrutinio circuit et lustrat', cited at Uta-Renate Blumenthal, 'The Papacy, 1024-1122', *The New Cambridge Medieval History IV, c.1024-c.1198, Part II*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 8-37, at p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ Michel Bur, 'Léon IX et la France (1026-1054)' in *Léon IX et son temps*, ed Georges Bischoff and Benoît-Michel Tock (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 233-57, at pp. 244-45; 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 252-53: 'Interdixit et Balduino comiti Flandrensi, ne filiam suam Willelmo Normano nuptui daret, et illi ne eam acciperet'.

The purpose of the council was to address the decline in the morality of the clergy and in particular the spread of the simony.¹⁰⁹ The principal source for the events which took place at the council is the ‘Dedicatio ecclesiae Beati Remigii Remensis’ written by Anselm, a monk of Saint-Rémy. The work was completed between 1055 and 1060, but the detail of the account and Anselm’s position within the community suggest that he attended the council.¹¹⁰ The events of the council were not unknown in Normandy, for Orderic Vitalis interpolated an account of Ivo of Sées’ appearance in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, but Geoffrey’s attendance is not mentioned in any other source.¹¹¹ According to Anselm, on 5 October, the third day of the council, Geoffrey defended himself by claiming that one of his brothers had bought the bishopric for him without his knowledge. When he discovered this he tried to flee, but his brother captured him and forced him to accept the position. Following his defence, Geoffrey swore an oath that his story was true and he was found innocent of simony.¹¹²

Following the council, Geoffrey appears to have accompanied the pope as he returned to Italy. He attended the council convened at Rome in April 1050 for he signed the bull issued by Pope Leo in which he recognised Bishop Gerard of Toul as a saint. Several other dignitaries who had attended the council of Reims were also present at Rome, including the

¹⁰⁹ Blumenthal, ‘The Papacy’, p. 27. The pope’s agenda included monks and clerics who renounce their vows, clerics who participate in warfare, and simony, which is the first item in this list, ‘Anselm de Saint-Remy’, pp. 238-39: ‘de simoniaca haeresi [...] de monachis et clericis a sancto proposito et habitu recentibus, item de clericis mundali militiae studentibus’.

¹¹⁰ Anselm describes himself as ‘a priest and monk’ in the prologue of the work, ‘Anselme de Saint-Remy’, pp. 200-1: ‘subsequentis auctor opusculi, professione non merito presbyter et monachus’.

¹¹¹ See above, n. 106.

¹¹² ‘Anselme de Saint-Remy’, pp. 248-49: Geoffrey ‘confessus est, se ignorante, a quodam fratre suo emptum sibi episcopium fuisse. Quod cum rescisset, ne contra fas ordinationem illam susciperet, voluisse aufugere: sed ab eodem violenter captum, episcopali contra voluntatem suam esse dignitate donatum. Quod sacramento comprobare jussus, nec renuens, sic judicatus est simoniace haeresis non incurrisse facinus’.

bishop of Nevers who had also been exonerated of simony.¹¹³ Michel Bur suggested that Geoffrey was brought to Rome in order to provide further justification for his conduct. Indeed, it is possible that the journey constituted a penitential exercise, for penitents were required to display their contrition through external signs such as pilgrimages.¹¹⁴ The presence of the bishop of Nevers is striking, and according to Pope Leo's 'vita', the bishop of Langres, who fled from the council of Reims having been accused of numerous offences, was forced to walk barefoot to Rome as a penance for his crimes.¹¹⁵ Geoffrey may have visited the basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Outside the Walls, where eleventh-century coins from Rouen have been found, and it is possible that he accompanied the pope to Monte Gargano, where two monks from Mont-Saint-Michel had travelled at the start of the eleventh century.¹¹⁶ Although Geoffrey's decision to visit Robert Guiscard and the Normans in southern Italy in order to obtain funds for the church of Coutances is presented as an example of his devotion to his church in the 'De statu', it is more likely that Geoffrey exploited an opportunity to visit his compatriots that presented itself as he attempted to atone for his simoniacal elevation to the episcopate.

¹¹³ Mansi, xix, cols. 769-72, at col. 771: 'Gozfredus Constantiensis episcopus'. Also present at both councils were Archbishop Halinard of Lyon, Archbishop Hugh of Besançon, Archbishop John of Porto, Bishop Adalbero of Metz, Bishop Hugh of Nevers, Abbot of Hugh of Cluny, Abbot Geoffrey of Vézelay and Abbot Gervin of Saint-Riquier, cols. 771-72; 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 236-37. The bishop of Nevers had admitted that his relatives had paid for his promotion, but that he had not known about it, 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 246-49: 'At Nivernensis episcopus surgens, pro suo episcopio plurimum pecuniae confessus est a parentibus datum fuisse, se tamen ignorante [...] sicque illi per aliud pedum ministerium episcopale reddidit'.

¹¹⁴ Sarah Hamilton, 'Penance in the Age of Gregorian Reform' in *Retribution, Repentance and Reconciliation*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory, Studies in Church History 40 (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 47-73, at pp. 58-59 and 63; Bur, 'Léon IX et la France', p. 252.

¹¹⁵ For the bishop of Langres' crimes, 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 244-47; for his flight, pp. 248-49: 'qui missi fuerant ad revocandum Lingonensem episcopum, nuntiaverunt eum facinorum suorum metuentem discussionem, fugae arripuisse praesidium'. For his penance, 'Leonis IX vita ab ipsis in ecclesia Tullensi archidiacono Wiberto conscripta' in *Pontificum Romanorum Vitae*, ed. I.M. Watterich, i (Leipzig, 1862), pp. 127-70, at p. 156: 'ad domnum rediit Papam et cum ingentibus lacrymis publice crimina confessus, spontaneam suscepit poenitentiam et Romam nudis vadens pedibus ab eodem nostro pio Pastore promeruit absolutionem'.

¹¹⁶ Lucien Musset, 'Recherches sur les pèlerins et les pèlerinages en Normandie jusqu'à la Première Croisade', *AdeN* 12 (1962), pp. 127-50, at pp. 141-42.

The meeting between Geoffrey and the Normans probably took place at Melfi in the weeks before the Roman council. According to Amatus of Montecassino, at Melfi, Pope Leo ‘begged them (the Normans) to abandon their cruelty and injuries to the poor’.¹¹⁷ The pope had returned to Rome via Metz, Mainz, Reichenau and Verona, where he celebrated Christmas in 1049.¹¹⁸ Following Amatus’ account, he convened a synod at Salerno in March or April 1050. From Salerno, the pope went to Melfi before returning to Rome.¹¹⁹ However, it is recorded in the *Annales Beneventani* that Pope Leo visited the city in April 1050 as he made his way to the shrine of Saint Michael at Monte Gargano on the east coast, a journey Geoffrey may have made as well.¹²⁰ This visit is also recorded in the pope’s ‘vita’ which refers to a council convened at Siponto, near Monte Gargano, following the pope’s visit to Benevento.¹²¹ Since Melfi is situated between Benevento and Siponto, it is logical to assume that he visited the city in April on his way to Siponto. He could not have met the Normans at Benevento, since the city was still controlled by Prince Pandulf until July.¹²² Therefore the most likely occasion for Geoffrey’s meeting with the Normans was at Melfi in April 1050.

¹¹⁷ *Storia de’ Normanni di Amato di Montecassino*, ed. V. de Bartholomeis (Rome, 1935), p. 129: ‘Et lor proia qu’il se deüssent partir de la crudelité, et laisser la moleste de li povre’; Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. Prescott N. Dunbar, revised and edited by Graham A. Loud (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 91.

¹¹⁸ ‘Leonis IX vita’, pp. 156-57: ‘Inde per urbem Mediomatricorum [...] Hinc generale apud Maguntiam concilium habuit [...] Demum domnus Papa apud Augiam in honore vivificae crucis ecclesiam dedicavit’; for his visit to Verona, ‘Life of Pope Leo IX’ in *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century*, ed. and trans. I.S. Robinson (Manchester, 2004), pp. 97-157, at p. 140, n. 244.

¹¹⁹ *Storia de’ Normanni*, pp. 130-31: ‘Il fist li synode [...] de Salerne [...] Et puiz s’en ala à Melfe [...] Et puiz s’en torna à Rome’.

¹²⁰ *Annales Beneventani*, ed. O Bertolini, *Bullettino dell’Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo*, xlii (1923), pp. 1-163, at p. 137: ‘Leo nonus papa transiens per Benevento perrexit montem Garganum’; Amatus of Montecassino, p. 92, n. 24.

¹²¹ ‘Leonis IX vita’, p. 158: ‘venit Beneventum [...] Itaque zelo sanctae religionis fervens praesul venerandus, apud Sipontum, habito concilio, duos deposuit ab officio archiepiscopatus’.

¹²² Amatus of Montecassino, p. 92, n. 24.

In Canon John's version of the meeting, Geoffrey met Robert Guiscard and some of his kinsmen, 'protégés' and acquaintances.¹²³ Geoffrey probably knew Guiscard and his family since he originated from the diocese of Coutances at a town called 'Altavilla', which may be identified as Hauteville-la-Guichard.¹²⁴ However, it is more likely that Geoffrey dealt with Drogo, who was the leader of the group at that time, rather than Guiscard. Guiscard had only arrived in southern Italy in c.1048, and although his stock was starting to rise in 1050, he was little more than a bandit until he allied with Gerard of Buonalbergo.¹²⁵ The identity of Geoffrey's relatives is difficult to determine. In a late thirteenth-century history of Normandy, two brothers of Nigel II, William and Waleran, were included in an account of the battle of Val-ès-Dunes. According to the author, Waleran went to Italy with Guiscard and fought in all of his campaigns.¹²⁶ Delisle dismissed these stories as 'folk tales', but the charter recording Duke William's foundation of the chapel in the castle at Cherbourg between 1063 and 1066 refers to the land of six men, which formed part of one of the canons' prebends, which 'Nigel son of the vicomte of Coutances abandoned when he went to Apulia'.¹²⁷ Therefore it is likely that Geoffrey met some of his relatives in southern Italy. At Melfi, according to Amatus, the pope 'encouraged them (the Normans) to do good, [and] make offerings to God'.¹²⁸ It was in this spirit of piety and reconciliation that Geoffrey received the riches referred to in the 'De statu'. According to John, Geoffrey acquired

¹²³ *DS*, col. 219: 'in Apuliam et Calabriam adire Robertum cognomine Guischartum parochianum suum, aliosque barones consanguineos suos, et alumnos, et notos peregre profectus'. Le Patourel noted that John was referring to Geoffrey's relatives rather than Guiscard's, at 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 136.

¹²⁴ *De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis auctore Gaufrido Malaterra*, ed. E. Pontieri (Second edition, Bologna, 1927-28), pp. 8-9: 'In qua quidem provincia civitas est, quae Constantinum dicitur, in cuius territorio villa est, quae Altavilla nuncupatur'.

¹²⁵ G.A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 110-14.

¹²⁶ 'Extrait de la chronique ou histoire manuscrite de Normandie' in *RHGF*, xi, pp. 334-5: 'Guilleren fut à Robert Guichart en Puille, et partout en batailles avec lui, et merueilleusement estoit bon chevallier et preux'. For a brief discussion of the work's provenance, see p. 320, n. (a).

¹²⁷ Delisle, *Histoire du château*, p. 26: 'contes populaires'; Fontanel, no. 339, p. 487: 'terre filiorum Constantini, scilicet sex vavasoires, quod Nigellus filius Constantini dimisit consuli, quando ivit in Apuliam'.

¹²⁸ *Storia de' Normanni*, p. 131: 'Et les conforta en faire bien et offerte à Dieu'; Amatus of Montecassino, pp. 91-92.

many things in gold and silver, and jewels, and altar-cloths and various rich objects for the church, and he carried away three vials full of pure balm, and other most precious things with which afterwards he enriched the aforesaid church on the inside and outside, and he constructed at great cost and for a long time a great cross [...] Moreover, he collected ecclesiastical ornaments and utensils, chalices, crosses, reliquaries, phylacteries, candelabra, censers, basins, a small dagger and jars of gold and silver, also vestments, dalmatics, tunics, chasubles, albs, capes of exquisite workmanship, with silk and woolen backs, curtains and tapestries, and he put in place a library, with martyrologies, homilies, missals, and two adequate and appropriate books with golden letters.¹²⁹

Some of these items may have been in the cathedral's possession in 1440 for an inventory of the episcopal 'mensa' includes numerous vestments, reliquaries and ornaments.¹³⁰ Although he was not at the council of Rome, it is possible that Ivo of Sées was with Geoffrey at this meeting. According to Orderic, Ivo journeyed to Apulia and Constantinople after the council of Reims, 'where he acquired a large sum of money from his rich kinsmen and friends'.¹³¹ From Melfi, the papal progress probably moved to Siponto where another council took place at which two archbishops were deposed.¹³² Pope Leo must have then completed his pilgrimage by visiting Monte Gargano before returning to Rome. It is not known whether Geoffrey left Italy after the council at Rome. He may have waited until after the council of Vercelli, held in September 1050, at which Lanfranc appeared, and then accompanied the prior of Bec as he returned to Normandy.¹³³

¹²⁹ *DS*, col. 219: 'multum in auro, et argento, et gemmis, et palliis variisque divitiarum donariis acquisivit, tresque asportavit phialas plenas puro opobalsamo, aliaque pretiosissima quibus postea præsata ecclesiam intus et extus locupletavit, majoremque crucifixum largis sumtibus et tempore longo construxit [...] Ceterum ornamenta ecclesiastica et ustencilia, calices, cruces, capsas, phylacteria, candelabra, thuribula, bacinos, sicutam et ampullas aurea contulit et argentea, casulas quoque, dalmaticas, tunicas, planetas, albas, cappas mirifici operis, necnon dorsalia serica et lanea, cortinas et tapeta, sed et bibliothecas, passionales, omeliares, missales, aureis litteris duos sufficientesque et competentes libros subrogavit'.

¹³⁰ *La mense épiscopale*, items 78-156, pp. 20-27.

¹³¹ *WJ*, ii, pp. 118-19: 'Igitur Apuliam et inde Constantinopolim perrexit, et a diuitibus cognatis ac amicis suis multum pecunie congegit'; Joseph Decaens, 'L'évêque Yves de Sées' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 117-37, at p. 129.

¹³² See above, n. 121.

¹³³ For the council of Vercelli, *Mansi*, xix, cols. 773-82.

Conclusion

As a member of Nigel II's family, Geoffrey's promotion as bishop of Coutances formed an important part of Duke William's attempt to rebuild relations with the western magnates following their defeat at Val-ès-Dunes in 1047. It also provides evidence that supports Searle's view of ducal power as resting on a foundation of kinship alliances between the ducal family and the descendants of Gunnor and her kin. Although condemned by the Church, the simoniacal nature of Geoffrey's promotion is highly significant, for it re-established trust between the duke and Geoffrey's family, and provided the base on which Geoffrey could build his friendship with Duke William. This friendship was based on the shared goal of restoring the church of Coutances and as a way of extending ducal power into the west following Count Guy's rebellion. On his return from southern Italy with a considerable amount of treasure, Geoffrey set about this task.

Chapter 3: The Restoration of the Church of Coutances

O prudent man, watching over his house well, who built his house from vibrant and select stones, and supported it with marvellous columns!¹

There is no evidence of Geoffrey's presence in Italy after the council held at Rome in April 1050, but it is possible that he waited until after the council of Vercelli, held in September, at which Lanfranc appeared, before returning to Normandy with the prior of Bec. It was at Vercelli that Pope Leo IX condemned the heretical teaching of Berengar of Tours concerning the Eucharist. The implications of this dispute resonated as far away as Coutances, for one of the miracles recorded in the section of the 'Miracula' written during Geoffrey's episcopate features a priest who doubted the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, only to find, on a certain day, flesh and blood in his chalice as he performed the service.² On his return to the diocese, Geoffrey set about the restoration of the church of Coutances. The principal source for this part of his career is the 'De statu'. According to Canon John, Geoffrey's efforts were focused on three aspects of the church: its patrimony, the cathedral, and the canons who served it. Within the scheme of John's work, Geoffrey's reforms played an essential role as evidence of his devotion to the church of Coutances. However, as Chapter 1 has demonstrated, John's version of the church's history between 836 and 1093 was shaped in order to promote the cult of the Virgin at Coutances after Geoffrey's death. Therefore this chapter will assess the evidence of the 'De statu' for this part of Geoffrey's career in order to establish the impact of his reforms on ecclesiastical life in the diocese. It will also consider the timescale of the changes implemented by Geoffrey.

¹ *DS*, col. 220: 'O virum prudentem et domui suæ bene præidentem, qui de vivis et electis lapidibus domum suam composuit et mirabilibus columnis eam sustentavit!'

² For Geoffrey at the council of Rome, Mansi, xix, cols. 769-72, at col. 771: 'Gozfredus Constantiensis episcopus'. For the council of Vercelli, cols. 773-82; for Lanfranc's attendance, H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc* (Oxford, 2003), p. 40. For the miracle, 'Miracula', no. xx.

The Church of Coutances before 1048

According to the 'De statu', the church of Coutances was 'completely razed to the ground' during the Scandinavian attacks led by Hasting and Rollo in 836 and 875.³ It lost its lands and privileges, as well as its relics and the bodies of its saints, and from 836 until Rollo's baptism in 911, the church was 'trampled upon by the foulness of idolatry and the fury of the pagans'.⁴ In 913, the bodies of Saints Lô and Romphaire, having been hidden from the Scandinavians, were installed in the church of Saint-Sauveur in Rouen with Rollo's consent. This church, which eventually took name of 'Saint-Lô', was granted to Theoderic by Rollo as his episcopal seat in exile, since the region around Coutances was 'devoid of Christians and empty for paganism'.⁵ As a result, the church was neglected by Theoderic's successors who chose to reside at Rouen until the early eleventh century.⁶ Some efforts were made to reform the church, in particular during the episcopates of Bishop Herbert and his successor, Robert, in the early eleventh century, but on the eve of Geoffrey's consecration the church was in poor condition. The cathedral, which had been crudely constructed, was served by a community of only five canons who were poorly provisioned.⁷ Bishop Robert in particular was criticised by Canon John; he is portrayed as a nepotist, who enriched his family at the expense of the canons.⁸

³ *DS*, col. 217: 'sancta Constantiensis ecclesia [...] funditus evertitur'.

⁴ *DS*, col. 217: 'prædiis simul et privilegiis privatur, reliquiis et Sanctorum corporibus viduatur [...] fœditate idololatriæ et paganis furibus conculcator'.

⁵ *DS*, col. 217: 'post biennium cum Carolo rege pacificato, corpora sanctorum episcoporum Constantiensrum, Laudi atque Rumpharii, [...] in ecclesia S. Salvatoris concessu Rollonis recepta [...] dedit eamdem ecclesiam [...] beato Laudo, necnon et domino Theoderico [...] Constantiensis pagus Christicolis vacuus erat et paganismo vacabat'.

⁶ Five bishops resided at Saint-Lô de Rouen, *DS*, col. 218: 'Sederunt itaque ibi præcipue quam Constantiis quinque episcopi, prædictus videlicet Theodericus, Herbertus, Algerundus, Gilbertus et Hugo'.

⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'In his pro certo diebus eadem rudis erat, et inculta, et imbecillis ecclesia, quinque tantum canonicorum personis contenta, bibliothecis ceterisque authenticis et canonicalibus libris et ornamentis pene penitus destituta'.

⁸ *DS*, col. 218: 'Robertus episcopus [...] non solum præbendas dictorum canonicorum servitio ecclesiæ non reddidit, verum etiam hæc et alia in feodum et hereditatem nepotibus, et consanguineis, et fororibus suis non large sed prodige distribuit'.

John's description of the Scandinavian attacks has been accepted by modern historians as an accurate account of the devastation wrought by the Vikings on the diocese.⁹ Indeed, the experience of the church of Coutances, as it was recounted in the 'De statu', has been seen as typical of the suffering endured by ecclesiastical institutions, both secular and monastic, throughout the duchy during this period.¹⁰ In the case of the diocese of Coutances, this view has been sustained by the perception of the region as the 'wild west', a land that remained outside the orbit of ducal authority until the mid-eleventh century, where the population clung to pagan customs.¹¹ Felice Lifshitz argued that its population were proud of their pagan image in the eleventh century and preserved the memory of it in order to express their independence from ducal authority.¹² But this image of western Normandy rests on anecdotal evidence from the chronicles of Dudo of Saint-Quentin and William of Jumièges, as well as John's late eleventh or early twelfth-century view of the past in the 'De statu'. Dudo noted the persistence of Scandinavian culture at Bayeux, where William Longsword sent his son, Richard, to learn Danish.¹³ William of Jumièges, who repeated Dudo's story, added a description of the 'ferocious' people of the Cotentin who repelled an English invasion in the early eleventh century. The survivors told King Æthelred II that their opponents 'consisted of not only fierce male soldiers but also of female warriors who crushed the heads of their boldest enemies with the carrying-poles of their waterjugs'.¹⁴

⁹ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', pp. 134-35; Musset, 'Un grand prélat', pp. 6-7; Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', pp. 279-80.

¹⁰ For example, Douglas, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 101-2; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp. 11-12.

¹¹ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 135.

¹² Felice Lifshitz, *The Norman Conquest of Pious Neustria. Historiographic Discourse and Saintly Relics 684-1090* (Toronto, 1995), pp. 31-35.

¹³ *De moribus*, pp. 221-22: 'volo igitur ut ad Bajocensia deferatur quantocius mœnia et ibi volo ut sit, Botho, sub tua custodia et enutriatur et educetur cum magna diligentia, fruens loquacitate Dacisca'.

¹⁴ For Dudo's story, *WJ*, i, pp. 88-89. For the description of the people of the Cotentin, *WJ*, ii, pp. 14-15: 'unius comitatus gente ferocissima [...] ubi non modo sunt uiri fortissimi bellatores, sed et femine pugnatrices, robustissimos quoque hostium uectibus hydriarum suarum excerebrantes'.

In the 'De statu', as noted above, John claimed that the permanent return of the bishops to their diocese in the tenth century had been prevented by the prevalence of paganism in the region. But the evidence of place-names suggests that Scandinavian settlement, which would have facilitated the spread of paganism, was restricted to coastal areas and the northern part of the peninsula, and the survival of the diocese's ecclesiastical traditions through the supposed pagan era highlights the inadequacy of this image.¹⁵ Indeed, as Cassandra Potts has pointed out, whilst there was undoubtedly disruption, ecclesiastical writers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries exaggerated the disorder caused by the Scandinavian attacks in the ninth and tenth centuries, and their views have been repeated by modern historians who imagined the wholesale destruction of the Norman Church during this period.¹⁶ The principal problem with this interpretation in relation to the diocese of Coutances is the evidence of continuity in ecclesiastical life. The 'De statu' itself contains evidence which points to the survival of popular Christianity. According to John, in the early eleventh century, when Bishop Robert began the construction of the cathedral that Geoffrey would complete, he was able to secure donations from the 'faithful parishioners' and the local magnates in addition to half of the returns of the altar from the canons.¹⁷ There is also evidence of the survival of at least the memory of several canonical and monastic communities in the diocese if not the communities themselves. Between 1022 and 1026, Duke Richard II granted to the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel the monastery of Saint-Pair together with its dependent lands, which consisted of the

¹⁵ For the extent of Scandinavian settlement in the duchy, Jean Renaud, *Les Vikings et la Normandie* (Rennes, 1989), pp. 153-98, especially the map at p. 197.

¹⁶ Cassandra Potts, 'When the Saints Go Marching: Religious Connections and the Political Culture of Early Normandy' in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, ed. C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 17-31, at pp. 20-22. For views of the destruction of the Norman Church, see n. 10 and Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, pp. 272-73.

¹⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'incēpta et ex parte constructa est Constantiensis ecclesia [...] auxiliantibus etiam canonicis, redditibus medietatis altaris ad tempus operi concessis, cooperantibus quoque baronibus et parochianis fidelibus'.

cultivated and uncultivated land, churches and mills, meadows and woods, that are bound by the public road to Coutances in the east, by the river Venlée in the north, in the south by the stream called Thar, and in the west by the ocean and the island that is called Chausey.¹⁸

Duke Richard III included the monastery of Portbail amongst the possessions that made up the dowry he gave to his wife Adèle in either 1026 or 1027.¹⁹ These abbeys were associated with two of the oldest centres of Christianity in the diocese. The community at Saint-Pair may have been established in the sixth century, and the discovery of a fifth-century hexagonal baptistery at Portbail highlights the antiquity of Christianity's establishment in the town.²⁰ There were also communities at Saint-Marcouf in the tenth century and Saint-Fromond before 1026.²¹ The survival of these communities constitutes significant evidence that contradicts the version of the diocese's history during this period in the 'De statu'.

Furthermore, the movements of the bodies of Saints Lô and Romphaire during the ninth and tenth centuries may provide evidence of the vibrancy of Christianity in the diocese. According to the 'De statu', the relics and bodies had been removed from the diocese, but in 913, the bodies of Lô and Romphaire were installed in the church of Saint-Sauveur at Rouen

¹⁸ *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 2, p. 77: 'trado abbatiam sancti Paterni sitam in pago Constantino cum terris cultis et incultis, cum ecclesiis et molendinis, cum pratis et siluis, que terminatur ab oriente uia publica tendente Constantias, a septemtrione riuulo nomine Venleia, a meridie fluuiolo nomine Tarn, ab occasu mare oceano cum insula que dicitur Calsoi'.

¹⁹ Fauroux, no. 58, p. 182: 'abbatiam necnon que appellatur Port Bahil que sita est super aquam Jor fluctum cum portu'.

²⁰ Elisabeth Deniaux, Claude Lorren, Pierre Bauduin and Thomas Jarry, *La Normandie avant les Normands, de la conquête romaine à l'arrivée des Vikings* (Rennes, 2002), p. 338; M. de Boüard, 'Le baptistère de Portbail (Manche)', *Cahiers archéologiques* 9 (1957), pp. 1-22.

²¹ The roof of the church of Saint-Marcouf, situated in the north of the Cotentin, was lifted off by the sea and taken to the abbey of Fécamp during the reign of William Longsword, 'Historiae Fiscannensis Fragmentum', *Analecta Bollandiana* 23 (1904), pp. 251-54; Potts, 'When the Saints Go Marching', pp. 26-27. For the community at Saint-Fromond, Lucien Musset, 'Les origines du prieuré de Saint-Fromond: un acte négligé de Richard II', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 55 (1959-60), pp. 53 (1955-56), pp. 475-89, at p. 476.

with Rollo's consent.²² John's version of the movement of these bodies is consistent with the twelfth-century view of the 'voluntary exodus' of Neustria's saints as a result of the Scandinavian attacks.²³ In the case of Saints Lô and Romphaire, it appears that the bodies were hidden from the Vikings in the ninth century. A record of the history of Lô's relics prior to their translation into the church of Saint-Germain at Angers in 1234, written in Anjou at some point before this date, states that the bodies were taken from Coutances and buried in front of the west façade of Bayeux cathedral. No date is provided, but E.-A. Pigeon suggested that this event took place in c.875, the date given to Rollo's attack on Neustria in the 'De statu'.²⁴ Following Rollo's acquisition of the region, according to the Angevin source, Bishop Theoderic of Coutances sought out the bodies and installed them in the church of Saint-Sauveur.²⁵ At this point, the source becomes chronologically confused. The bodies of Lô and Romphaire were moved to Angers and installed in the church of Sainte-Geneviève with the remains of Saints Marcouf, Coronaire and Cariulfe at the time of Rollo's second invasion of Francia. However, the author identifies Ingelger as the count of Anjou who received the relics; his reign cannot be reconciled with Rollo's invasion of Francia because Ingelger died in 888.²⁶ It is possible that this confusion reflects an attempt to conceal the theft of the relics of Lô and Romphaire at some point between their removal from Bayeux

²² *DS*, col. 217: 'per diversa terrarum spatia corpora Sanctorum multa defunctis custodibus remanserunt [...] post biennium cum Carolo rege pacificato, corpora sanctorum episcoporum Constantiensium, Laudi atque Rumpharii [...] in ecclesia S. Salvatoris concessu Rollonis recepta'.

²³ The phrase is Felice Lifshitz's, at 'The Migration of Neustrian Relics in the Viking Age: The Myth of Voluntary Exodus, the Reality of Coercion and Theft', *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995), pp. 175-92.

²⁴ The Angevin text, after a copy made by Léopold Delisle, is provided at Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 50-53. For the date, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 33 and p. 53, n. 1; see above, n. 3.

²⁵ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 50: 'Rollo [...] omnium est potitus dominio, fungente tunc temporis Theodorico Constantiensis ecclesiae sacerdotio, qui beatorum praedecessorum suorum Laudi scilicet atque Rumpharii corpora audiens quo praedictum est loco et modo haberi thesaurum [...] diligenter quæsitum invenit, inventum in ecclesia sancti Salvatoris tunc nomine dedicata apud urbem Rotomagum honorifice collocavit'. This account is similar to the version in the 'De statu', cited above at n. 5. It is claimed in the seventeenth-century brevaries of Coutances that the body of Saint Possesseur was also installed in Rouen, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 34, n. 2.

²⁶ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 52: 'Cum quibus idem Rollo consilium iniens iterum contra regnum insurgens ut eum subjugaret procuratores sui exercitus usquequaque transmittit [...] sanctorum Laudi atque Rumpharii corpora Andegavim usque transmittunt sub protectione [...] Ingelgerii videlicet Andegavorum consulis [...] Qui honorabiliter in ecclesia sua videlicet Sanctae Genovefae [...] dicta sanctorum corpora honorifice collocavit cum sanctorum corporibus, videlicet Marculfi, Coronarii et Carnulfi'.

and the early years of their residence in Rouen.²⁷ It is clear from an inventory of the priory of Saint-Lô's relics compiled in 1470 that it had lost the bulk of Lô's body and some of Romphaire's by this time.²⁸ If these relics had been stolen, it suggests that their cults were vibrant in the late ninth and early tenth centuries since their 'virtus' was in demand beyond the borders of diocese.²⁹ This in turn is an indication of the strength of popular Christianity in the region. Although the Angevin source attributes the translation of the relics of Lô and Romphaire to the agency of Bishop Theoderic, John stated that Rollo's initiative lay behind it. Indeed, Rollo may have recognised the value of local saints in strengthening his authority.³⁰

John's description of the devastation of the church of Coutances during the Scandinavian attacks conforms to the traditions of Norman historical writing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The destruction wrought by the Vikings and prevalence of paganism was a necessary element of the history of early Normandy. The 'myth of Norman sacred destiny', which originated in Dudo of Saint-Quentin's *De moribus* and was exemplified in his account of Rollo's dream in which he and his followers were baptised and the rise of Normandy was prophesied, depended on it, since it was the Normans who Christianized the region in this vision of the past.³¹ It was vital in order to strengthen ducal power in the formative period of its development. As Samantha Kahn Herrick noted, '[c]onversion serves

²⁷ For the theft of relics from the diocese of Rouen in the ninth and tenth centuries, Lifshitz, 'Migration of Neustrian Relics', pp. 175-92, especially pp. 182-83.

²⁸ For the inventory, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 57-60. Pigeon provides a summary of the parts of Lô's body taken to Angers deduced from the contents of the priory's reliquaries listed in this inventory, at p. 44. Musset noted the anatomical imprecision of sources of this nature at 'Les translations de reliques en Normandie (IX-XII siècles)' in *Les saints dans la Normandie médiévale*, ed. Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (Caen, 2000), pp. 97-108, at pp. 99-100. Some of Lô's relics may have been subsequently removed from Angers, for the abbeys of Tulle and Thoars claimed to have relics of Lô. For Tulle, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 53-54; for Thoars, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 34 and Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 124.

²⁹ For the saints' 'virtus' as a reason for relic thefts, Lifshitz, 'Migration of Neustrian Relics', pp. 177-78.

³⁰ See above ns. 22 and 25. For the role of saints' cults in bolstering ducal authority, see Potts, 'When the Saints Go Marching', pp. 17-31, especially pp. 25-27.

³¹ *De moribus*, pp. 146-47; Lifshitz, *Norman Conquest*, pp. 12 and 217.

as a framework for legitimate power; those who render the territory to Christ wield a power both sacred and invincible'.³² In the context of the composition of the 'De statu', this version of the church of Coutances' past heightened the impact of Geoffrey's reforms and allowed John to present him as its saviour. Furthermore, the theme of renewal in the 'De statu' would have also reminded John's fellow canons that the decline in the church of Coutances' status after Geoffrey's death could be rectified.³³

Ecclesiastical Revival and Geoffrey's Predecessors

It is clear from the 'De statu' that the exile of Bishop Theoderic and his successors in the tenth century at Rouen did not preclude contact with the diocese. John stated that Theoderic returned to Coutances and its environs 'in order to revive by the grace of God the Christian religion'.³⁴ However, apart from the information in the 'De statu', there is no evidence of the activities of bishops Theoderic, Herbert, Algerund and Gilbert. Lecanu thought that all four bishops, as well as Gilbert's successor, Hugh, were buried in the choir of the church of Saint-Lô at Rouen, where each bishop was depicted on the windows of the crossing on the side of the cloister.³⁵

The first of the exiled bishops of whom there is evidence is Bishop Hugh.³⁶ The date of Hugh's accession is unknown, but he appears in the record of a grant made by Duke

³² Samantha Kahn Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past. Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge [Mass.], 2007), p. 114.

³³ For a similar point, Giles Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life. Concepts and Realities' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benton and Giles Constable (Oxford, 1982), pp. 37-67, at p. 38.

³⁴ *DS*, col. 217: 'Reviviscente vero gratia Dei religione christiana Constantiis et eiusdem circumquaque finibus, ex deliberatione et temporis et rei necessitate veniebat huc sæpe dictus præsul, dispositisque ecclesiasticis propriisque negotiis Rotomagum reversus'.

³⁵ Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 158.

³⁶ For Hugh, Toustain de Billy, i, pp. 104-7; Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques*, pp. 108-10; Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, pp. 158-61, where Lecanu erroneously attributed to Hugh the creation of a college of canons at Saint-Lô and the acquisition of various rights and privileges; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 170-73.

Richard I to the abbey of Fécamp on the day of its dedication, 15 June 990.³⁷ The date of his death is also unknown, but he was still active in 1020, when he dedicated the church at La-Ferté-en-Bray, and he appears in charter evidence as late as c.1023.³⁸ Charter evidence suggests that most of Hugh's time was spent in Upper Normandy. His 'signum' appears on two charters that record ducal confirmations made at Rouen, and the beneficiaries of most of the other charters which he attested were abbeys in Upper Normandy.³⁹ Furthermore, according to the Angevin source cited above, Hugh enlarged the church of Saint-Lô 'at great cost', a project that would have required his presence at Rouen, and he transferred seven of the canons who had been established at Coutances to this church.⁴⁰ Moreover, it has been suggested recently that Hugh's family came from Upper Normandy, for Hugh's son, Roger, held land near Rouen and in the Pays de Talou.⁴¹ Yet there is evidence to suggest that Hugh took an active interest in the ecclesiastical life of his diocese. According to the 'pancarte' of the priory of Saint-Fromond, which was renewed in 1239, Hugh granted an exemption from episcopal customs including the dues associated with synods and the right of visitation.⁴² He may have granted a similar exemption to the church of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte.⁴³ Above

³⁷ Fauroux, no. 4.

³⁸ For the dedication, Pierre Bauduin, *La première Normandie (X^e-XI^e siècles)* (Caen, 2004), p. 292 and n. 35; Fauroux, no. 30, redated 1017 x c.1023 at Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 173.

³⁹ Fauroux, no. 13, p. 89: 'Actum est hoc Rodomo civitate'; no. 18, p. 102: 'Actum est [...] Rodomagensi civitate'. For Hugh's appearances in charters for Upper Norman abbeys, nos. 4 (Fécamp), 24 (Saint-Ouen) and 30 (Saint-Wandrille). For his other appearances, no. 6 (Coutances cathedral); *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 4; Musset, 'Saint-Fromond', p. 484; N. Bulst, *Untersuchungen zu den Klosterreformen Wilhelms von Dijon (962-1031)* (Bonn, 1973), pp. 223-36 (Fruttuaria), cited at Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 173.

⁴⁰ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 50-51: 'venerabilis Hugo episcopus ad honorem sanctorum et gloriam eamdem pluribus sumptibus ampliavit ecclesiam'; *DS*, col. 218: 'præscriptus episcopus Hugo septem canonicos de his qui Constant. ecclesiæ deputandi erant, ad sæpeditam ecclesiam S. Laudi ubi Rotomagi morabatur, transtulit'.

⁴¹ Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 210. For Roger 'filius episcopi', L. C. Loyd, 'The Origin of the Family of Warenne', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 31 (1934), pp. 97-113, at pp. 98-103.

⁴² Lucien Musset, 'Les origines du prieuré', 'Appendice', pp. 483-88, at p. 484: 'concedente etiam Hugone Constanciensi episcopo predictam ecclesiam esse quietam et liberam ab omni synodo et circuitu et omni consuetudine'.

⁴³ In exchange for this exemption, the church of Coutances received the church at Le Homme and the village of Gishaula, Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 172-73; Delisle, *Histoire du château*, pièces justificatives, no. 48, p. 59: 'ecclesia Sancti Salvatoris est libera ab omnibus episcopalibus consuetudinibus, et a tempore vetuli Ricardi comitis et Rogeri vicecomitis [...] qui pro hac libertate ecclesiam Sancti Nicholai de Hulmo et vicum qui vocatur Gishaula in eadem villa Sancte Marie Constanciensi concessit'. Cf. Van Torhout who doubted the authenticity of this story at 'Les sièges du pouvoir des Néel', pp. 11-12.

all, it was during Hugh's episcopate that the ecclesiastical revival was initiated by Duke Richard I. The duke, with Hugh's assistance, established canons at the cathedral and endowed them with land at Blainville, Courcy and Souilles with its forest.⁴⁴

Hugh's successors continued the revival. Although Herbert's episcopate probably lasted less than a year, he took up residence in the diocese at Saint-Lô and expelled the unworthy canons at Coutances.⁴⁵ Herbert exchanged his see with Robert, bishop of Lisieux in c.1023.⁴⁶ John minimised Robert's contribution to the diocese's recovery in order to extol Geoffrey's achievements, but the extant evidence of his activities suggests that Robert made a significant contribution to the ecclesiastical revival at Coutances. Charter evidence highlights the amount of time he spent in Upper Normandy; six of the twelve charters attested by Robert were for abbeys in Upper Normandy.⁴⁷ He also attended Archbishop Mauger's provincial synod at Rouen in c.1045 and participated in the dedication of the new abbey of Saint-Wandrille in 1033.⁴⁸ But he appears to have divided his time between Upper Normandy and his diocese. Indeed, the infrequency of his charter attestations, which has been recently noted, may reflect the amount of time he spent in Lower Normandy.⁴⁹ A careful examination

⁴⁴ *DS*, col. 218: 'Richardus huius Willelmi filius [...] fide tam pius quam catholicus sanctam Constantiensem ecclesiam largius quam ceteri sublimare decrevit; canonicos namque instituit, et terras et redditus unde viverent dedit et confirmavit [...] In diebus illis Blainvilla, et Cruciatum, et terra de Sola cum silva non modica fuerant præbendæ canonicorum, quod etiam chartula Richardi marchionis et Hugonis episcopi testatur usque hodie'; Fauroux, no. 6.

⁴⁵ For the duration of Herbert's episcopate, Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 248. *DS*, col. 218: 'Herbertus [...] et Robertus [...] sederunt apud sanctum Laudum supra Viram fluvium [...] His quosdam canonicorum qui sibi minus urbani, minusque faceti videbantur, ab ecclesia Constantiensi radicitus tanquam illiteratos et inutiles extrudit, eorumque terras et possessiones non modicas [...] in dominio suo retinuit'.

⁴⁶ For the date of the exchange, Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 248. For Robert's episcopate, Toustain de Billy, i, pp. 109-16; Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques*, pp. 114-17; Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, pp. 161-62; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 174-75.

⁴⁷ Fauroux, nos. 35, 85, 87 (Fécamp), 69, 102 (Saint-Wandrille) and 112 (Saint-Ouen). For further attestations, Fauroux, nos. 33 (Sées cathedral), and 64 (Cerisy); *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, nos. 2 and 10; *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Père*, i, no. iv (Saint-Père) and *Le Grand Cartulaire de Conches et sa copie: transcription et analyse*, ed. C. de Haas (Le Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, 2005), no. 406 (i) (Conches), both cited at Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 171, Fig. 30.

⁴⁸ Bessin, p. 41; Toustain de Billy, i, p. 116.

⁴⁹ Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', p. 174.

of the evidence in the 'De statu' suggests that the state of the church of Coutances in 1048 was not as desperate as John tried to maintain. Robert had been able to secure the help of Duchess Gunnor in the construction of his new cathedral. In the ducal confirmation charter of the cathedral's possessions in 1056, Gunnor is said to have laid the first stone.⁵⁰ He had also persuaded the parishioners to contribute, as well as the local magnates, whose names had been carved into the arches of the church. The canons were clearly performing their function because they were able to donate half of the proceeds from the altar towards the cost of its construction.⁵¹

Although Robert was unable to complete his cathedral, Joel Herschman's study of the remains of the Romanesque cathedral has highlighted the significance of Robert's contribution to the building completed by Geoffrey and the inherent ambition of the work. This will be examined in more detail below, but it is clear from Herschman's work that although the masonry in the parts built by Robert was not as refined as that in the towers of the western façade overseen by Geoffrey, and the building was incomplete in 1048, Robert's contribution was not as negligible as Canon John's derogatory description of the structure suggests.⁵² Furthermore, the evidence of the episcopal list available to John and the charter of Duke Richard I in which he established the canonical community points to the existence of a library or archive in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Furthermore, cartulary C of the chapter is said to have contained charters from the ninth century.⁵³ In addition, John did

⁵⁰ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'terram etiam Rolphi de Forcivilla quam dedit Gonnor ancilla Dei cum primam posuerit petram in fundamentis predicte ecclesie'.

⁵¹ *DS*, col. 218: 'Huius tamen temporibus incœpta et ex parte constructa est Constantiensis ecclesia, fundante et coadiuvante Gonorra comitissa, auxiliantibus etiam canonicis, redditibus medietatis altaris ad tempus operi concessis, cooperantibus quoque baronibus et parochianis fidelibus, quod usque hodie contestantur aliquot ipsorum nomina insculpta lapidibus in ecclesiæ arcubus'.

⁵² Joel Herschman, 'The Eleventh-Century Nave of the Cathedral of Coutances: A New Reconstruction', *Gesta* 22 (1983), pp. 121-34, especially pp. 123-24; *DS*, col. 218: 'rudis erat, et inculta, et imbecillis ecclesia'.

⁵³ See above, pp. 13-14; *DS*, col. 217: 'iamque sub 33 episcopis Deo fideliter militaverat'; Deslondes-Fontanel, 'Le cartulaire B', p. 73.

not say that the canons at this time lacked a library; he said that the books they had lacked illuminations. This is indicative of the poverty of the see relative to its condition at the time that John was working rather than evidence of the backwardness of ecclesiastical life before 1048.⁵⁴ Indeed, the revival was probably hampered by the death of the church's pre-eminent sponsor, Duchess Gunnor, in 1031.⁵⁵ Her importance to the reform programme is suggested by her role in laying the first stone of the new cathedral. The disorder that followed the deaths of Duke Richard III and Duke Robert also probably undermined it. These periods of disruption are identified in a charter recording the possessions of the cathedral of Bayeux, dated 1035 x 1037, as the moments when the church suffered significant losses.⁵⁶ But it is likely that Robert's contribution to the revival has been too readily dismissed. Therefore Geoffrey continued the work of his predecessors.

Patrimony

Geoffrey consolidated the cathedral's patrimony in the diocese and extended it to the south and east through the acquisition of land from members of his family and by securing donations from Duke William (Fig. 4). The oldest possessions of the canons at Blainville-sur-Mer, Courcy and Soulles, which are identified in Duke Richard I's charter cited by Canon John in 'De statu', were located in the south of diocese, near Coutances and Saint-Lô.⁵⁷ Another cluster of estates can be identified around Saint-Lô, a town that had been associated with the bishops of Coutances since at least 511, when Bishop Leoncien attended a council at

⁵⁴ *DS*, col. 218: 'bibliothecis ceterisque authenticis et canonicalibus libris et ornamentis pene penitus destituta'; cf. Fontanel, for example, who stated that the church lacked a library, at 'La réorganisation religieuse', pp. 192-93.

⁵⁵ Van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor', pp. 7-24.

⁵⁶ *Antiquus cartularius ecclesiae Baiocensis*, i, no. xxi, p. 28: 'videns quosdam raptore ecclesiae qui, post excessum Ricardi comitis ejusque filii Rotberti, omni postposita æquitate, jure quodam tirannico terras Sanctae Mariæ plurimas Baiocacensis ecclesiae quia vi abstulerant'.

⁵⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'In diebus illis Blainvilla, et Cruciatum, et terra de Sola cum silva non modica fuerant præbendæ canonicorum, quod etiam chartula Richardi marchionis et Hugonis episcopi testatur usque hodie'.

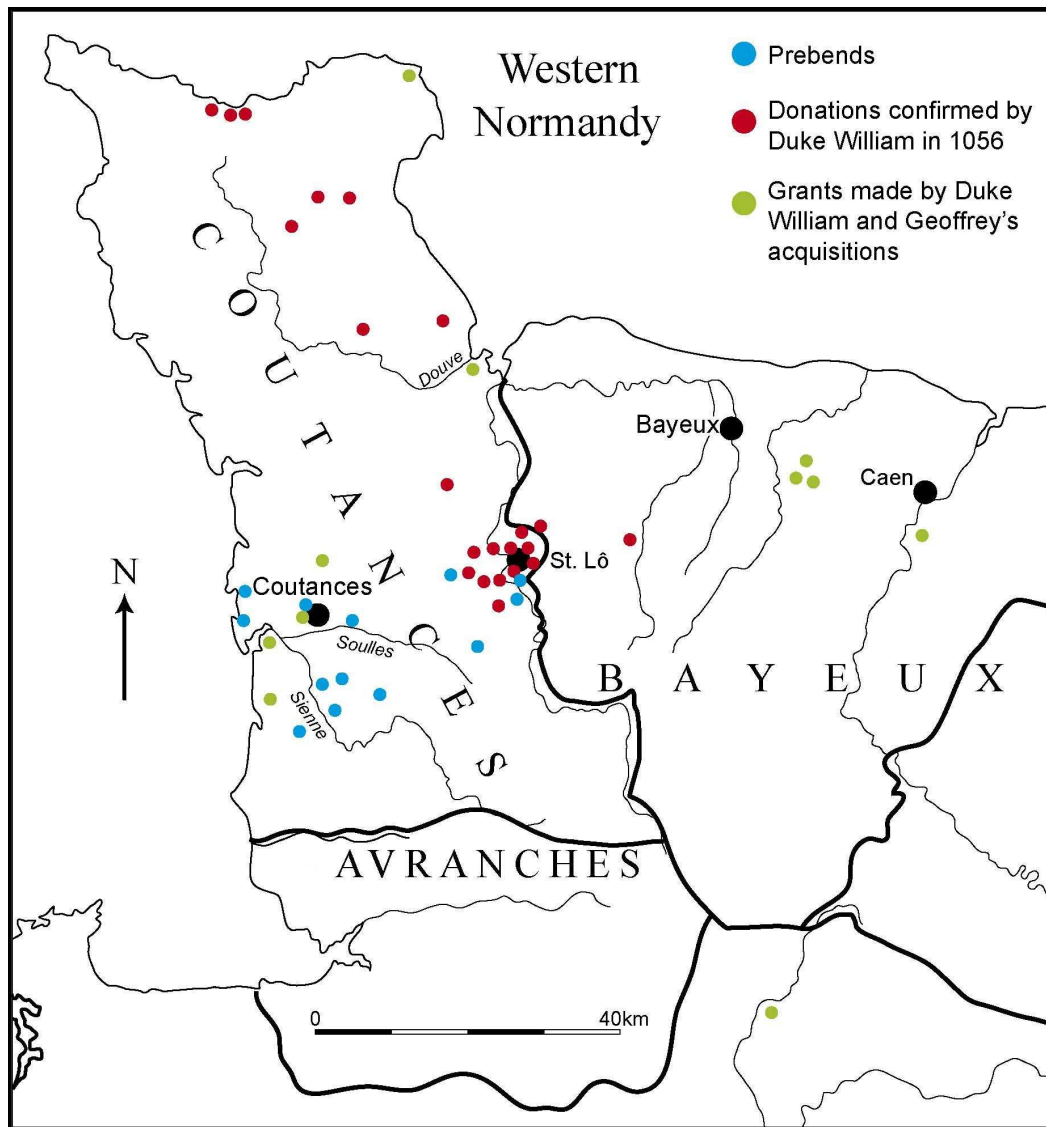


Fig. 4 - The Patrimony of Coutances Cathedral in 1056.⁵⁸

Orléans as bishop of Briovère, Saint-Lô's ancient name.⁵⁹ Toustain de Billy was convinced that these estates, which he thought formed the barony of Saint-Lô, were donated to the church of Coutances by Saint Lô himself, whose father had been lord of Briovère.⁶⁰ Although this story appears to be legendary, as André Dupont has demonstrated, there is a

⁵⁸ This map is based on Fontanel, no. 340 and *DS*, col. 219. The map does not show the unidentified 'Mansum Aloii', 'Mansum Restaldi', 'Mons Johannis', the land of Ralph 'de Forcivilla', 'Crapolt', 'Unceyo', the hunting and fishing rights, and the possessions on the Channel Islands from the charter; it excludes 'Holmetellum' from the *DS*.

⁵⁹ Mansi, viii, col. 357: 'Leontianus episcopus ecclesiae Constantinæ subscripti'.

⁶⁰ René Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l'histoire du Cotentin et de ses villes* (Saint-Lô, 1864), pp. 6-8; Toustain de Billy, i, p. 24.

correlation between the cathedral's possessions in 1056 and the estates that made up the barony as they were recorded in 1549.⁶¹ It is possible that these estates represent the earliest donations made to the church following the interment of Lô in the church that became the abbey of Sainte-Croix and the occurrence of the miracles at his tomb that led to the town becoming known as Saint-Lô.⁶² In addition, according to the confirmation charter, Geoffrey had secured the cathedral's possession of the estates at Coutances, Saint-Lô, and Valognes that emerged as the principal centres of episcopal power in the medieval diocese, as well as the episcopal manor at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé.⁶³

The patrimony generated income for the church from a range of sources, and the exploitation of its resources effectively extended the scope of episcopal authority throughout the diocese (Fig. 5). At the core of the church's income was its revenue from land, which probably constituted customary money payments as well as payments in kind, but there is no evidence of the size of the church's income from it. This income was supplemented by the episcopal customs that were associated with the churches held by the cathedral. These customs are also difficult to determine, but they probably included income generated by the altar, which comprised tithes, first-fruits, burial dues, dues associated with the right to hold synods and visitations, and the fines for crimes committed in the church and its yard.⁶⁴ The church also collected dues from its mills. The dues generated by the mills at Coutances are

⁶¹ André Dupont, 'La baronnie de Saint-Lô', *RdM* 27 (1985), pp. 5-48, at pp. 11-14. Arthur de Cossé, bishop of Coutances, sold a large part of the barony in 1576, Marie Casset, *Les évêques aux champs. Châteaux et manoirs des évêques normands au Moyen Âge (XI^e-XV^e siècles)* (Caen, 2007), p. 427.

⁶² Arturo Du Monstier, *Neustria Pia* (Rouen, 1663), p. 836: 'ob ingentia merita ipsius S. Laudi, maxime vero propter quamplurima inibi ad sacras eius Reliquias cœlitus edicta miracula, de suo nomine deinceps, appellationem tulit'.

⁶³ Fontanel, no. 340; *La mense épiscopale*, p. xi; Casset, *Les évêques aux champs*, pp. 415-25.

⁶⁴ These are some of the episcopal customs granted by William de la Ferté-Macé with the church of Notre-Dame de Bellou-en-Houlme to Saint-Julien de Tours in 1053, Fauroux, no. 131, p. 304: 'altare et omnes reditus eorum, decimas scilicet, primitias, sepulturam, sinodalia, circada et omnes forfacturas ad ipsam æcclesiam pertinentes'.

	Church	Parish	Tithe	Tithe of Tolls	Mills	Salt-Pits	Wood	Meadow	Plain	Cultivated Land	Uncultivated Land	Unspecified Land	Houses	Appurtenances
Wild beats in the Cotentin			✓											
Caen								✓						
½ fishing on Sienne														
Guernsey										✓				
1 house (prebends)													1	
Land of 'Hugolini Trachel'												✓		
Saint-Sauveur l'Endelin				✓						✓				
Brévands														
Lingreville												✓		
Loucelles												✓		
Putot												✓		
Sainte-Croix[-Grand-Tonne]												✓		
'Crapolt'												✓		
'Unceyo'														
'De statu'														
Le Parc														
'Holmetellum'														1
Barfleur														

Fig. 5 - Statistical survey of the cathedral's patrimony in 1056.⁶⁵

referred to in the confirmation charter, and Canon John included the mills at Grimouville with their dues amongst the possessions purchased by Geoffrey in the cathedral city in the 'De statu'.⁶⁶ The church also received the tithes of game, of fishing, and of wrecks along the coast near Coutances, as well as half of the tolls at Coutances and the tithe of tolls at Cherbourg.⁶⁷

Since the church held land and rights throughout the diocese, the patrimony provided Geoffrey with the means to extend episcopal authority which, in turn, would have stimulated

⁶⁵ Key: > = more than; p = parts of.

⁶⁶ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'duobus molendinis cum tota multa'; *DS*, col. 219: 'cum molendinis et multa Grimoldi viaca'. There is also a reference to these mills in the charter, at p. 492: 'et nominatim illius terre que dicitur Grimouvilla'.

⁶⁷ In these contexts a 'tithe' may be defined as a tenth of the income generated, Lucien Musset, 'Aperçus sur la dîme ecclésiastique en Normandie au XI^e siècle' in Lucien Musset, Jean-Michel Bouvrin and Véronique Gazeau, *Aspects de la société et de l'économie dans la Normandie médiévale (Xe-XIIIe siècles)*, Cahiers des Annales de Normandie 22 (Caen, 1988), pp. 47-64, at p. 48.

ecclesiastical life through the episcopal right of visitation and the holding of synods. Tithes provide a clear example of this process for they intruded episcopal authority into ecclesiastical life at a local level and provided the church with an income.⁶⁸ Indeed, the patrimony formed the foundation of Geoffrey's episcopal lordship. The confirmation charter reveals a network of lands and rights within the diocese and beyond its borders organised around the centres of episcopal power at Coutance and Saint-Lô, as well as the episcopal manors at Valognes and Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé.⁶⁹

Although the 'De statu' provides some information about Geoffrey's additions to the patrimony and the estates he recovered, the extent to which Geoffrey was responsible for reconstituting and augmenting the church's possessions cannot be determined precisely. According to the confirmation charter, the grants made by Duke William's predecessors had been diminished, but the estates affected are not identified, and the circumstances surrounding the losses are vaguely described by the term 'quoquomodo' or 'in whatever way'.⁷⁰ The most likely occasions for this disruption were the deaths of Dukes Richard III and Robert in 1027 and 1035 as noted above.⁷¹ Furthermore, Geoffrey's role in the reconstitution of the patrimony is obscured in the confirmation charter by the prominence afforded to the duke in the church's restoration. Fontanel has argued that in its current form the charter preserves amendments made in the twelfth century in order to minimise the role of the bishop in the process by enhancing the contribution made by the duke. The similarities between the organisation of the confirmation charter and the bulls issued by Pope Eugenius III confirming the possessions of the chapter and of Bishop Algar on 26 February 1146

⁶⁸ For tithes as a means of projecting episcopal power, Eldevik, 'Ecclesiastical Lordship', pp. 40-56.

⁶⁹ For a similar point about the structure of the possessions of the bishops of Beauvais at the end of the eleventh century, Guyotjeannin, *Episcopus et Comes*, p. 94.

⁷⁰ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 491: 'beneficiis ab antecessoribus suis eidem ecclesie collatis, quoquomodo imminuta fuissent'.

⁷¹ See above, n. 56.

suggest that these amendments were made shortly after Algar's appointment.⁷² Algar, who is credited with the implementation of reform ideals in the diocese in modern historiography, was given permission to replace the communities of secular canons in the abbey of Sainte-Croix at Saint-Lô and the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen with Augustinian canons by Pope Innocent II. In light of this evidence, and the introduction of Augustinian canons at Sées in 1131, the canons at Coutances may have feared that they were about to be replaced.⁷³ For example, Geoffrey's acquisition of half of the city of Coutances and the associated lands and rights is presented as a ducal grant in the charter, but in the 'De statu' these possessions were purchased by Geoffrey for three hundred pounds.⁷⁴ Indeed, a comparison of the possessions listed by Canon John with the evidence from the charter suggests that Geoffrey expended a significant amount of time and resources in order to reconstitute and augment the patrimony. According to Canon John, Geoffrey recovered Blainville 'by surety', but there is no mention of this arrangement in the charter.⁷⁵ The church's possessions on the Channel Islands, the tithe of hunting in the ducal forests in the Cotentin and Passais, the church of Cherbourg and Tourlaville and Equeurdreville were acquired by the gift of the duke and through Geoffrey's service and wealth in the 'De statu', but in the charter they are simply listed amongst the donations confirmed by the duke or as ducal grants.⁷⁶

⁷² Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse', pp. 195-96 and 200-4; Fontanel, nos. 273 (Eugenius III's bull for Algar) and 348 (for the chapter).

⁷³ *GC*, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238; Fontanel, p. 57; Françoise Loddé, 'L'histoire d'un chapitre régulier au Moyen Âge: celui du diocèse de Sées' in *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie*, ed. Sylvette Lemagnen and Philippe Manneville (Caen, 1997), pp. 241-51, at pp. 241-43.

⁷⁴ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'ex sua parte contulit et propria manu firmavit'; *DS*, col. 219: 'trecentis libris comparavit et acquietavit'.

⁷⁵ *DS*, col. 219: 'de vadimonio'.

⁷⁶ *DS*, col. 219: 'ecclesiam Cæsaris-burgi, et Torlevillæ, et Esquedrevillæ [...] et quidquid habet ecclesia Constantiensis in insulis videlicet Gersei, Granasei, *Serf* et Atreno, dono præsati ducis Willelmi, servitio censuque suo acquisivit [...] et de forestis totius Constantini, et de Passeis qui sunt de dominio Normannorum ducis, omnem decimam totius venationis'; cf. Fontanel, no. 340, pp. 491-92: 'et cetera que alio quolibet modo predictæ ecclesie attributa sunt, inferius denotantur [...] ecclesia *Carisbourc* cum decima thelonei ejusdem ville et altera Torlavilla [...] et terra Eschedreville [...] addenda sunt deinde que ipse ex sua parte contulit et propria manu firmavit [...] porro ecclesiam insule que vocatur *Aurenoy* [...] ecclesiam insule que vocatur *Serch* [...] et in insula Gersoii ecclesiam sancti Salvatoris'. The tithe of hunting in the Cotentin and Passais is recorded as 'the

It is clear from the evidence of the ‘De statu’ that Geoffrey continued to acquire land for the cathedral after 1066. Having described Geoffrey’s acquisitions, his provision of liturgical ornaments and vestments, and his reorganisation of the chapter, John stated that Geoffrey ‘acquired the greater part of the aforementioned lands before the English war’.⁷⁷ This statement is supported by the inclusion of several possessions in John’s abbreviated list not found in the charter: Le Parc, near Coutances, which Geoffrey obtained from the count of Mortain; a mill at ‘Holmetellum’, purchased from his brother Mauger; and Barfleur.⁷⁸ It is also possible that he acquired the thirty acres of land at Valognes in the episcopal ‘mensa’ in 1146, where John stated that Geoffrey built ‘the noblest home, a garden and a chapel’.⁷⁹ Furthermore, after 1066, Geoffrey granted Winterborne Stickland in Dorset to the canons.⁸⁰ Therefore the process of reconstituting and augmenting the patrimony appears to have continued beyond 1066. The lack of detailed evidence makes it impossible to provide a precise ‘terminus ad quem’.

Cathedral

Although little remains of Geoffrey’s cathedral, the evidence of Canon John’s works and the surviving parts Geoffrey’s western towers permit some conclusions about the style and

tithe of the skins of the savage beasts of the Cotentin’, p. 492: ‘decimam coriorum ferarum bestiarum Constantinencium’.

⁷⁷ *DS*, col. 220: ‘terrasque praescriptas ex maxima parte ante bellum Anglicum acquisivit’.

⁷⁸ *DS*, col. 219: ‘terram parci contra comitem Moritoniensem ex parte expugnavit [...] molendinum quoque eius quod est apud Holmetellum a Maugero fratre suo in dominio ecclesiae comparavit [...] et Barbi fluvii [...] dono praesati ducis Willelmi, servitio censuque suo acquisivit’. For the identification of ‘Barbi fluvii’ as Barfleur, Fontanel, ‘La réorganisation religieuse’, pp. 203-4.

⁷⁹ *DS*, col. 219: ‘in Valloniis terram ubi domum optimam, et virgultum, et capellam construxit’. The bull exists as a *vidimus* issued between 1223 and 1236, Fontanel, no. 273, p. 411: ‘domos, virgultum, triginta acras terre que habes in Valoniis cum libertatibus et quietudinibus in foresta comitis’.

⁸⁰ *DS*, col. 221: ‘dedit canonicis in commune quoddam manerium nomine Wiltrebornam 15 sterlingorum in Anglia’; Fontanel, no. 278; *DB Dorset*, 22.1 (*Domesday*, fol. 79r, p. 209).

architectural significance of his edifice. Canon John provides a fairly detailed description of the cathedral Geoffrey completed. In the 'De statu', he noted that Geoffrey

built the chevet with an ambulatory ('area'), and here and there two larger, more noteworthy and more spacious apses. After this he raised two towers from the foundations, and a third above the choir with outstanding work, in which he placed two expensive and appropriate bells, and he completely covered all of these things with lead.⁸¹

It is clear from Canon John's eyewitness description that the nave had already been built by 1048 and Geoffrey added the east end, the two towers of the western façade and the lantern tower over the choir.⁸² But the style of the east end remains a controversial subject because of Canon John's use of the word 'area' and his description of the subsidiary apses as 'majora', 'nobiliora', and 'ampliora' than the central apse. Pigeon, whose reconstruction of Geoffrey's cathedral is undermined by his misinterpretation of 'majoremque crucifixum' as the shape of nave, choir and transept rather than an ornamental object, translated 'area' as 'ambulatory' and interpreted the subsidiary apses as the transepts.⁸³ This view is shared by Maylis Baylé who considered the alternative arrangement, an echeloned east end, which had been proposed by Lefèvre-Pontalis and Le Patourel, as unlikely since it was rare in Normandy before the construction of the abbeys of Saint-Étienne and La Trinité at Caen.⁸⁴ The most likely arrangement is a central apse with an ambulatory and two smaller subsidiary

⁸¹ *DS*, col. 219: 'capitium navis ecclesiæ cum area, et hinc inde duo majora capitia nobiliora et ampliora construxit. Duas turres posteriores a fundamentis, tertiamque supra chorum opere spectabili sublimavit, in quibus classicum consonans et pretiosum imposuit, et hæc omnia plumbo cooperuit'.

⁸² For Bishop Robert's nave, Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 121-34.

⁸³ *DS*, col. 219; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 42 and 89. André Mussat thought that this phrase may be a reference to the construction of the nave, at 'La cathédrale Notre-Dame de Coutances', *Congrès archéologique de France* 124 (1966), pp. 9-50, at p. 10.

⁸⁴ Maylis Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande au XI^e siècle' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 151-72, at pp. 161-67 (p. 163 especially); E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, 'Coutances', *Congrès archéologique de France* 75 (1909), i, pp. 247-77, at p. 248; Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey de Montbray', p. 140.

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Fig. 6 - Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10049, f. 421r.

apses projecting out of the eastern walls of the transepts.⁸⁵ This is suggested in Du Monstier's version of the text, which was used by Pigeon. This part of the text in the *Gallia Christiana* is corrupt, but according to Du Monstier's copy, the stones of the lantern tower fell on the central apse and the smaller apses either side of it (Fig. 6).⁸⁶

However, it is important to recognise Robert's contribution to the Romanesque cathedral. John minimised Robert's role in its construction by describing the church that he bequeathed to Geoffrey as 'crude, undeveloped and feeble'.⁸⁷ But in an examination of the Gothic cathedral's nave, Joel Herschman demonstrated that the outer walls of the thirteenth-century galleries were the exterior walls of Robert's nave. Therefore, on Geoffrey's accession in 1048, the nave of the cathedral, which was one of the largest in Normandy, had already been completed.⁸⁸ This is confirmed by John in the 'De statu', for he noted that he was able to read the names of some of the donors who contributed to Robert's cathedral inscribed on the arches of the church, which must be a reference to the arcades of the nave.⁸⁹ By determining the size of the nave, Robert's role in the construction of the Romanesque cathedral was crucial. The dimensions of the nave dictated the height of the western façade and the size of the transepts and the east end, so that the building was structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing. Therefore, although Geoffrey's work on the cathedral was substantial and significant, the proportions of the cathedral he completed, and to some extent its design, reflected Robert's conception of the building.

⁸⁵ This interpretation is similar to Marcel Lelégard's, who imagined a central apse with an ambulatory which afforded it pre-eminence over two larger apses either side of it, at 'La cathédrale et la tombe de Geoffroi d'après le 'Livre Noir' de Coutances' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 295-301, at p. 297.

⁸⁶ Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10049, f. 421r: 'ipsamque majorem turrin, ab orientali parte scinderent, majusque capitium Ecclesiæ, et quæ sunt hinc et inde minora conquassarent'; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 44-45 and n. 1.

⁸⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'In his pro certo diebus eadem rudis erat, et inculta, et imbecillis ecclesia'.

⁸⁸ Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 123-24; for the size, see p. 121 and n. 1 (at p. 132).

⁸⁹ *DS*, col. 218: 'quod usque hodie contestantur aliquot ipsorum nomina insculpta lapidibus in ecclesiæ arcubus'.

Although John Le Patourel and Lucien Musset argued that the cathedral was almost complete when it was dedicated on 8 December 1056, it is clear from the evidence of the ‘De statu’ that the construction work continued after 1066.⁹⁰ John noted that after ‘the English war’, Geoffrey spent lavishly on the work of the church, which included the work of glass-makers, masons and goldsmiths.⁹¹ Work within the cathedral certainly continued beyond 1066 for it was not until after 1066 that the great cross was raised on the day that Geoffrey granted Winterborne Stickland to the canons.⁹² In addition, as André Mussat pointed out, the contrasting style of the square rooms and the octagonal rooms above them in the western towers points to separate phases of construction.⁹³ Therefore it is more likely that only part of the cathedral had been completed by the time of its dedication, perhaps, as Lefèvre-Pontalis suggested, just the nave.⁹⁴ The date of its completion is unknown, but it may be inferred from John’s account of the earthquake on 2 November 1091 that the east end of the cathedral and the lantern tower had been finished by the time of this disaster, since he referred to the damage caused to the east end. Therefore it seems likely that the cathedral was incomplete when it was dedicated in 1056, and that the construction work continued after the Conquest.⁹⁵

The Cathedral Chapter

The only source of evidence for the history of the chapter at Coutances is the ‘De statu’.

According to a charter cited by Canon John, the first canonical community at Coutances was

⁹⁰ Le Patourel, ‘Geoffrey of Montbray’, p. 137; Musset, ‘Un grand prélat’, p. 9.

⁹¹ *DS*, col. 220: ‘Cum autem post Anglicum bellum [...] in Anglia pluries moraretur [...] Redditus episcopi necessitatibus et operibus ecclesiæ, scilicet scriptoribus, vitrariis, cæmentariis, aurifabris et ceteris omnibus quibus opus erat, per manum præsati camerarii abundanter expendebat’.

⁹² *DS*, col. 221: ‘Eo si quidem die quo crucifixum quem magistrante Lamberto multo sumtu fecerat, fesline levavit, dedit canonicis in commune quoddam manerium nomine Wiltrebornam 15 sterlingorum in Anglia’.

⁹³ Mussat, ‘Notre-Dame de Coutances’, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁴ Lefèvre-Pontalis, ‘Coutances’, pp. 247-48.

⁹⁵ Pigeon thought that the nave was finished by 1056 but implied that construction work continued after 1066; he also noted that the cathedral had been completed by the time of the earthquake, at *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 40 and 44.

established by Duke Richard I and Bishop Hugh in the tenth century with prebends located at Blainville, Courcy and Soulles.⁹⁶ Following Bishop Hugh's removal of seven of the canons to the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen, his successor, Bishop Herbert, attempted to reform the remaining canons by expelling those who were unworthy, but he did not complete this task before he exchanged sees with Bishop Robert of Lisieux in c.1023.⁹⁷ According to Canon John, Bishop Robert distributed the confiscated prebends amongst members of his own family.⁹⁸ Geoffrey recalled the seven delinquent canons from Saint-Lô de Rouen 'by the apostolic authority of the mother church' and added two more canons to the chapter.⁹⁹ Although John's use of the phrase 'ecclesiæ matri' may be interpreted as the church of Coutances, it is possible that Geoffrey had obtained papal dispensation for the chapter's reconstitution while he was with Pope Leo IX in Italy, or the canons may have been recalled by the authority of Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion, who attended the council of Lisieux in 1054 as a papal legate.¹⁰⁰ In addition, he provided the canons with ecclesiastical ornaments, vestments and books.¹⁰¹ Geoffrey also created a hierarchy of chapter officials by establishing the offices of chanter, subchanter and rector of schools, and after 1066 he granted the manor of Winterborne Stickland in Dorset for the common provisions of the canons.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ *DS*, col. 218: 'In diebus illis Blainvilla, et Cruciatum, et terra de Sola cum silva non modica suerant præbendæ canonicorum, quod etiam chartula Richardi marchionis et Hugonis episcopi testatur usque hodie'.

⁹⁷ *DS*, col. 218: 'His quosdam canonicorum qui sibi minus urbani, minusque faceti videbantur, ab ecclesia Constantiensi radicitus tanquam illiteratos et inutiles extrudit, eorumque terras et possessiones non modicas, donec eruditiores et aptiores restitueret, in dominio suo retinuit'.

⁹⁸ *DS*, col. 218: 'Robertus episcopus [...] non solum præbendas dictorum canonicorum servitio ecclesiæ non reddidit, verum etiam hæc et alia in feodum et hereditatem nepotibus, et consanguineis, et fororibus suis non large sed prodige distribuit'.

⁹⁹ *DS*, cols. 219-20: 'septemque canonicos quos episcopus Hugo Rotomagi in ecclesia S. Laudi irregulariter constituerat, apostolica auctoritate ecclesiæ matri revocavit, itemque duos alios adiecit'.

¹⁰⁰ *WP*, pp. 88-89: the duke 'deposuit patrum in publico sanctæ sinodi, apostolici uicario cunctisque Normanniæ episcopis, iuxta canonum auctoritatem sententiam dantibus unanimi consensu'; Bessin, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰¹ *DS*, col. 219: 'Ceterum ornamenta ecclesiastica et ustencilia, calices, cruces, capsas, phylacteria, candelabra, thuribula, bacinis, siculam et ampullas aurea contulit et argentea, casulas quoque, dalmaticas, tunicas, planetas, albas, cappas mirifici operis, necnon dorsalia serica et lanea, cortinas et tapeta, sed et bibliothecas, passionales, omeliarum, missales, aureis litteris duos sufficientesque et competentes libros subrogavit'.

¹⁰² *DS*, col. 220: 'Cantorem quoque, et succentorem, et rectorem scholarum [...] constituit'; Fontanel, no. 278, p. 418: 'in perpetuum communi canonicorum victui'.

The purpose of the chapter was to celebrate the divine office in the cathedral. As John d'Ivry made clear in his liturgical treatise *De officiis Ecclesiasticis*, which was written while he was bishop of Avranches and before the death of Archbishop Maurilius of Rouen, the canons were required to observe the canonical hours.¹⁰³ They also performed Mass on the feast days of the cathedral's liturgical calendar.¹⁰⁴ The canons probably observed a form of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang which was compiled in the early ninth century and incorporated elements of the original Rule of Chrodegang, which was probably formulated in 755, and the 'Institutio Canonicorum', which was pronounced in 816.¹⁰⁵ Fontanel has suggested that the enclosure of the canons' quarter in 1294 was designed to protect the canons from outside interference, as prescribed in Chrodegang's rule.¹⁰⁶ But the nature of the rule observed at Coutances cannot be established. John d'Ivry referred to a 'canonical institution' in the *De Officiis* without setting out the canons' way of life, but it is likely that the form of the rule observed varied according to each institution.¹⁰⁷ The 'Miracula' contain evidence of the canons' observance of the hours, but the only piece of additional information about the internal life of the chapter during Geoffrey's episcopate is a brief overview of the procedure followed when a new canon was admitted to the chapter.¹⁰⁸ It is possible that the origins of the two general chapter meetings may be found in the late eleventh century, since they coincided with the Marian feast days of the Purification and the Assumption. Both of

¹⁰³ *Le De Officiis Ecclesiasticis de Jean d'Avranches, Archevêque de Rouen (1067-1079)*, ed. R. Delamare (Paris, 1923), p. 5: 'Has namque horas, scilicet primam, tertiam, sextam, nonam, vespervas et completorium, nocturnas et matutinale officium'. The work was dedicated to Maurilius, hence it could not have been written before his death in 1067, p. 3: 'Domino vere sancto et meritis honorando Maurilio venerabili Sancte Rotomagensis ecclesie archiepiscopo Johannes Abrincacensis'.

¹⁰⁴ Fontanel, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Julia Barrow, 'Review Article: Chrodegang, His Rule and Its Successors', *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006), pp. 201-12, at pp. 202-4.

¹⁰⁶ Fontanel, p. 59 and no. 317.

¹⁰⁷ *De Officiis*, p. 4: 'canonicam institutionem'; Gosset, 'Les chanoines du chapitre', p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ 'Miracula', nos. iii, vii, viii, xi, xxixxxxi and xxxii; *DS*, col. 221: 'Deinde in fratrein et concanonicum ab omnibus canonicis et ab ipso episcopo in osculo sancto suscipiebatur, sicque ecclesie servitio et assiduitati mancipabatur'.

these feasts were observed at Coutances in the eleventh century for they feature in the ‘De statu’.¹⁰⁹

Geoffrey’s most significant contribution to the development of the chapter was the establishment of its hierarchy. From at least 1135, the head of the Coutances chapter was the chanter, but the dean was the senior official during Geoffrey’s episcopate, an office held by Canon John’s father, Peter.¹¹⁰ The functions of the dean and the other officials created by Geoffrey may be inferred from a liturgical treatise attributed to Archbishop Maurilius which appears to contain corrections to the text of John d’Ivry’s *De Officiis*.¹¹¹ According to this treatise, the dean acted in the bishop’s place in respect of matters related to the canons. His function is most clearly expressed in the role prescribed to him by Maurilius as a mediator between the bishop and the clergy.¹¹² The chanter, which is designated ‘cantor’ in the ‘De statu’ but ‘præcentor’ in the ‘Miracula’, was responsible for directing the singing in the choir.¹¹³ The subchanter, the chanter’s deputy, was ‘the holder of the staff to be displayed in the choir’.¹¹⁴ Maurilius did not refer to the master of schools, but the role of a ‘scholasticus’, which was undoubtedly similar, was to assist the chancellor, who was responsible for letter-writing and the preservation of the church’s books, to govern the schools, and to study divine texts.¹¹⁵ By the sixteenth century, the prior of Saint-Lô de Rouen was a member of the

¹⁰⁹ Gosset, ‘Les chanoines du chapitre’, p. 22; *DS*, cols. 221, 222 and 224.

¹¹⁰ Gosset, ‘Les chanoines du chapitre’, p. 33; Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 93.

¹¹¹ For extracts of this treatise, *De Officiis*, pp. xlviii–lix; Richard Allen, ‘A Proud and Headstrong Man’: John of Ivry, Bishop of Avranches and Archbishop of Rouen, 1060–79’, *Historical Research* 83 (2010), pp. 189–227, at p. 202.

¹¹² *De Officiis*, p. liii: ‘inter episcopum mediator et clerum debet precellere’.

¹¹³ *De Officiis*, p. liii: ‘Precentor primicerius in officio psallendi precinit catanda’; *DS*, col. 220; ‘Miracula’, no. xiv. The title ‘cantor’ predominated amongst Theodelinus’ successors, Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 93.

¹¹⁴ *De Officiis*, p. liii: ‘cujus est in choro preferre baculi magisterium’.

¹¹⁵ *De Officiis*, p. liii: ‘Officium est Scholastici vicem supplere cancellarii, scholas regere et archana divina quantum expetit revelare’.

chapter.¹¹⁶ This arrangement probably dates back to the establishment of Augustinian canons at the church of Saint-Lô in 1132, but it may have had a precedent in an arrangement made by Geoffrey when he recalled the canons. It is evident from the bull of Pope Innocent II which authorised the installation of the Augustinian canons that the church was served by a community of canons before 1132.¹¹⁷ Therefore it is possible that the head of this group of canons was represented in the Coutances chapter.

The canons who resided at Saint-Lô de Rouen had been recalled by the time of the cathedral's dedication in 1056. Although, as noted above, the ducal confirmation charter of the church's possessions may have been altered in the twelfth century, there is no reason to doubt this part of it for the changes appear to have been limited to the organisation of its contents and the emphasis placed on the role of the duke in the church's restoration.¹¹⁸ But the establishment of the chapter's hierarchy may not have occurred until after 1066. David Spear has identified the period between 1070 and 1090 as the time of growth in the development of cathedral chapters in Normandy.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, the evidence of the officials at Coutances, which derives principally from the works of Canon John, cannot be dated precisely. In the 'De statu', John implied that his father held the deanship of the church during Geoffrey's episcopate, but in one of the stories in the 'Miracula', Peter is described as a 'secretarius' 'at that time'. This was the title given to the treasurer at Rouen between 1091 and c.1146, but it also referred to the office of 'sacristan' before 1090.¹²⁰ In another of these

¹¹⁶ Gosset, 'Les chanoines du chapitre', p. 37.

¹¹⁷ GC, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238: 'Audivimus enim ibi seculares irregulariter vivere'.

¹¹⁸ See above, pp. 102-3.

¹¹⁹ David Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale Normande. Archidiaques et dignitaires des chapitres' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 81-102, at p. 94.

¹²⁰ DS, col. 220: 'Petrum camerarium [...] vicarium suum et ecclesiae decanum in rectorem præposuit'; 'Miracula', no. i, p. 368: 'vocatoque Petro, tum temporis ecclesiae secretario'; Diana Greenway, 'The False Institutio of St Osmund' in Diana Greenway, Christopher Holdsworth and Jane Sayers (eds.), *Tradition and Change. Essays in Honour of Marjorie Chibnall on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Cambridge,

stories, canon Theodelinus is identified as the chanter.¹²¹ When this evidence is considered in the context of the development of the chapters at the other cathedrals, it is likely that these officials appeared in the period of growth identified by Spear. The position of dean is found at Sées during the 1070s, at Bayeux before 1077, at Lisieux in 1077 or 1078, at Evreux before c.1080, and at Avranches before 1113.¹²² A treasurer existed at Bayeux until 1070, at Lisieux in 1077 or 1078, at Avranches by 1113, at Sées by 1117 and Evreux in 1157.¹²³ A chanter is found at Lisieux and Bayeux by 1077, at Sées by 1092 and at Evreux before 1113.¹²⁴ Therefore since it is likely that these officials did not appear until after 1066, it is possible that Geoffrey's absences in England acted as a catalyst in the development of the chapter's hierarchy.

Conclusion

Although Geoffrey is presented as the founder of the church of Coutances in the 'De statu', once the evidence of his principal reforms is examined, it is clear that the ecclesiastical revival at Coutances began before his episcopate. Whilst Geoffrey's role in the development of the church was undoubtedly crucial, John exaggerated the poor condition of the church before 1048 in order to present Geoffrey as its founder. The restoration of the church began during the episcopate of Bishop Hugh in the late tenth century. It gathered pace during Robert's episcopate but was undermined by the death of Duchess Gunnor and the disorder that followed the deaths of dukes Richard III and Robert.

1985), pp. 77-101, at p. 83; *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources with Supplement*, ed. R. E. Latham (London, 1980), p. 428.

¹²¹ 'Miracula', no. xiv, p. 376: 'Theodelinus canonicus, sacerdos et præcentor ecclesiæ illuc'.

¹²² Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, pp. 275, 34, 172, 136 and 7. The chapter at Rouen, which acquired its hierarchy of officials before 1066, was unusual, Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale Normande', p. 94. Therefore it is less useful in this comparison.

¹²³ Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, pp. 44, 180, 11, 281 and 146.

¹²⁴ Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, pp. 181, 46, 282 and 146.

Chapter 4: The Diocesan Bishop

However after the English war, which occurred nine years afterwards, that is 1066 [years] from the Lord's incarnation, when he was frequently staying in England, he was exerting his soul and love to the augmentation of the church.¹

In the 'De statu', Canon John emphasised Geoffrey's devotion to the church of Coutances, even after 1066 when he was often preoccupied with affairs in England. According to John, Geoffrey's commitment to the church's prosperity and the interest he maintained in his pastoral duties were reflected in the gifts of precious embroideries and ornaments he sent to the canons from England, the rousing admonitions he dispatched to the congregation of the church, and the prayers he composed for use in the schools at Coutances.² Indeed, the scale of Geoffrey's contribution to the restoration of the church suggests that he undertook his diocesan duties conscientiously. This chapter will examine the evidence of Geoffrey's activities as a diocesan bishop besides his efforts to restore the church discussed in the previous chapter. Although the evidence of these activities is slight, an impression of Geoffrey's attitude towards his diocesan duties may be formed from incidental references in the works of Canon John and evidence found in the letters of Archbishop Lanfranc and Pope Alexander II. Several other aspects of his career as a diocesan bishop will also be considered in order to assess Geoffrey's broader impact on ecclesiastical life in the diocese. There is charter evidence, for example, of his role in the development of monasticism. His attitude towards reform ideals and their implementation can also be discerned from a range of sources, including the 'vita' of the monastic reformer Bernard of Tiron, which provides a

¹ *DS*, col. 220: 'Cum autem post Anglicum bellum, quod actum est nono sequenti anno, id est ab Incarnatione Domini M. LXVI, in Anglia pluries moraretur, animus tamen et amor ad ædificationem ecclesiæ desudabat'.

² *DS*, col. 220: 'illic ornamenta pretiosa, et brodaturas, et aurifrisas cum smaragdis et gemmis parabat [...] et inde canonicis suis quandoque pretiosas vestes, et clericales pelliceas, et superpellicia delicata trans mittebat [...] iuvenesque et adolescentes ecclesiæ ut pius pater interdum precibus et admonitionibus satagebat, et præmissis ad scholarum doctrinam et ecclesiæ frequentiam concitare minis et terroribus, ab omnibus segnitie et inhonestate revocare'.

revealing account of the life of the archdeacons at Coutances in the early twelfth century. Furthermore, Geoffrey's patronage of the Virgin Mary's cult and the development of the corporate identity of the cathedral chapter during his episcopate will also be considered, since they formed important elements of his legacy as bishop of Coutances. An assessment of Geoffrey as a diocesan bishop would not be complete without careful consideration of the effects of his absences from Coutances after 1066 on ecclesiastical life. In addition, it is essential to consider the significance of Geoffrey's episcopal office to his lordly identity after 1066. An examination of these aspects of his career will permit an insight into his piety which will make it possible to determine whether the description of him as an 'old-fashioned' bishop is a fair one.

Geoffrey and Diocesan Duties

It is difficult to establish the range of the episcopal duties Geoffrey was expected to carry out because of a lack of evidence. The works of Canon John contain some references to Geoffrey's diocesan activities other than his principal reforms outlined in Chapter 3, but they provide only glimpses of his duties which cannot be dated accurately. The absence of any liturgical books from the cathedral during Geoffrey's episcopate, such as pontificals or benedictionals, also undermines any attempt to build up a picture of Geoffrey as a diocesan bishop. But an impression of the duties performed by Geoffrey may be formed from the evidence of Bishop Gilbert of Limerick's 'De statu ecclesiae', a tract on the organisation of the church written between 1107 and 1111. Although it was intended to be implemented in Ireland, Gilbert's view of the church is relevant in this context because his correspondence with Anselm suggests that he was a Norman and therefore his views were formed in the

cultural milieu in which Geoffrey lived.³ Gilbert expected a bishop to perform the functions of a priest: leading his flock, obeying his archbishop, praying, performing church services, preaching, teaching, baptizing, giving blessings, excommunicating and reconciling, anointing, performing the Mass, commending souls to God, and burying the dead.⁴ In addition, a bishop had seven more duties: confirming, offering episcopal blessings, absolving the population from venial sins on Ash Wednesday and criminal sins on Maundy Thursday, holding synods in the summer and the autumn, dedicating churches and altars, consecrating ecclesiastical utensils, including priestly vestments, and ordaining abbots, abbesses, priests and those entering the remaining orders.⁵

Evidence of some of the duties set out by Gilbert may be found in the canons of Norman church councils. This evidence may be supplemented by the canons of councils held in England after the appointment of Lanfranc as archbishop of Canterbury in 1070. The similarities between the canons of these councils and those of Norman councils between 1072 and 1076 highlights the influence of Norman practice on Lanfranc's approach to ecclesiastical affairs in England.⁶ Furthermore, the compiler of Lanfranc's letter-collection considered the canons of the council of London in 1075 as representative of his subject's world-view, since he included them in the work.⁷ A bishop's right to admit candidates into

³ Gilbert of Limerick, 'Liber de statu ecclesiæ' in *PL* 159, cols. 997-1004. For its date and the context of its production, Barlow, *English Church 1066-1154*, p. 33.

⁴ 'Liber de statu ecclesiæ', col. 1002: 'Et superiores quique gradus possunt inferiorum officia ministrare'; col. 1000: 'Sacerdotum autem sunt quatuordecim officia, præesse, subesse, orare, offerre, prædicare, docere, baptizare, benedicere, excommunicare, reconciliare, ungere, communicare, animas Deo commendare, corpora sepelire'.

⁵ 'Liber de statu ecclesiæ', col. 1002: 'Confirmare ejus est [...] Benedicit ergo pontifex reginam et virginem cum velatur, et quemlibet fidelem benedici postulantem, et totum populum ante pacem [...] Absolvat præsul populum de venialibus in capite jejunii, de criminalibus in Cæna Domini. Tenet quoque synodum bis in anno, in æstate et in autumnio [...] Dedicat etiam pontifex atrium, templum, altare [...] Consecrat autem episcopus utensilia ecclesiæ [...] vestimenta videlicet sacerdotalia [...] Ordinatio episcopus abbatem, abbatissam, sacerdotem, et ceteros sex gradus'.

⁶ Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), p. 142; Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, p. 127.

⁷ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 11. For a letter-collection as a world-view of an author, Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, p. 33.

Orders was upheld in canons pronounced at Windsor in 1070, Rouen and Winchester in 1072, and Rouen in 1074. At Winchester in 1076, bishops were instructed not to ordain priests or deacons unless the candidates had sworn that they did not have wives.⁸ The responsibility of a bishop to dedicate churches is found in a canon of the council of Winchester in 1070 which prohibited the celebration of Mass in churches that had not been consecrated by a bishop.⁹ At the council of Windsor in 1070, it was decreed that bishops ought to hold two synods each year.¹⁰ The duty of a bishop to force monks or nuns who have left their monasteries or have been expelled to return to their houses is highlighted by a canon of the council of Rouen held in 1072. This council also set out the role of bishops in the deposition of clerics and the responsibility of a bishop to ensure that he consecrated chrism and oil with twelve priests 'or more if possible, clad in sacerdotal vestments'.¹¹ The councils of Winchester and Windsor in 1070 and Winchester in 1072 addressed episcopal jurisdiction over criminal sins and the role of bishops in assigning penance.¹² The scope of episcopal jurisdiction in Normandy is set out in the canons of the council convened at Lillebonne in 1080, many of which concern the

⁸ Windsor (1070), *Councils & Synods with other Documents relating to the English Church, Volume I, A.D. 871-1204, Part II 1066-1204*, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), p. 580, c. 5: 'Ut episcopi archidiaconos et ceteros sacri ordinis ministros in ecclesiis suis ordinent'; Rouen (1072), *OV*, ii, pp. 288-89, c. 9: 'Clerici qui non electi nec uocati aut nesciente episcopo sacris ordinibus se subintromittunt'; Winchester (1072), *Councils & Synods*, p. 606, c. 5: 'Ut nemo mittat presbiterum in aeclesia sine auctoritate episcopi qui sibi commendat curam animarum'; Rouen (1074), Bessin, p. 65, c. v: 'Quod Subdiaconi, sive Diaconi, sive sacerdotes parochiani non ordinentur [...] absque legitima professione, quam coram Episcopo, et omnium circumstantium audientia faciant, qui ordinandi fuerint'; Winchester (1076), *Councils & Synods*, p. 619, c. 1: 'Et deinceps caveant episcopi ut sacerdotes vel diacones non presumant ordinare nisi prius profiteantur ut uxores non habeant'.

⁹ *Councils & Synods*, p. 575, c. 8: 'Quod in ecclesiis nisi ab episcopis consecratis misse non celebrentur'.

¹⁰ *Councils & Synods*, p. 580, c. 4: 'Quod episcopi bis concilia celebrant per annum'; cf. c. 13 of the council of Winchester, 1070, which prescribes only one synod, *Councils & Synods*, p. 576: 'Quod quisque episcopus omni anno synodum celebret'. In one manuscript, 'bis' is added after 'anno', which may in fact be the correct version of the text, at n. 4.

¹¹ *OV*, ii, pp. 286-91, c. 11: 'Monachi et sanctimoniales qui relictis suis æcclesiis per orbem uagantur, alii pro nequitia suis a monasteriis expulsi, quos pastoralis auctoritate oportet compellere'; c. 19: 'Si aliquis lapsus dignus depositione repertus fuerit, et ad eum deponendum tot coepiscopos quot auctoritas postulat [...] unusquisque qui adesse non poterit, uicarium suum cum sua auctoritate transmittat'; c. 1: 'Hoc etiam debet episcopus præuidere ut in ipsa consecratione xii sacerdotes sacerdotalibus uestibus indutos uel quamplures secum habeat'.

¹² Winchester (1070), *Councils & Synods*, p. 576, c. 11: 'Quod de criminibus soli episcopi penitentiam tribuant'; Windsor (1070), *Councils & Synods*, p. 581, c. 7: 'Ut episcopi et sacerdotes laicos invitent ad penitentiam'; Winchester (1072), p. 606, c. 8: 'Ut nemo celet episcopo vel ministro episcopi criminale peccatum qui scierit'.

crimes for which bishops were entitled to fines. In particular, the council upheld the right of the bishop to administer the ‘ordeal by hot iron’.¹³ The canons also highlight episcopal control of preaching and the power of excommunication, and the duty of a bishop to ensure the observance of the Truce of God.¹⁴ Episcopal responsibility to call synods was reaffirmed through the council’s reference to the right of the bishop to fines from priests who did not attend. The role of a bishop in admitting candidates to Orders is alluded to in the prohibition of the presentation or deprivation of a priest to a church without the bishop’s consent and the requirement of a bishop to accept a candidate put forward by monks to a church in their possession.¹⁵ This evidence does not provide a complete picture of the duties of a Norman bishop during the second half of the eleventh century. The contrast between the relatively mundane canons of Mauger’s council in *c.*1045 and the detailed canons pronounced at Lillebonne in 1080 suggests that these duties evolved during Geoffrey’s episcopate.¹⁶ Furthermore, practice may have varied in each diocese. It is noteworthy that at Lillebonne two canons allude to variations in the scope of each bishop’s jurisdiction. One canon states that the range of crimes judged by a bishop should be determined by custom, and the final canon allows bishops to claim additional rights if they have proof that they are entitled to them.¹⁷

¹³ For the fines due to bishops, *OV*, iii, pp. 30-35, cs. 13-20, 23-28 and 35; for the ordeal, c. 31: ‘Si ferri iudicium fuerit iudicatum, apud matrem æcclesiam terminetur’.

¹⁴ *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27 and 32-35, c. 33: ‘In parrochia episcopi sine licencia eius, nullus audeat predicare’; c. 20: ‘Si presbiteri preter treuiæ Dei infractores et latrones sine licencia episcopi excommunicauerint similiter’; c. 1: ‘Qui uero seruare contempserint, uel aliquatenus fregerint episcopi secundum quod prius statutum est eos iudicando iusticiam faciant’.

¹⁵ *OV*, iii, pp. 28-33, c. 16: ‘Presbiteri qui ad sinodum uenire neglexerint similiter’; c. 9: ‘Laicus presbiterum non det uel adimat æcclesiae nisi ex consensu præsulis’; c. 12: ‘Quem si recipiendus est episcopus recipiat’.

¹⁶ For the canons of Mauger’s council in *c.*1045, Bessin, pp. 40-42.

¹⁷ *OV*, iii, pp. 32-35, c. 29: ‘Parrochianorum crimina episcopo pertinentia ubi consuetudo fuit episcoporum iudicio examinentur’; c. 38: ‘Si episcopi aliquid quod hic non sit scriptum in regis curia monstrare possunt, se habuisse tempore Rodberti comitis uel Guillelmi regis eius concessione rex eis non tollit quin habeant’.

Canon John provides glimpses of Geoffrey carrying out some of these duties in the ‘De statu’ and ‘Miracula’, but he does not provide accurate dates for these activities. For example, he referred to Geoffrey’s dedication of a local church towards the end of his life.¹⁸ This church may be identified as Saint-Pierre de Marigny for a record of Geoffrey’s role in its dedication has survived within a now lost twelfth-century charter.¹⁹ An incidental reference in one of the stories of the ‘Miracula’ provides evidence of diocesan synods during Geoffrey’s episcopate. A priest of Saint-Pair-sur-Mer, who recognised the healing of a crippled young man in the cathedral as a miracle, had come to Coutances in order to attend a synod.²⁰ The same story alludes to Geoffrey’s role in the ordination of priests, for the healed man remained in the service of the church of Coutances and his son, whom John knew, became a ‘pastor of Bishop Geoffrey’.²¹ Further evidence of Geoffrey’s performance of this duty is found in a letter of Lanfranc to Archbishop John of Rouen in which he refers to the irregular profession of faith and obedience made by the archdeacons of Bayeux and Coutances on their accession to office.²² John also provided evidence of Geoffrey’s participation in the liturgy. In addition to his performance of Nigel II’s funeral, one of the stories in the ‘Miracula’ refers to Geoffrey and the canons singing a celebratory hymn following a miracle.²³

¹⁸ *DS*, col. 222-23: ‘cum quamdam ecclesiam ipso die dedicare deberet, cuius dedicationem ingruentibus causis bis inantea protelaverat, intestino lethiferoque morbo aggravatur, nec ulterius ipsam dedicationem differre voluit, nec ullo modo per se complere valuit, sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit’.

¹⁹ Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, pp. 475-77.

²⁰ ‘Miracula’, no. v, p. 370: ‘presbyter ejusdem villæ Sancti Paterni, qui synodi causa venerat (*erat enim tunc dies synodorum*), ut diligentius aspexit puerum, et eum agnovit ab omni ægritudine liberatum’.

²¹ ‘Miracula’, no. v, p. 370: ‘idem vero Gisbertus in ecclesiæ servitio remansit [...] et filios, nobis videntibus, episcopi Gaufridi pastor extitit’.

²² *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 41, p. 136-37: ‘De fide ab archidiaconis petita et data interrogantibus episcopis Baiocensi et Constantiniensi hoc tantum respondi’.

²³ *DS*, col. 222: ‘Eadem namque nocte Assumptionis celeriter expetitus, ut Nigellum vicecomitem consanguineum suum defunctum sepeliret, summo mane ipsius festivitatis profectus est’; ‘Miracula’, no. xii, p. 375: ‘Illa itaque procedente ad altare, præfatus antistes, qui paverat eam longo tempore, cunctusque clerus, hymnum jubilationis et laudis Domino cecinere’.

Lanfranc's letter collection provides the most illuminating evidence of Geoffrey's activities as a diocesan bishop. As noted above, in a letter written to Archbishop John of Rouen between 1 April 1076 and July 1077, Lanfranc commented on the irregularity of the confessions of faith required by the bishops of Bayeux and Coutances from their archdeacons at the time of their appointment. Since the office of archdeacon was not one of the Orders of the Church, candidates were not ordained, and therefore a profession of faith, which was required from those admitted to Orders, was inappropriate.²⁴ In another letter addressed to the archdeacons of Bayeux, written between 1082 and 9 September 1087, Lanfranc refers to a letter he had received from Geoffrey in which he sought the archbishop's advice over the matter of a priest who had committed murder on an estate of his located in the diocese of Bayeux. According to Lanfranc, Geoffrey asked him at the request of the archdeacons whether the murderer could celebrate Mass ever again.²⁵

These letters suggest that Geoffrey was actively engaged in diocesan affairs in the late 1070s and early 1080s. The irregularity of the archdeacons' confession of faith does not necessarily reflect badly on Geoffrey; even Archbishop John was uncertain about this matter, since Lanfranc's letter is, in part, a response to his enquiries.²⁶ Furthermore, it may be significant that Geoffrey and Odo, both of whom had commitments in England after 1066, were the bishops in question. If the confession of faith included an oath of obedience to the bishop, just as a bishop professed faith and obedience to their metropolitan, it would have been in the interests of Geoffrey and Odo to extract such a profession given their absences from their dioceses.²⁷ Thus, this apparently irregular procedure may actually represent one of

²⁴ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 41, pp. 134-37 and p. 137, n. 6; pp. 136-37: 'De fide ab archidiaconis petita et data [...] nec legisse tale aliquid nec uidisse'.

²⁵ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 51, pp. 162-63: 'Addidit quoque consilium meum super hac re uos uelle habere'.

²⁶ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 41, pp. 136-37: 'me nec legisse tale aliquid nec uidisse'.

²⁷ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 41, p. 137, n. 6 and no. 3, p. 41, n. 5.

the steps taken by Geoffrey to bolster his episcopal authority and compensate for his absences. The second letter highlights Geoffrey's involvement in clerical discipline. It is difficult to know whether the archdeacons sought out Geoffrey at Coutances or wrote to him in England, or whether Geoffrey wrote to Lanfranc from his diocese or one of his English estates. The important point is that Geoffrey was personally involved in the priest's case and that the archdeacons passed their concerns up the ecclesiastical hierarchy to him. Since Lanfranc concluded the letter with an oblique reference to Odo's incarceration, it follows that it was written while the diocese of Bayeux was effectively administered as if 'sede vacante'.²⁸ Therefore the archdeacons' recourse to Geoffrey may suggest that he was responsible for the diocese of Bayeux during Odo's imprisonment.

Further evidence of Geoffrey's participation in diocesan affairs is provided by two letters addressed to Geoffrey in the register of Pope Alexander II. Only fragments of the letters have survived, but it is clear that both concern pastoral care.²⁹ Alexander's first letter was a response to an enquiry submitted by Geoffrey about penance. The surviving text indicates that Geoffrey had sent a man to Rome whose son had died unbaptized in order to have his penance reduced. Geoffrey was successful, as the *Regesta Pontificum* states that the penance was reduced from five years to two.³⁰ In the second letter, Alexander responded to another enquiry regarding the appropriate punishment for those who had been accidentally present at a murder.³¹ In this case, Alexander released these individuals from their

²⁸ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 51, pp. 164-65: 'et de pastore uestro desideratam uobis laeticiam tribuat'.

²⁹ *Regesta Pontificum*, i, nos. 4479 and 4480. No. 4480 was also printed by Migne and Mansi, *PL* 146, no. cxxviii, col. 1408 and Mansi, vol. xix, col. 980. No. 4479 appeared for the first time in a calendar of Alexander II's letters printed by Paul Ewald and subsequently included in the second edition of the *Regesta Pontificum*, Ewald, 'Die Papstbriefe der Brittischen Sammlung', no. 6, p. 330.

³⁰ The fragmentary text provided by Wattenbach *et al* is 'praesentium portitori, qui filium suum sine baptismo in lecto suo nocte iuxta se mortuum repperit'; 'quinquennalis poenitentiae duos annos remisisse', *Regesta Pontificum*, i, no. 4479.

³¹ *PL* 146, no. cxxviii, col. 1408: 'Dicebant se latores praesentium homicidio illi, pro quo poenitentia illis injuncta est, penitus non interfuisse, sed praeliantibus solummodo, casu supervenisse. Quod si ita est,

punishments, a ruling which Ivo of Chartres employed as a precedent in similar cases.³² The principal problem with these letters is the uncertainty over when they were written. Both letters were included in the *Register Pontificum* between correspondence dated 21 May and 11 October 1062 by its editors.³³ Neither letter was dated by Ewald, and Mansi and Migne broadly dated the second letter to Alexander's pontificate.³⁴ It therefore remains to be determined whether the concern Geoffrey expressed over the administration of penance in these letters belonged to the pre or post-Conquest period.

Geoffrey's Absenteeism and Ecclesiastical Life

Canon John refers to Geoffrey's absences from the diocese on three occasions in the 'De statu'. The first reference occurs in his description of Geoffrey's character. Although Geoffrey was frequently entangled with the king's affairs, he remained committed to the development of the church of Coutances.³⁵ A similar reference is found in the description of Geoffrey's asceticism. He often wept at Lent because of his preoccupation with the king's business.³⁶ Finally, John notes that Geoffrey's commitment to the church's prosperity did not waver after 1066 even though he spent a lot of time in England.³⁷ Although the problems associated with charter evidence, which have been discussed in the Introduction, undermine any attempt to establish a detailed itinerary for Geoffrey, it is possible to identify at least two periods between 1066 and 1087 when Geoffrey spent most of his time in England. The first occurred between Christmas 1068, when he subscribed Nigel de Brévands' grant of the

quandoquidem nec in causa homicidii nec in culpa fuerint, misericordia super eos moti, exsilium eis apostolica auctoritate remisimus'.

³² Ivo of Chartres, *Decretum* in *PL* 161, Pars X, c. 30, col. 700.

³³ *Regesta Pontificum*, i, pp. 568-69.

³⁴ Ewald, 'Die Papstbriefe', nos. 6, 7, p. 330; Mansi, xix, col. 980; *PL* 146, no. cxxviii, col. 1408.

³⁵ *DS*, col. 219: 'quanquam sæpissime curialibus negotiis regiisque obsecundationibus irretitus, tamen ad ædificationem et incrementum ecclesiæ suæ omni nisu et voluntate per noctem erat et per diem'.

³⁶ *DS*, col. 222: 'tempore namque Quadragesimali, quocumque erat, sive ad curiam, sive in alia regni occupatione, quam multoties flebat (solebat) segniter irretiri'.

³⁷ *DS*, col. 220: 'Cum autem post Anglicum bellum, quod actum est nono sequenti anno, id est ab Incarnatione Domini M. LXVI, in Anglia pluries moraretur, animus tamen et amor ad ædificationem ecclesiæ desudabat'.

church of Brévands to the priory of Saint-Gabriel at Valognes, and c.1076, when he heard a plea concerning Mont-Saint-Michel's disputed possession of a mill at Vains.³⁸ The second occurred between Geoffrey's attendance at the dedication of the church of Saint-Evroult de Mortain before autumn 1082 and the Conqueror's funeral on 9 September 1087 at Saint-Étienne de Caen.³⁹ A third absence may have occurred between the Mont-Saint-Michel plea in c.1076 and 12 April 1080 when Geoffrey heard a plea between the abbey of La Trinité-du-Mont and Bishop Gilbert of Évreux over the abbey's possession of the island of Oissel in the River Seine.⁴⁰ These periods coincided with his participation in English affairs. In the first period, Geoffrey suppressed the West Saxon rebellion in 1069, presided over pleas at Penenden Heath in autumn 1072 and possibly Kentford in either 1075 or 1076, and assisted in the suppression of the 1075 revolt.⁴¹ During the second period, he was preoccupied with the Ely land pleas and the dispute over the bishop of Worcester's jurisdiction in Oswaldslow.⁴² In the third period, Geoffrey accompanied the king to Maine in either 1077 or 1078 but had returned to England by 14 July 1077.⁴³ Charter evidence does not place him in Normandy again until 1080.⁴⁴

However, Geoffrey's preoccupation with English affairs did not preclude visits to his diocese. Although he was not present at the provincial council held in 1074, he may have attended the councils held in 1078, 1079 and 1080.⁴⁵ Several charters place him in Normandy in 1080, and in Orderic's account of the council of Lillebonne he stated that 'all

³⁸ *Regesta*, no. 256; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 6.

³⁹ *Regesta*, no. 215; *OV*, iv, pp. 104-5.

⁴⁰ *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 6; *Regesta*, no. 235.

⁴¹ *OV*, ii, pp. 228-29; *Regesta*, nos. 69, 118 and 122; *JW*, iii, pp. 24-27.

⁴² *Regesta*, nos. 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 347, 348, 349 and 350.

⁴³ *Regesta*, nos. 174 and 83.

⁴⁴ *Regesta*, nos. 175, 235, 257 and possibly 201, which is dated 27 December 1080 and autumn 1081, at p. 636.

⁴⁵ For 1074, Mansi, xx, col. 398; for 1078, Bessin, p. 66; for 1079, *OV*, iii, pp. 22-23. For a list of the provincial councils, Foreville, 'Synod of the Province of Rouen', p. 22, Table 1.

the bishops' attended.⁴⁶ Moreover, Geoffrey may have returned to Coutances or the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen in order to celebrate certain feasts. Geoffrey was especially devoted to the Virgin. Neither the cathedral's calendar during Geoffrey's episcopate nor the church of Saint-Lô's is extant, but a mid-fifteenth century calendar from Coutances contains the Marian feasts of her Purification (2 February), Assumption (15 August), Nativity (8 September) and Conception (8 December). It also includes the feasts of Saints Lô on 21 September and Romphaire on 18 November.⁴⁷ Although the text is faded, the feasts of the Virgin's Purification and Assumption, as well as the feasts of Saints Lô and Romphaire, may be discerned in a fourteenth-century missal from Saint-Lô de Rouen.⁴⁸ In addition, readings for the feasts of the Virgin's Conception and the feasts of two more local saints, Possessor and Fromond, are contained in an early thirteenth-century lectionary from the church.⁴⁹ Therefore although Geoffrey appears to have spent more time in England after 1066, it is likely that he visited the diocese.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of Geoffrey's absences on ecclesiastical life in the diocese. According to Canon John, Geoffrey sent clothing to the clergy from England and prayers and admonitions to rouse his congregation from inactivity and dishonourable conduct, presumably by letter.⁵⁰ Contact between Geoffrey and his diocese would have been facilitated by the proximity of Geoffrey's estates in south-west England to the Cotentin coastline. There is no evidence of Geoffrey's transcriptions, but since he held the port of

⁴⁶ *OV*, iii, pp. 24-25: 'omnes episcopos'; see above, n. 44.

⁴⁷ Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 350, fols. 183v, 186v, 187r, 188r and 188v.

⁴⁸ Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 94, fols. 3v, 6v, 7r and 8r.

⁴⁹ Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 131, fols. 9r, 219v and 249v.

⁵⁰ *DS*, col. 220: 'precibus et admonitionibus satagebat, et præmissis ad scholarum doctrinam et ecclesiæ frequentiam concitare minis et terroribus, ab omnibus segnitie et inhonestate revocare'. According to Symeon of Durham, William de Saint-Calais was accustomed to send letters to the convent during his absences: William M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 149. However, only one letter has survived, W.M. Aird, 'An Absent Friend: The Career of Bishop William of St Calais' in David Rollason, Margaret Harvey, Michael Prestwich (eds.), *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193* (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 283-97, at p. 293.

Bristol, and Henry I used Barfleur when he returned to Normandy, it would not have been difficult to return to Coutances.⁵¹ Furthermore, Geoffrey also held two estates at ‘Wintreburne’ in Dorset, which may be identified as Winterborne Clenston, near the canons’ estate at Winterborne Stickland. These estates were close to the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight, from which Geoffrey may have crossed to Barfleur.⁵² Lanfranc’s letter collection points to the existence of a cross-channel communication network after 1066. It is clear from a reference to a letter Lanfranc had received from Geoffrey prior to the period between 1082 and 9 September 1087 that he used this network.⁵³ Since most letters in this period were dictated to a scribe, it is possible that Geoffrey’s chaplain, Turgil, who attested the royal confirmation of Lessay’s foundation and possessions on 14 July 1080, fulfilled this function.⁵⁴

However, despite this evidence, Geoffrey’s absences inevitably created practical problems. The canons of the provincial council held at Rouen in 1072 provide an insight into the some of these issues. The second canon prohibited an ‘abominable custom’ which had appeared in unspecified provinces: some archdeacons ‘in the absence of their own bishop’ were acquiring small amounts of oil and chrism from another bishop and mixing them with their own.⁵⁵ Canon nine ordered the deposition of clerics who had forced themselves into

⁵¹ For Henry I’s use of Barfleur in 1105, see *OV*, vi, pp. 60-61: ‘in ultima quadragesimæ septimana portum qui Barbaflot dicitur applicuit’; in 1120, *RRAN*, ii, no. 1233. Barfleur was also where the White Ship sank in 1120, *OV*, vi, pp. 294-307. For the port, Judith A. Green, *Henry I. King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 165.

⁵² DB Dorset, 5.1 and 5.2 (*Domesday*, f. 77r, p. 203); for its identification, E-DB Dorset, ‘Notes, version 1a’, 5.1. For the grant of Winterborne Stickland to the canons, Fontanel, no. 278. For the Anglo-Norman kings use of Southampton and Portsmouth, John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 166-67 and 175-76.

⁵³ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 51, pp. 162-65, at pp. 162-63: ‘Indicauit michi litteris suis Constantiensis episcopus’.

⁵⁴ Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, pp. 42-43; *Regesta*, no. 175 (Version II), p. 584: ‘Turgillo capellano episcopi Constantiensis’. An unidentified chaplain also assisted Geoffrey at the dedication ceremony after he had been taken ill, *DS*, col. 223: ‘sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit’.

⁵⁵ *OV*, ii, pp. 286-87, c. 2: ‘mos detestabilis inoleuit quod quidam archidiaconi pastore carentes ab aliquo episcopo particulas olei et crismatis accipiunt, et ita oleo suo commiscent’.

Orders ‘without the bishop’s knowledge’.⁵⁶ The remaining canons address irregularities which may be partly attributed to episcopal absenteeism. For example, canon six prohibited priests from keeping the viaticum and holy water beyond the eighth day or re-consecrating the consecrated host.⁵⁷ These canons highlight the practical problems caused by episcopal absenteeism and its impact on a bishop’s authority as the supervisor of clerical behaviour. Since the bishop was at the centre of liturgical life in his diocese, only he could consecrate the chrism used in rites such as baptism.⁵⁸ Ordination was one of the rites that could only be performed by a bishop. Therefore the admission of candidates into Orders without the bishop’s knowledge directly undermined his episcopal authority.⁵⁹ This evidence, and the decline in the standards of pastoral care suggested by canon six, may be attributed to bishops’ neglect of their duty to inspect the clergy and the standard of ecclesiastical life during a visitation of their diocese.⁶⁰

However, there is evidence to suggest that the Norman Church was already adjusting to the reality of absentee bishops in 1072. The solution proposed by the council to the problem of archdeacons who mix another bishop’s oil and chrism with their own was to have all of the archdeacons’ oil consecrated by this bishop.⁶¹ In addition, the supervisory role of archdeacons over priests, deacons and subdeacons is also emphasised in one of the canons.⁶² The canons of the council of Lillebonne held in 1080 contain references to bishops’ ‘officers’

⁵⁶ *OV*, ii, pp. 288-89, c. 9: ‘Clerici qui non electi nec uocati aut nesciente episcopo sacris ordinibus se subintromittunt [...] hi digni sunt depositione’.

⁵⁷ *OV*, ii, pp. 286-87, c. 6: ‘Sunt quidam qui uaticum et aquam benedictam ultra octauum diem reseruant quod et dampnatum est. Alii uero non habentes hostias, consecratas iterum consecrant quod terribiliter interdictum est’.

⁵⁸ Maureen C. Miller, *The Formation of a Medieval Church. Ecclesiastical Change in Verona, 950-1150* (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 156-57.

⁵⁹ *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, iii, p. 56.

⁶⁰ For the role of visitations, Leonie Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 11.

⁶¹ *OV*, ii, pp. 286-87, c. 2: ‘Sed unusquisque archidiaconus chrisma et oleum suum totum episcopo a quo consecrabitur ut proprio episcopo præsenteret’.

⁶² *OV*, ii, pp. 290-91, c. 14: ‘Archidiaconi qui eos regere debent’.

as well as archdeacons who collected the fines due to bishops and exploited episcopal rights in their name.⁶³

Indeed, Geoffrey's absenteeism may have stimulated the development of the chapter's hierarchy and the archidiaconal system in the diocese. In order to mitigate the effects of his absences, Geoffrey appointed Peter, the father of Canon John, as his 'alter ego' in the diocese, to watch over the Divine Office, education, building work, and the management of the church's properties and laws wherever Geoffrey resided.⁶⁴ Although John stated that Peter acted in this capacity when Geoffrey was in Apulia, it is possible that he did not acquire these responsibilities until after 1066. As noted above, Peter is identified as the dean of the chapter in both the 'De statu' and the 'Miracula', but in one of the stories in the 'Miracula' he is described as 'secretarius' of the church 'at that time', which may be translated as either 'treasurer' or 'sacristan'.⁶⁵ The miracle cannot be dated, but Canon John's use of the phrase 'at that time' implies that he relinquished the office at some point. Therefore if Peter did not hold the deanship on Geoffrey's return to Coutances from southern Italy, it is unlikely that he acted as his deputy at this time.

Diocesan administration would have been undertaken by Geoffrey's archdeacons who monitored the condition of the diocese as the 'eye of the bishop'.⁶⁶ The principal duties of an archdeacon are set out in a liturgical text attributed to Archbishop Maurilius of Rouen

⁶³ For episcopal officers, see *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27, c. 3: 'ministros episcopi' and c. 5, pp. 28-29: 'ab episcopis uel ab eorum ministris'; for archdeacons, pp. 28-29, c. 6: 'Archidiaconi per archidiaconatus suos semel in anno presbiterorum suffraganeorum suorum uestimenta et calices et libros uideant'. The context of c. 5, cited above, implies that episcopal officers collected the fines due to bishops. For the range of fines, see cs. 13-20, 23-28 and 35, pp. 30-35.

⁶⁴ *DS*, col. 220: 'quidquid habuit eius dominatui subjugavit. Hic igitur ubique psalter, aut in Normannia, aut in Apulia, vel in Anglia, educationi, et operibus, et procurationi rerum et legum invigilabat'.

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 112-13; for Peter as dean, *DS*, col. 220; 'Miracula', no. vi, p. 371. For Peter as 'secretarius', 'Miracula', no. i, p. 368: 'tum temporis ecclesiæ secretario'.

⁶⁶ A. Hamilton Thompson, 'Diocesan Organization in the Middle Ages. Archdeacons and Rural Deans', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 29 (1943), pp. 153-94, at pp. 157-58.

which contained corrections to John d'Ivry's *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*. They included the supervision of deacons and subdeacons, the examination of candidates for Orders, and the collection of ordinary income.⁶⁷ Although there is no evidence of the existence of the office in the diocese before 14 July 1080, when Norman the archdeacon attested a confirmation charter for the abbey of Lessay, archdeacons were probably active at Coutances before 1066.⁶⁸ David Spear has argued that the office evolved gradually during the eleventh century.⁶⁹ In c.1045, at the council of Rouen, the office's existence was assumed, since it was decreed that no archdeacon might overthrow another. There is also evidence of the office in the neighbouring diocese of Avranches in 1061, when John d'Ivry made Abbot Ranulf of Mont-Saint-Michel an archdeacon with jurisdiction over minor cases.⁷⁰ However, a settled archidiaconal system in which each archdeacon was associated with a specific territory may not have developed until c.1080.⁷¹ Richard Allen has argued that this process occurred during John d'Ivry's archiepiscopate when the prominence of archdeacons in diocesan administration was recognised at the council of Rouen in 1072.⁷² Spear's argument is supported by the evidence from Coutances. An archdeacon called Ralph de Saint-Lô is identified in a plea presided over by Geoffrey concerning a prebend of Saint-Georges de Bohun between 27 December and autumn 1081.⁷³ This evidence, together with the appearance of at least two more archdeacons towards the end of Geoffrey's episcopate, suggests that Geoffrey's absences may have acted as a catalyst in the development of

⁶⁷ For this manuscript, see *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, pp. xlviii-lix; Allen, 'John of Ivry', p. 202. For an archdeacon's duties, pp. liii-liv: 'Archidiaconus [...] levitis preest et subdiaconibus [...] ordinandorum examinatio [...] communem quoque pecuniam colligere'; Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale normande', p. 87.

⁶⁸ *Regesta*, no. 175 (Version I), p. 583: 'Normanni archidiaconi'. David Spear identified Richard the archdeacon as a signer of this charter, at Spear, *Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 96. He is probably the signer identified as 'R.' immediately after Norman's, where the manuscript is corrupt, at p. 583 and n. p at p. 584.

⁶⁹ David Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale normande. Archidiacones et dignitaires des chapitres' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 81-102.

⁷⁰ Bessin, p. 42, c. 11: 'Ut nullus Archidiaconus alterius Archidiaconatum supplantare præsumat'; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, Appendix II, no. 5; Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale normande', p. 88.

⁷¹ Spear, 'L'administration épiscopale normande', p. 93.

⁷² Allen, 'John of Ivry', pp. 207-9. For example, *OV*, ii, pp. 290-91, c. 14: 'Archidiaconi qui eos regere debent'. This settled system was introduced to England after 1066, Barlow, *English Church 1066-1154*, pp. 48-49.

⁷³ *Regesta*, no. 201.

territorial archdeaconries in the diocese.⁷⁴ The importance of the office in the administration of the diocese by Geoffrey's death in 1093 may be suggested by the background of his successor. According to Toustain de Billy, who cited an 'old manuscript', Ralph had been the first archdeacon of Coutances before his promotion as bishop. He may be identified as Ralph of Saint-Lô in the charter cited above.⁷⁵

Geoffrey and the Cathedral Chapter

Geoffrey's post-Conquest career had a profound effect on the development of the chapter because as a result of his enrichment in England the canons received their first communal possession, Winterborne Stickland in Dorset. The date of the grant is unknown. According to the royal charter confirming the grant and the 'De statu', it took place on the day the cross was raised. The charter has survived as two nineteenth-century copies made by Gerville and Léopold Delisle. Gerville did not include a date in his copy, but Léopold Delisle dated the grant to *c.*1070.⁷⁶ Geoffrey granted the manor 'in perpetuity for the common provisions of the canons'.⁷⁷ There is evidence of the chapter's growing awareness of its corporate identity after 1066. In addition to the existence of the 'De statu' and 'Miracula', which reflect the canons' perception of their place in the church's history and their role in ecclesiastical life at Coutances, the canons collectively signed the royal confirmation charter of the abbey of Lessay's foundation and possessions. The date of their subscription cannot be established precisely because the attestations were collected over time. However, since Geoffrey is the only bishop of Coutances who signed the charter, and at least one archdeacon from the

⁷⁴ For Norman and possibly Richard, see above n. 68; for Geoffrey the archdeacon, see the record of the dedication of Saint-Pierre de Marigny, Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77.

⁷⁵ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 148: 'un ancien manuscrit'.

⁷⁶ *DS*, col. 221: 'Eo si quidem die quo crucifixum quem magistrante Lamberto multo sumtu fecerat, festine levavit, dedit canonicis in commune quoddam manerium nomine Wiltrebornam'; Fontanel, no. 278, p. 418: 'Eo die quo Gaufridus Constanciensis episcopus crucifixum ecclesie sancte Marie [bene]dixit'; Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. nov. acq. lat. 1018, fol. 9r.

⁷⁷ Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. nov. acq. lat. 1018, fol. 9r: 'in perpetuum communi canonicorum victui'; Fontanel, no. 278.

diocese also signed it, it is possible that it was made on 14 July 1080.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the strength of their institutional identity may be reflected in the election of Ralph as Geoffrey's successor. However, since the chapter was unable to elect its own candidate as successor to Richard de Brix in 1131, it is doubtful whether the canons exercised this right in 1093.⁷⁹

But this evidence should not be interpreted as indications of the chapter's growing independence 'vis-à-vis' the bishop after 1066. As Everett Crosby has pointed out in the context of twelfth-century England, independence, in the sense of the chapter's jurisdiction over their possessions, represented a separate stage in the evolution of a chapter which followed the separation of the canons' possessions from the bishop's.⁸⁰ At Coutances, this division was not confirmed until 1146, when the chapter's possessions and rights were set out in a bull issued by Pope Eugenius III.⁸¹ The first chapter meeting occurred at the end of the twelfth century, but its rights 'vis-à-vis' the bishop were not delimited until the episcopate of Jean d'Essey when disputes between the two parties were settled in 1256 and 1263.⁸² There is no evidence of the conflict that often characterised a chapter's struggle for independence from a bishop during Geoffrey's episcopate.⁸³ In fact, the reverence for Geoffrey's memory reflected in the works of Canon John suggests that a harmonious relationship probably existed between Geoffrey and the chapter. This relationship would have been fostered by

⁷⁸ *Regesta*, no. 175 (Versions I and II). For the problems of dating the attestations, see pp. 579-80. Norman the archdeacon and probably Richard also signed the charter; see above, n. 68.

⁷⁹ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 148; Fontanel, p. 72. For the election of a bishop as a step towards the independence of a chapter in England, see Everett U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 380-83.

⁸⁰ Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, p. 20.

⁸¹ Fontanel, no. 348; Bernard Jacqueline, 'Le chapitre de la cathédrale de Coutances en 1146', *RdM* 6 (1964), pp. 201-6.

⁸² Fontanel, p. 71; Fontanel, nos. 344 and 342.

⁸³ At Coutances, this conflict was seen during the episcopate of Jean d'Essey (1251-1274) in particular, Fontanel, p. 74.

Geoffrey's employment of the canons, such as Peter the chamberlain, in his own household.⁸⁴ It may be argued that the appearance of individual prebends in the ducal confirmation charter of the cathedral's possessions in 1056 reflects the chapter's growing independence. John implied in the 'De statu' that Duke Richard I had established prebends for the canons.⁸⁵ However, as Fontanel has suggested, it is likely that this act was modified in the twelfth century so that it resembled the pontifical privileges received by the chapter.⁸⁶ According to Crosby, the division of communal lands into individual prebends followed the establishment of the chapter's 'mensa'. Therefore it is unlikely that each canon held their own prebend at Coutances before the grant of Winterborne Stickland, which marked an important moment in the formation of the chapter's communal identity.⁸⁷ It is more likely that the income from prebends was divided equally between the canons, as prescribed in the Rule of Chrodegang.⁸⁸

Geoffrey's Piety and the Virgin Mary

The intensity of Geoffrey's piety is difficult to gauge. The 'De statu' presents Geoffrey as a devoted diocesan bishop whose attention to his church remained constant even when he was distracted by the king's affairs in England. Canon John also included a detailed description of Geoffrey's ascetic practices. According to John, Geoffrey endured great suffering which accompanied his labours:

[D]uring Lent, wherever he was, either at court, or in another occupation of the king, he cried many times since he was accustomed to be sluggishly preoccupied in this

⁸⁴ This was not uncommon, as noted by Martin Brett in relation to early twelfth-century England at *The English Church under Henry I* (Oxford, 1975), p. 173.

⁸⁵ Fourteen prebends are set out in the ducal charter; this number corresponds to the size of the chapter created by Geoffrey, Fontanel, no. 340. *DS*, col. 218: 'In diebus illis Blainvilla, et Cruciatum, et terra de Sola cum silva non modica suerant præbendæ canonicorum, quod etiam chartula Richardi marchionis et Hugonis episcopi testatur usque hodie'.

⁸⁶ Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse', pp. 195-96 and 204.

⁸⁷ Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, p. 25. David Bates thought that individual prebends were rare before 1066, at *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 216.

⁸⁸ Gosset, 'Les chanoines du chapitre', pp. 31-32.

way, and every day before daybreak having heard Matins and the vigils of the dead, he sang the Mass and the whole of the psalter with many prayers.⁸⁹

Furthermore, at Lent, Geoffrey was accustomed to live on bread and water for three days each week. In addition, he observed three fasts of forty days each year and survived on only bread, water and raw herbs on Wednesdays and Fridays during two of these periods and on Fridays during the third.⁹⁰ John also depicted Geoffrey composing prayers, which he sent to the schools at Coutances.⁹¹ He made frequent references to Geoffrey's alms-giving, and on the eve of his death, John described how Geoffrey humbly made a public confession of his sins and vicariously washed the feet of three poor people each day.⁹² Some of this information may accurately reflect Geoffrey's practices, but John may have employed 'topoi' in order to depict Geoffrey as an ideal bishop who balanced the contemplative and active lives. The inclusion of 'topoi' does not mean that Geoffrey was not devout or he did not provide alms. John's canonical audience would have interpreted their meaning loosely as general references to Geoffrey's way of life.⁹³

However, the evidence of Geoffrey's promotion of the Virgin's cult at Coutances suggests that he had an unusually strong devotion to her when the popularity of her cult in Normandy had not yet reached its high point. The existence of the 'Miracula', which

⁸⁹ *DS*, col. 222: 'tempore namque Quadragesimali, quocumque erat, sive ad curiam, sive in alia regni occupatione, quam multoties flebat (solebat) segniter irretiri, quotidieque in antedialibus matutinis et vigiliis defunctorum auditis, ipse missam totumque psalterium cum orationibus multis decantabat'.

⁹⁰ *DS*, col. 222: 'His quoque diebus, tribus in hebdomada diebus abstinebat in pane et in aqua, tresque Quadragesimas in anno faciebat, quarta scilicet et sexta feria duarum et reliqui temporis feria sexta in pane et aqua, et crudis tantum herbis'.

⁹¹ *DS*, col. 220: 'iuvenesque et adolescentes ecclesiae ut pius pater interdum precibus et admonitionibus satagebat, et praemissis ad scholarum doctrinam'.

⁹² *DS*, col. 223: 'ibi publicam confessionem peccaminum suorum faciens [...] et quotidie coram se quod per seipsum facere non poterat, per manum sui capellani tribus pauperibus pedes abluens'. For further references to Geoffrey's provision of alms, *DS*, col. 223, where he made satisfaction in part 'by alms': 'eleemosynae' and col. 222: 'pauperesque large reficiebat'. Two stories in the 'Miracula' refer to two people who were supported by Geoffrey's alms, no. xi, p. 374: 'eleemosina sua paverat et vestierat' and no. xii, p. 375: 'necessaria vitae ministravit'.

⁹³ For the value of 'topoi', see Mary Garrison, 'The Study of Emotions in Early Medieval History: Some Starting Points', *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), pp. 243-50, at pp. 245-46.

Geoffrey commissioned, is testament to the strength of his devotion for it is one of the earliest extant collections of Marian miracles in Europe.⁹⁴ It is clearer in Geoffrey's promotion of the feast of the Virgin's Conception. Fournée suggested that Geoffrey introduced the feast at Coutances from England after 1066, but it is likely that it was celebrated at Coutances as early as 1056. According to the duke's confirmation of the cathedral's possessions, the Romanesque cathedral was dedicated on 8 December, the day of the feast.⁹⁵ Whilst it is not recognised as the feast of the Conception in either the 'De statu' or the charter, it cannot be a coincidence that Geoffrey chose this date for the ceremony, for it carried great symbolic significance as the moment when episcopal power was restored in the diocese. By pushing back the date of the introduction of the feast at Coutances, Geoffrey is placed at the vanguard of the cult's development in Normandy. Other than the date of the cathedral's dedication, there is no evidence of its celebration in the duchy until the twelfth century.⁹⁶ It is not amongst the Marian feasts included in a list of saints' feasts celebrated in Normandy by John d'Ivry, archbishop of Rouen, in his *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, and its omission from Lanfranc's monastic constitutions suggests that it was not universally recognised in pre-Conquest Normandy.⁹⁷ But the feast became closely associated with the Normans in the Middle Ages, and it seems from the evidence of the Virgin's cult at Coutances that Geoffrey may have been responsible for introducing it into the duchy. If so, he may have learnt about the feast from the Normans in southern Italy, for it has been

⁹⁴ 'Miracula', p. 367: 'predictus episcopus [...] constituit ut virtutum miracula [...] veraci et competenti calamo conscriberentur'; *Stella Maris*, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁵ Fournée, *La spiritualité en Normandie*, p. 40; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'die dedicationis que acta est .VI. idus decenbris'; the 'De statu' provides the year, at col. 220: 'anno Incarnationis Dominicæ M. LVI, indictione X'.

⁹⁶ Fournée, 'L'abbaye de Fécamp', p. 164.

⁹⁷ These were the Assumption, Nativity, Purification and Annunciation, *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, pp. 24-25, 46-48 and cxl-cxli. For the introduction of the feast of the Conception into England in c.1030, Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 42. For the Marian feasts included in Lanfranc's *Constitutions*, see *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. David Knowles and Christopher N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 2002), pp. 82-83 (Assumption) and pp. 88-89 (Purification, Annunciation and Nativity).

suggested that the feast was introduced into Anglo-Saxon England by Greek monks from southern Italy.⁹⁸

Geoffrey and Reform

Geoffrey's correspondence with Alexander II highlights his recognition of papal supremacy in spiritual affairs. According to the 'De statu', Geoffrey had also sought direction from the papacy in the matter of the delinquent canons of Coutances who were serving the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen. Geoffrey recalled them 'by the apostolic authority of the mother church', which may be a reference to papal support for his actions.⁹⁹ Geoffrey's deference to the pope in these matters would not have been controversial, for William the Conqueror accepted papal intervention in spiritual affairs as long as papal authority did not impinge on his own.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the presence of the papal legate Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion at the council of Lisieux in 1054 or 1055 and in England in 1070 highlights the king's sympathy for reform and his willingness to work with the papacy in putting these ideals into practice.¹⁰¹

Geoffrey's attitude towards reform ideals may be described as pragmatic. Geoffrey's alleged reaction to his discovery of the simoniacal nature of his promotion to the episcopate suggests that he rejected simony as early as 1049. According to Anselm de Saint-Remy, who provides an eye-witness account of the council of Reims, Geoffrey claimed that he had tried to flee once he had discovered that his brother had purchased the see for him, but he was

⁹⁸ Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 44; Fournée, *La spiritualité en Normandie*, p. 40.

⁹⁹ *DS*, col. 220: 'apostolica auctoritate ecclesiæ matri'; see above, p. 109. Since the position of these canons had been reformed by 1056, Geoffrey must have obtained the authorization of Leo IX at Reims in 1049 or during his sojourn in Italy after the council.

¹⁰⁰ Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 202; see, for example, Robert de Grandmesnil's attempt to regain the abbacy of Saint-Evroult: *OV*, ii, pp. 94-95.

¹⁰¹ H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion and the Penitential Ordinance following the Battle of Hastings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1969), pp. 225-42, at pp. 227-31.

violently taken captive and forced to accept the bishopric against his will.¹⁰² Furthermore, Canon John stated in the 'De statu' that Geoffrey refused to sell positions in the church of Coutances or its prebends to the local laity.¹⁰³ However, the evidence of canonical life at Coutances suggests that Geoffrey did not enforce chastity on the canons or, if he did, he was unsuccessful.¹⁰⁴ The 'De statu' and the 'Miracula' provide evidence of an ecclesiastical dynasty within the chapter. Peter the Chamberlain had two sons: John and Richard the archdeacon, whom John identifies as his brother. John also had an uncle, Walter, whom he describes as priest and canon in the same source.¹⁰⁵ This picture is confirmed by the life of Bernard of Tiron. At Pentecost in c.1101, Bernard preached against clerical marriage in Coutances cathedral.¹⁰⁶ According to Bernard's 'Vita', it was customary in Normandy at this time for priests to marry and pass on their churches to their children. At Coutances, Bernard was confronted by an archdeacon 'who had a wife and children, with a large number of priests and clerics' over his right to preach, since monks were dead to the world.¹⁰⁷

It is tempting to attribute this slackness in canonical life to Geoffrey's negligence. In the absence of strong episcopal leadership after 1066, the canons lacked discipline. However, the situation at Coutances which Bernard of Tiron faced in c.1101 was not unusual. Indeed,

¹⁰² 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 248-49: 'Quod cum rescisset, ne contra fas ordinationem illam susciperet, voluisse aufugere: sed ab eodem violenter captum, episcopali contra voluntatem suam esse dignitate donatum'.

¹⁰³ *DS*, cols. 220-21: 'Plures enim curialium multoties per se et potentes dominos suos eum rogaverunt ut eis in ecclesia Constantiensi præbendam vel honorem præberet aliquem, quod ille statim prædicta obiecta [...] negavit'.

¹⁰⁴ The laxity of the bishops in enforcing clerical celibacy was noted at the council of Lillebonne in 1080, *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27, c. 3: 'sed quia episcopi eo tempore minus quam conuenisset inde fecerant'.

¹⁰⁵ 'Miracula', no. xxviii, p. 381: 'Richardis fratris mei archidiaconi'; no. xxii, p. 379: 'Patruus meus Galterus, sacerdos et canonicus'.

¹⁰⁶ Geoffrey the Fat, 'Vita Beati Bernardi' in *PL* 172, cols. 1363-1446, at cols. 1397-99. For the date of this preaching tour: Geoffrey Grossus, *The Life of Blessed Bernard of Tiron*, trans. Ruth Harwood Cline (Washington D.C., 2009), p. xxx. However, Kathleen Thompson placed the preaching tour after Bernard had defended his election as abbot of Saint-Cyprian at Rome: Kathleen Thompson, 'The Other Saint Bernard: The 'Troubled and Varied Career' of Bernard of Abbeville, Abbot of Tiron', *JEH* 60 (2009), pp. 657-72, at pp. 666-67. Cline argues that Bernard made two trips to Rome in c.1102, after he had preached in western Normandy: *Life of Blessed Bernard*, p. xxx.

¹⁰⁷ 'Vita Beati Bernardi', col. 1398: 'quidam archidiaconus uxorem habens et filios, cum magno presbyterorum atque clericorum'.

it reflects the persistence of an entrenched custom which the Norman Church was forced to condemn at councils held in 1064, 1072 and 1080.¹⁰⁸ Some idea of the unpopularity of the attempts to curtail the practice can be gleaned from Orderic's account of the council of Rouen in 1072, when Archbishop John was stoned out of the meeting when he addressed the issue.¹⁰⁹ Therefore Geoffrey's failure to ensure the chastity of the clergy in his diocese should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of his indifference towards reform ideals. It is a reflection of how embedded the custom had become. It is even possible that Geoffrey accepted clerical marriage out of a wider concern for the spiritual welfare of the people of his diocese as Lanfranc did in England. Lanfranc's concession to married priests at the council of Winchester in 1076, which allowed them to keep their wives, has been interpreted as an unwillingness to disrupt the provision of pastoral care at parish level.¹¹⁰ There is no evidence to suggest that Geoffrey was guilty of concubinage. Therefore Geoffrey's attitude towards reform reflected the condition of the Norman Church in the period, which has been described as 'conservative but reforming'.¹¹¹ He had sympathy for its ideals, but adopted a pragmatic approach towards its implementation.

Geoffrey and Monasticism

Although, unlike Odo of Bayeux, Geoffrey did not establish an abbey himself, he encouraged the development of monasticism in his diocese.¹¹² It was not until his episcopate that the

¹⁰⁸ Lisieux (1064), Delisle, 'Canons du Concile', p. 517, c. 2: 'nullus abinde uxorem vel concubinam seu introductam mulierem duceret'; c. 3: 'Est etiam decretum ibidem ut nullus canonicorum a clero in antea uxorem acciperet'; Rouen (1072), *OV*, ii, pp. 290-91, c. 14: 'De sacerdotibus et leuitis et subdiaconibus qui feminas sibi usurpauerunt, concilium Luxouiense obseruetur'; Lillebonne (1080), *OV*, iii, pp. 26-27, c. 3: 'Presbyteri, diaconi, subdiaconi, et omnes canonici et decani nullam omnino feminam habeant'. According to Mansi, citing an anonymous manuscript from the 'archivi Rotomagensis', the council of Rouen in 1063 addressed the 'preservation of chastity' ('de castitate conservando'), Mansi, xix, col. 1027.

¹⁰⁹ *OV*, ii, pp. 200-1: 'a quibus dum in sinodo concubinas eis sub anathemate prohiberet lapidibus percussus aufugit'.

¹¹⁰ Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, pp. 127-28.

¹¹¹ Cowdrey, 'Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion', p. 237.

¹¹² Faucon, *Essai historique sur le prieuré de Saint-Vigor-le-Grand* (Bayeux, 1861), pp. 65-68.

monastic revival led by William of Volpiano and his followers permeated the borders of the diocese. The first Benedictine abbey established in the diocese was Lessay, which was founded in 1056 by Turstin Haldup and his family.¹¹³ Following the Conquest, Hugh, vicomte of Avranches founded Saint-Sever before 1070, and Montebourg was established between 1066 and 1087.¹¹⁴ Several communities of secular canons were replaced by monastic convents during Geoffrey's episcopate. The community of canons at Saint-Georges de Bohun was granted to Marmoutier between 1068 and 1077/78 or 1080, and as each canon died, he would be replaced by a monk.¹¹⁵ The canons at Saint-Fromond were replaced by monks from Cerisy between 1066 and 1083.¹¹⁶ Finally, the canons at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte were replaced by monks from Jumièges between 1080/1 and 1085.¹¹⁷ In addition, there was a community of secular canons at the abbey of Sainte-Croix at Saint-Lô, and another community was established at Cherbourg between 1063 and 1066.¹¹⁸ There were also canons serving the church at Néhou before 1110, but the exact date of their installation is unknown.¹¹⁹

Geoffrey was directly involved in the foundation of Lessay and the replacement of the canons at Saint-Fromond with monks from Cerisy. According to King William's confirmation of Lessay's possessions, the abbey was established by Turstin Haldup, his wife,

¹¹³ *Regesta*, no. 175. The date of its foundation derives from the abbey's cartulary, Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 188.

¹¹⁴ Lucien Musset, 'Les origines et le patrimoine de l'Abbaye de Saint-Sever' in *La normandie bénédictine au temps de Guillaume le Conquérant (XI^e siècle)*, ed. Gabriel-Ursin Langré (Lille, 1967), pp. 357-67, at p. 360; Gazeau, *Normannia monastica*, ii, p. 191, n. 1; Pierre Godrey, 'Légende et histoire à l'abbaye de Montebourg' in *La normandie bénédictine*, pp. 369-73.

¹¹⁵ *Regesta*, no. 199, p. 633: 'cum canonicus morietur, in loco eius restituetur sacerdos monachus'.

¹¹⁶ *Regesta*, no. 92.

¹¹⁷ *Regesta*, no. 260.

¹¹⁸ For the canons at Sainte-Croix, see below, pp. 166-68; Fauroux, no. 224.

¹¹⁹ Lucien Musset, 'Recherches sur les communautés de clercs séculiers en Normandie au XI^e siècle', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 55 (1959-60), pp. 5-38, at pp. 30-31; *GC*, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238.

Anna, and their son, Eudo au Chapel, ‘with the counsel of Geoffrey bishop of Coutances’.¹²⁰ The substance of Geoffrey’s advice is not specified, but in light of his correspondence with Lanfranc, and the possibility that he may have been in Italy with Lanfranc when he was prior of Bec in 1050, Geoffrey may have suggested colonising the abbey with monks from Bec.¹²¹ Geoffrey’s influence may also be evident in the abbey’s dual dedication to Sainte-Trinité and Notre-Dame, since he was particularly devoted to the cult of the Virgin.¹²² William du Hommet’s grant of Saint-Fromond to Cerisy was also made with Geoffrey’s advice, as well as the counsel of other religious men and the grantee’s barons. The nature of his contribution is also unspecified, but it is possible that he advocated the replacement of the canons whose ‘neglect’ had ruined the church by monks.¹²³ Given this evidence, it is surprising to find that he is not recorded as contributing to the decision of his relative, Nigel II the vicomte, to introduce monks at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte.¹²⁴

Geoffrey’s sponsorship of monasticism is also reflected in the grants of episcopal customs he made to Lessay, Saint-Étienne de Caen and the priory of Saint-Gabriel. Episcopal customs are rarely defined in the extant charters.¹²⁵ However, an unusually detailed record of William de la Ferté-Macé’s gifts to Saint-Julien de Tours in 1053 sets out some of the customs he held with the church of Notre-Dame de Bellou-en-Houlme. These customs, which included the altar and all of its dues, suggest that episcopal customs derived

¹²⁰ *Regesta*, no. 175: ‘Gausfridi consilio Constantiensis episcopi’.

¹²¹ Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, pp. 38-40; also, see above, pp. 120-21. Lessay’s first three abbots (Roger I, Geoffrey and Garin) were formerly monks of Bec, Gazeau, *Normannia monastica*, ii, pp. 171-73.

¹²² *Regesta*, no. 175, p. 581: ‘in honore summe et individue Trinitatis et Sancte Mariae virginis’; Montebourg was also dedicated to the Virgin.

¹²³ *Regesta*, no. 92, p. 362: ‘per negligentiam clericorum adnichilari fretus, consilio Gaufridi Constantiensis episcopi ac religiosarum personarum seu baronum meorum’.

¹²⁴ *Regesta*, no. 260.

¹²⁵ Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier (eds.), *Histoire des institutions françaises au Moyen Age, Volume III: Institutions ecclésiastiques* by Jean-François Lemarignier, Jean Gaudemet and Mgr Guillaume Mollat (Paris, 1962), p. 71.

from a bishop's right to hold synods, undertake visitations and judge behaviour.¹²⁶ However, it is clear from the detailed canons of the council of Lillebonne in 1080 that episcopal customs were still being defined during Geoffrey's episcopate.¹²⁷ Furthermore, as a fabricated version of a genuine charter for the abbey of Montivilliers demonstrates, the episcopal customs granted in each case varied. This charter was improved by the addition of 'just as the church of Fécamp holds in all of its tenure'.¹²⁸ Therefore the range of customs granted by Geoffrey cannot be precisely determined. At Lessay, Geoffrey granted the revenue from crimes committed in the church's cemetery by the abbey's servants, and freedom from synodal customs 'and all other customs'. In addition, he promised not to exact any payments from the church for the 'necessities' stemming from episcopal custom.¹²⁹ Geoffrey granted similar concessions to the abbey of Saint-Étienne de Caen. He relinquished his right to synodal customs and 'circata' from the part of the church at Baupte which belonged to Eudo the vicomte. Two priests at Houtteville and Méautis who rendered these customs to Geoffrey were not required to make payments when they attended the diocesan synod. He also relinquished jurisdiction over criminal and non-criminal sins on the abbey's possessions at Baupte, Le Fresne, Hotot and Houtteville, together with the abbey's men at Barfleur, Houtteville and two unidentified places, and the men living in the almshouse of Saint-Hilaire at Méautis.¹³⁰ In 1069, Geoffrey freed the church of Brévands, which had been granted to the priory of Saint-Gabriel by Nigel de Brévands, 'from all episcopal customs'.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Fauroux, no. 131, p. 304: 'trado [...] æcclesiam Sancte Marie de Berlo et altare et omnes redditus eorum'; Colin Morris, 'William I and the Church Courts', *EHR* 82 (1967), pp. 449-63, at p. 452.

¹²⁷ *OV*, iii, pp. 26-35; Morris, 'William I', pp. 452-53.

¹²⁸ Fauroux, no. 90*bis*, p. 237: 'in omnia tenetura, sicut tenet Fiscannensis ecclesia'.

¹²⁹ *Regesta*, no. 175, p. 583: 'concessit supradictus episcopus ut si quid famuli loci in cimeterio ipsius ecclesie admiserint, monachorum sit quicquid emendationis fuerit [...] Addidit etiam hoc idem episcopus quatinus ab omni senatu absoluta, et ab omni alia consuetudinaria re quieta in p[er]petuum haberetur. Necessaria quoque huic [ecclesie] episcopali mori conveniunt absque precio adimplere promisit, sicuti sine pecunia recepit'.

¹³⁰ *Regesta*, no. 57, pp. 268-69: 'concedo eidem sancti Stephani cenobio synodoticum debitum et circatam de ecclesia sancte Marie Balte, partem illam scilicet que est de feodo Eudonis vicecomitis [...] et ut prescriptarum ecclesiarum clerici sic legitime statutis temporibus ad synodum veniant, ne sub aliqua occasione ab eis pecunia requiratur [...] de Balta et de Fraisno et de Hotot et de Holtavilla, et de illis hominibus de Windelonda [...] et de

These grants are significant, for they occurred at a time when the Norman bishops were engaged in the process of reclaiming episcopal customs which had fallen into the hands of laymen. The fourth canon of the council of Lillebonne clearly states that '[n]o layman shall have a share in the altar dues or burial dues, or the third part of the tithe, nor receive money in any way for the sale or grant of these things'.¹³² Therefore although Geoffrey's grants were pernickety, the fact that he relinquished some of his rights to these institutions suggests that he actively encouraged the development of monasticism.

Geoffrey's Dual Status

Although no evidence has survived, such as his personal correspondence, which elucidates Geoffrey's view on whether he perceived a conflict between his participation in secular activities in England after 1066 and his episcopal duties, it seems likely that his episcopal office remained just as important as a component of his lordly identity as his status in post-Conquest England as 'one of the principle men of the English'.¹³³ An insight into his attitude towards his dual status is provided by a record of his intervention at the trial of William of Saint-Calais, bishop of Durham, at Salisbury, which began on 2 November 1088.¹³⁴ According to this report, which has been described by Mark Philpott as an eye-witness

illis hominibus de Helpinmaisnil, et de illis hominibus qui manent in elemosina sancti Hylarii de Meltiz, et de IIII hominibus qui manent in Barbatum fluctum, et de VII hominibus qui manent in Holtovilla, videlicet in prefatis ecclesiis, domibus, terris, habitatoribus, omnium forisfacturarum de criminalibus peccatis vel non criminalibus prodeuntium pecuniam concedo'. For the date of the charter, see Bates' notes at p. 267. The right of *circatam* probably referred to episcopal visitations.

¹³¹ *Regesta*, no. 256, p. 775: 'ab omni costuma episcopali'. It is possible that Nigel de Brévands belonged to the family of Nigel II the vicomte and therefore should be considered as a relative of Geoffrey. It is noteworthy that Geoffrey made this grant 'for the love and prayers of the king and queen and of me, Nigel', at p. 775: 'pro amore et deprecatu regis et regine atque mei Nigelli'.

¹³² *OV*, iii, pp. 28-29, c. 4: 'Nullus laicus in redditibus altaris uel in sepultura uel in tercia parte decimæ aliquid habeat, nec pecuniam pro horum uendicione uel donatione aliquatenus habeat'. For this process, Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 199; Morris, 'Church Courts', pp. 451-53.

¹³³ *Regesta*, no. 68, p. 314: 'unus de primatibus Anglorum'.

¹³⁴ *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I, Volume I: William I to Stephen (Nos. 1-346)*, ed. R.C. van Caenegem (London, 1990), no. 134, p. 95: 'respectatum est utrinque placitum usque in quarto nonas Novembris'.

account, Geoffrey supported the bishop of Durham's claim to episcopal privilege by suggesting that the court 'convoke bishops and abbots, to have with us some of these barons and earls and justly to decide with them whether the bishop should first be invested or embark on the case on the king's complaints before investiture'.¹³⁵ This reference to the precept of 'exceptio spoli', which would have prevented the bishop of Durham from being put on trial before he had recovered his bishopric, suggests that Geoffrey was familiar with some aspects at least of pseudo-Isidorian canon law which formed part of the 'Collectio Lanfranci', Lanfranc's canonical collection.¹³⁶ Lanfranc eventually rejected William of Saint-Calais' claim by reminding him that

We do not judge you because of your bishopric, but because of your fief; and in this way we have judged [Odo] the bishop of Bayeux concerning his fief before the father of the present king, and the king did not call him bishop in that suit, but brother and earl.¹³⁷

This response alluded to the imprisonment of Bishop Odo in 1082 for apparently attempting to buy the papacy.¹³⁸ According to William of Malmesbury, Lanfranc encouraged the king to arrest Odo by reminding him that 'you will not be arresting the bishop of Bayeux, you will be taking into custody the earl of Kent'.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ *English Lawsuits*, no. 134, p. 97: 'decretet nos surgere, et episcopos et abbates convocare, quosdam etiam baronum et comitum istorum nobiscum habere; et cum eis juste decernere, si episcopus debeat prius investiri, vel ante investituram de querelis regis intrare in placitum'; Mark Philpott, 'The *De iniusta uexacione Willelmi episcopi primi* and Canon Law in Anglo-Norman Durham' in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193*, ed. David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 125-37, at p. 129.

¹³⁶ Philpott, '*De iniusta uexacione Willelmi*', p. 131. On the similarities between the content of the 'Collectio Lanfranci' and the pseudo-Isidorian decretals, see Mark Philpott, 'Lanfranc's Canonical Collection and 'the Law of the Church'' in *Lanfranco di Pavia e l'Europa del secolo XI*, ed. G. D'Onofrio (Rome, 1993), pp. 131-47.

¹³⁷ *English Lawsuits*, no. 134, p. 99: 'Nos non de episcopio sed de tuo te feodo iudicamus, et hoc modo iudicavimus Bajocensem episcopum ante patrem hujus regis de feodo suo, nec rex vocabat eum episcopum in placito illo, sed fratrem et comitem'.

¹³⁸ David R. Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097)', *Speculum* 50 (1975), pp. 1-20, at pp. 15-17.

¹³⁹ WM, *GR*, i, pp. 544-45: 'episcopum Baiocarum capies, sed comitem Cantiae custodies'. He did not refer to Lanfranc's role in an earlier account of Odo's arrest and imprisonment, at pp. 506-7.

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Fig. 7 - Bishop Odo of Bayeux's seal (top left), from Sir Christopher Hatton's *Book of Seals* (*English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, ed. Tristram Holland, Janet Holt and George Zarnecki (London, 1984), p. 79.)

The report of his intervention at the bishop of Durham's trial suggests not only that Geoffrey was capable of distinguishing between each side of his identity, but also that it was not unusual for men like Geoffrey and the bishop of Durham to exploit the distinction. This distinction is evident in Geoffrey's 'signum' on the record of the Primacy Agreement finalised at Windsor on 27 May 1072 in which he is described as 'bishop of Coutances and one of the principle men of the English'.¹⁴⁰ His presence at the council of London in 1075 is explained in a similar way: 'though an overseas bishop [he] was sitting with the others in the council because he had a great deal of property in England'.¹⁴¹ Geoffrey's seal has not survived, but if it had, it seems likely in light of this evidence that it would have resembled Odo's now lost seal copied into Sir Christopher Hatton's *Book of Seals* in 1640-41 (Fig. 7).¹⁴² This seal was once attached to a bilingual writ recording an exchange of land between Odo and Canterbury cathedral. On one side, Odo is depicted as a knight holding a sword and shield; on the other side, he is presented as a bishop holding a pastoral staff. Although in Odo's case the images represented the titles of the offices he held, as a component of his lordly identity, Geoffrey's status as a landholder in England was just as significant as his episcopal title. His prominence amongst the king's followers after 1066 was built upon his activities as bishop of Coutances; his extensive landholding in post-Conquest England reflected his closeness to the king.

¹⁴⁰ *Regesta*, no. 68, p. 314: 'Ego Goisfredus Constantiensis episcopus et unus de primatibus Anglorum consensi'.

¹⁴¹ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 11, pp. 74-75: 'qui cum transmarinus esset episcopus in Anglia multas possessiones habens cum ceteris in concilio residebat'. He attested as 'one of the principle men of the English land', p. 74, n. 1: 'unus de Anglicaе terrae primatibus' and p. 79, n. 16.

¹⁴² *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, ed. Tristram Holland, Janet Holt and George Zarnecki (London, 1984), p. 79; for the current condition of the writ, *Regesta*, no. 74, p. 332.

Conclusion

From the evidence of Geoffrey's diocesan activities in the 'De statu' and Lanfranc's letter-collection in particular, a picture emerges of a bishop who remained committed to his episcopal duties throughout his career. Indeed, it is likely that Geoffrey not only maintained contact with his church after 1066; he appears to have been active in the government of ecclesiastical life in his diocese during his absences in England. Geoffrey's absences appear to have acted as a catalyst in the development of territorial archdeaconries in the diocese as well as a stimulus to the growth of the chapter's communal identity. Geoffrey's piety is difficult to assess because the only evidence of his lifestyle is found in the 'De statu'. In the context of the scheme of this work, it forms an important element of Canon John's depiction of Geoffrey as an ideal bishop whose commitment to the active and contemplative lives earned him a place in heaven next to the Virgin. But Geoffrey was certainly more sympathetic towards reform ideals than his reputation in modern historiography suggests. Although the 'vita' of Bernard of Tiron provides evidence of married clergy at Coutances after Geoffrey's death, he rejected simony and recognised papal supremacy in spiritual affairs. Perhaps the most striking evidence of his piety is his prominent role in the development of monasticism in the diocese. The strength of Geoffrey's commitment to his church is reflected in the significance of his episcopal office as an integral part of his lordly identity after the Conquest.

Chapter 5: The Development of Episcopal Lordship, 1048-1066

[Geoffrey] celebrated the solemn dedication of the church with great expense, in the presence of William duke of the Normans, the archbishop [of Rouen], fellow bishops, abbots, the nobles of Normandy, and certain others of Brittany, in the year of the incarnation of the Lord 1056, tenth indiction.¹

On 8 December 1056, Geoffrey dedicated Coutances' new cathedral in the presence of the duke and the ecclesiastical and lay 'principes' of Normandy and Brittany.² Canon John's description of the ceremony is brief, but his reference to its 'great expense' and the attendance of the duke, the archbishop of Rouen and the other dignitaries indicate its significance in Geoffrey's career. Medieval rituals provided a way of visually expressing power, status and friendships. The dedication ceremony at Coutances in 1056 not only communicated Geoffrey's place amongst the elite of Norman society; it was a public demonstration of the duke's favour.³ Whilst Geoffrey's restoration of the church of Coutances was motivated to a great extent by piety, this interpretation highlights the broader significance of Geoffrey's actions as acts intended to enhance the charismatic element of his lordship. Modern historians have attributed Geoffrey's rise to prominence in post-Conquest England to his extraordinary administrative and organisational skills which he demonstrated in his diocese before 1066. In this interpretation, his reorganisation of the church of Coutances is presented as a test of competence, which Geoffrey passed with flying colours.⁴ But Geoffrey was not simply a passive recipient of ducal favour. He actively sought ducal

¹ *DS*, col. 220: 'celebremque dedicationem ecclesiæ magnis multisque sumtibus celebravit, præsentē Guillelmo Normannorum duce, et archiepiscopo, et coepiscopis, et abbatibus, et principibus Normanniæ, et aliis quibusdam Britanniæ, anno Incarnationis Dominicæ M. LVI, indictione X'.

² Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'die dedicationis que acta est .VI. idus decenbris'.

³ Gerd Althoff, 'The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages' in *Medieval Concepts of the Past. Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 71-87, at p. 73; Althoff, '(Royal) Favour', p. 250. For the role of rituals in forming bonds of friendship, Rebecca L. Silt, 'Acting Out Friendship: Signs and Gestures of Aristocratic Male Friendship in the Twelfth Century', *HSJ* 21 (2009), pp. 147-64, at p. 148.

⁴ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 148; Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray' pp. 284 and 287; Musset, 'Un grand prélat', p. 12.

favour by augmenting his charisma through the restoration of the church of Coutances. Therefore this chapter will examine the strategy employed by Geoffrey and it will consider the relationship between his pre-Conquest career and his pre-eminence in England after 1066.

Pre-Conquest Career

If the information provided by Canon John about the reorganisation of the church of Coutances is set aside, there is little evidence of Geoffrey's activities between his return to Normandy in c.1050 and 1066. In addition to the ducal confirmation of Coutances cathedral's possessions, Geoffrey appears in five ducal charters during this period. Three of the charters concern land in the diocese of Coutances. Between c.1050 and 1064, Geoffrey witnessed Duke William's confirmation of the abbey of Marmoutier's purchase of twenty acres of land at Héauville. During the period between c.1052 and 1058, Geoffrey subscribed Duke William's gift of six churches on the island of Guernsey to the abbey of Marmoutier. In 1054, he added his 'signum' to Nigel the priest's donation of his allod at Sainte-Colombe to the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel.⁵ In another charter, Geoffrey witnessed the duke's confirmation of William fitz Osbern's gift of land to the abbey of Bec 'before his chamber' between 1048 and 1066.⁶ In 1066, Geoffrey witnessed and subscribed Roger Malfillastre's gift of the church of Caine to the abbey of Beaumont-lès-Tours in order to establish a priory.⁷ The evidence of provincial synods can be added to these charter appearances. Although Geoffrey can be positively identified at only one provincial synod, held at Rouen in 1063, it is not unlikely that he was also present at the synods convened at Lisieux in 1054, Rouen in 1055, Caen in 1061, Lisieux in 1064 and Lillebonne in 1066.⁸ Geoffrey is not named in the

⁵ Fauroux, nos. 163 and 141; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 43.

⁶ Fauroux, no. 181, p. 365: 'ante cameram suam'. Fauroux dated the charter to 1041-1066, but Geoffrey's appearance provides a new date of 1048-1066.

⁷ Fauroux, no. 227.

⁸ Allen, '*Acta Archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium*', pp. 40 and 53.

accounts of these synods, but the authors refer generally to the attendance of all the Norman bishops.⁹ There is no clear evidence of Geoffrey's involvement in any of the principal events of the pre-Conquest period, but he may have been present at the battle at Mortemer in 1054, since Wace stated that the 'barons of the Cotentin' formed part of the ducal army.¹⁰

If this paucity of evidence is taken at face value, it supports the notion that Geoffrey was pre-occupied with the reorganisation of the church of Coutances before 1066. But it would be misleading to suggest that Geoffrey was isolated from affairs outside his diocese or that he had little contact with the ducal court. Since signers were selected with the contents of charters in mind, the appearance of Geoffrey's 'signum' on three of these documents is significant because it provides evidence of his presence at the ducal court.¹¹ In the case of the duke's confirmation of William fitz Osbern's gift to Bec, it is stated in the charter that the action was performed in the duke's chamber. Geoffrey witnessed this confirmation in person, just as he witnessed Marmoutier's purchase of land at Héauville.¹² Therefore whilst the paucity of evidence for Geoffrey's pre-Conquest career suggests that he busied himself with diocesan affairs, his infrequent appearances in charters should also be interpreted as a reflection of his peripheral place amongst the followers of the duke. As the ducal confirmation of Roger Malfilastre's gift to Beaumont-lès-Tours demonstrates, Geoffrey's relationship with the duke was close enough for him to be able to witness this action in the

⁹ For Lisieux, 1054, *WP*, pp. 88-89: 'cunctisque Normanniae episcopis'; Rouen, 1055, Bessin, p. 47: 'presente Maurilio Rotomagensi cum comprovincialibus [...] Constantiensi'; Bessin, p. 48: 'apud Cadomum habuisse Conventum Episcoporum'; Lisieux, 1064, Delisle, 'Canons du Concile', p. 517: 'cum ceteris suffraganeis episcopis atque abbatibus'; Lillebonne, 1066, *OV*, ii, pp. 140-43, at pp. 142-43: 'Omnes hi ad commune decretum iussu ducis acciti sunt'.

¹⁰ Wace, pp. 204-5: 'e les barons de Costentin'.

¹¹ Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p. 159. Bates made this point in relation to Norman diplomas, *Regesta*, p. 19 and Bates, 'Prosopographical Study', pp. 93-94.

¹² See above, ns. 5 and 6.

duke's chamber at Bayeux in 1066.¹³ The remaining part of this chapter will examine how Geoffrey was able to move from the periphery to the heart of the duke's following.

***Königsnähe*, Charisma and the Episcopal Office**

Geoffrey's pre-Conquest activities, including the reforms discussed in Chapter 3, formed a *Königsnähe* strategy. *Königsnähe* is a term used by German historians to describe an individual's 'closeness to the king'.¹⁴ Since those closest to a ruler enjoyed the greatest material rewards and the enhanced status that came through an association with a successful ruler, the objective of Geoffrey's *Königsnähe* strategy was self-advancement. This strategy was based on the enhancement of the charismatic elements of his lordship. Charisma may be defined as an aura that reflected an individual's honour, reputation and prestige.¹⁵ In Geoffrey's case, as a bishop, it also had a sacred aspect. Max Weber, who first introduced the term 'charisma' into sociology, defined it as

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.¹⁶

As a bishop, Geoffrey possessed what Weber described as a routinized form of charisma, a 'charisma of office', in which, following Liah Greenfield's definition, 'genuine charisma was appropriated as a legitimating value, namely, when authority was legitimated by some relation to this alleged source of genuine charisma'. According to Weber, a bishop's 'charisma of office' rested on 'the belief in the specific state of grace of a social institution',

¹³ Fauroux, no. 227, p. 437: 'apud Bajocas, in camera Guilelmi ducis'.

¹⁴ Tellenbach, 'From Carolingian Imperial Nobility', p. 207.

¹⁵ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 7.

¹⁶ Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff *et al*, 3 vols. (New York, 1968), i, pp. 241-42; Charles Lindholm, *Charisma* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1990), p. 24.

which derived from his status as an heir to the Apostles.¹⁷ An individual's charisma determined his closeness to his lord. Just as a follower's prestige was enhanced by the reputation of his lord, a lord's reputation was reflected in the status of the men who followed him.¹⁸ Indeed, honour, in the sense of the 'public expression of one's legal, political, social and economic status', was reciprocal.¹⁹ Those closest to the ruler possessed the greatest charisma. Therefore in order to gain closeness to a lord a follower needed to enhance his honour, reputation and prestige, the elements of charisma.

Richard Barton has emphasised the significance of material possessions and personal relationships as foundations of aristocratic charisma in his study of lordship in the county of Maine between c.890 and 1160.²⁰ In particular, he highlighted the symbolic value of certain locations in the county, such as the city of Le Mans, that were linked to the Carolingian past. By gaining control of these places, the counts of Maine built up their prestige through the connections to the 'memory, and thus the glory, power, and authority of the Carolingian rulers' provided by these sites.²¹ In addition, the counts may have sought control of the possessions of their comital predecessors for a similar reason.²² In this way, as Barton has argued, possession of locations that were prominent in the history of secular power in Maine 'was a sign of a man's honor and prestige'.²³ Charisma was also enhanced through the development of a network of personal relationships.²⁴ It was clearly beneficial for a count of

¹⁷ Weber, *Economy and Society*, iii, pp. 1139-41, quotation at p. 1140; i, p. 248; Liah Greenfield, 'Reflections on Two Charismas', *The British Journal of Sociology* 36 (1985), pp. 117-32, at p. 118. For bishops as the successors to the apostles, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, ii, p. 111; Joseph H. Lynch, *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* (Harlow, 1992), p. 266.

¹⁸ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 104, 112 and 122; Schlesinger, 'Lord and Follower', p. 76; Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, pp. 89 and 109.

¹⁹ Weiler, 'Politics', p. 118; Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 79.

²⁰ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, pp. 51-111.

²¹ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 56; quotation at p. 52.

²² Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, pp. 70-71.

²³ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 76.

²⁴ Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 78.

Maine to forge relationships with neighbouring lords, such as the count of Anjou, but his charisma was also reflected in the size of his following.²⁵ Therefore personal relationships constituted a vital element of lordship.

Although Barton applied these ideas in a secular context, they are equally significant in an ecclesiastical context, not least because many bishops were drawn from the aristocracy and so were conscious of the importance of charisma as an aspect of lordship.²⁶ For example, according to Henry of Huntingdon, the ‘glory’ of the court of Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, projected the bishop’s charisma. Henry described Bloet’s ‘handsome knights, noble young men, his horses of great price, his golden and gilded vessels, the number of courses, the splendour of those who waited upon him, the purple garments and satins’.²⁷ However, since the charisma of a bishop consisted of a sacred element, it was primarily enhanced through connections to the sacred rather than the secular past of a region. Whereas the counts of Maine in Barton’s study sought to augment their charisma by establishing links to the Carolingian past and the authority of their predecessors, Geoffrey’s charisma would be enhanced by controlling sites associated with episcopal power and his saintly predecessors. The establishment of personal relationships was just as important to Geoffrey as it was for the counts of Maine. In particular, it was important for Geoffrey to develop relationships with those already close to the duke. By combining these elements into a coherent strategy, Geoffrey sought to acquire closeness to the duke.

²⁵ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 104.

²⁶ Parisse, ‘The Bishop’, p. 9; Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, p. 198.

²⁷ *HH*, pp. 586-87: ‘Cum namque puerulus, cum adolescens, cum iuuenis, Roberti presulis nostri gloriam conspicerem, scilicet equites decentissimos, adolescentes nobilissimos, equos pretiosissimos, uasa aurea et deaurata, ferculorum numerum, ferentium splendorem, uestes purpureas, et bissinas’.

Although Canon John may have exaggerated the dilapidated condition of the church of Coutances on the eve of Geoffrey's consecration, it is evident from Geoffrey's activities after his return from southern Italy and the outline of the church's history in the tenth and early eleventh centuries that the bishop of Coutances was a figure of peripheral importance in western Normandy in 1048. The marginal status of Geoffrey's predecessors is epitomised by the decision of Herbert and Robert to reside on the edge of their diocese at the town of Saint-Lô.²⁸ According to Canon John, the bishops held few possessions in their episcopal city; the episcopal residence was little more than a lean-to which lacked a stable for Geoffrey's horse; the cathedral, the most striking symbol of episcopal power, was incomplete; and the church's patrimony, devoid of parks and vineyards and reduced by the nepotism of Bishop Robert, was meagre.²⁹ In addition, although some of the canons actively served the cathedral, they lacked ornaments, clothing and books, and the chapter remained divided between Coutances and the church of Saint-Lô de Rouen.³⁰ Furthermore, the church did not secure title to its possessions until after the dedication in 1056.³¹ Consequently, its poor condition in 1048 undermined Geoffrey's honour, reputation and prestige, and acted as a motivating factor in his pre-Conquest career.

²⁸ *DS*, col. 218: 'Herbertus uno tantum anno, et Robertus qui fuerat episcopus Lexovii, sederunt apud sanctum Laudum supra Viram fluvium'.

²⁹ *DS*, col. 219: 'Cum autem non haberet in civitate, sive in suburbio tantum possessionis ecclesiæ, ubi maneret episcopus, vel proprius equus eius posset stabulari, sed neque propriam domum, nisi quoddam appendicium humile, quod pendebat de parietibus ecclesiæ'. For the construction of the cathedral, see Chapter 3; *DS*, col. 218: 'Robertus [...] non solum præbendas dictorum canonicorum servitio ecclesiæ non reddidit, verum etiam hæc et alia in feodum et hereditatem nepotibus, et consanguineis, et fororibus suis non large sed prodige distribuit'.

³⁰ *DS*, 218: 'Hugo septem canonicos de his qui Constant. ecclesiæ deputandi erant, ad sæpeditam ecclesiam S. Laudi ubi Rotomagi morabatur, transtulit'. Geoffrey provided these items, col. 219: 'Ceterum ornamenta ecclesiastica et ustencilia, calices, cruces, capsas, phylacteria, candelabra, thuribula, bacinis, siculam et ampullas aurea contulit et argentea, casulas quoque, dalmaticas, tunicas, planetas, albas, cappas mirifici operis, necnon dorsalia serica et lanea, cortinas et tapeta, sed et bibliothecas, passionales, omeliarum, missales, aureis litteris duos sufficientesque et competentes libros subrogavit'.

³¹ Fontanel, no. 340.

The City of Coutances

The church's possessions in Coutances formed the foundation of Geoffrey's charisma. Through the acquisition of land and rights in the city, the construction of an episcopal hall and the completion of Bishop Robert's cathedral, Geoffrey transformed Coutances into an emblem of his status and prestige. As noted above, the church held few possessions in the city at time of Geoffrey's accession. Despite the return of the bishops to the diocese from Rouen in c.1023 and the help Bishop Robert received from Duchess Gunnor when he began the construction of the new cathedral, none of Geoffrey's predecessors had acquired a manor in the city.³² This may be attributed to a lack of money. Bishop Robert was clearly aware of the symbolic importance of the city for he initiated the construction of the new cathedral. But it is likely that the death of the project's principal sponsor, Gunnor, in 1031 undermined any attempt to establish Coutances as a centre of episcopal power.³³ Geoffrey, on the other hand, secured substantial riches from the Normans in southern Italy. Therefore, on his accession, he was able to buy part of the city from the duke. According to Canon John, Geoffrey paid three hundred pounds for the 'thriving' half of the city and its suburbs with half of the income from tolls and taxes, as well as the mills and the dues of Grimouville. Geoffrey also obtained the right to hold a fair, a detail omitted by Canon John but included in the confirmation charter.³⁴

The acquisition of lands and rights within the city clearly held a symbolic importance. Since Coutances was the seat of the bishops and their authority was explicitly connected to

³² Duchess Gunnor donated the land of Ralph 'de Forcivilla' to the church and laid the first stone of Robert's cathedral, Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'terra etiam Rolphi de Forcivilla quam dedit Gonnor ancilla Dei cum primam posuerit petram in fundamentis predictae ecclesie'. Lecanu suggested that this land was Mesnil-Raoult, at *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 162, n. 1.

³³ van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor', pp. 7-24.

³⁴ *DS*, col. 219: 'valentiorum medietatem civitatis, suburbii, et telonei, et vectigalis, cum molendinis et multa Grimoldi viaca a Guillelmo invictissimo duce Normannorum, postea quoque glorioso rege Anglorum trecentis libris comparavit et acquietavit'; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'et una generali feria'.

the city, principally through their episcopal title, the establishment of a permanent episcopal presence constituted a vital element of Geoffrey's charisma.³⁵ Geoffrey's half of the city was located on the eastern side of a street which bisected the city from north to south; it followed the line of Rue Tancred in the modern city which becomes Rue Geoffrey de Montbray as it moves south past the cathedral.³⁶ It included the episcopal manor which was located on the northern side of the cathedral.³⁷ Indeed, Annie Renoux has plausibly suggested that Geoffrey's acquisition of half of the city was prompted in part by the need to obtain an area of land large enough to accommodate an episcopal palace complex.³⁸ But Geoffrey's status was also augmented by the right he acquired to half of the duke's income from tolls and taxes. This concession implied that Geoffrey's secular power in the city was equivalent to a vicomte's, since it was collected on the duke's behalf by a vicomte.³⁹ Therefore the grant probably gave Geoffrey independence from the vicomte's authority.⁴⁰

Cathedral

Geoffrey's cathedral served as a visual expression of his prestige. The most significant influence on Geoffrey's additions to the cathedral appears to have been the abbey church of Notre-Dame de Jumièges, which was begun by Abbot Robert Champart and consecrated on 1 July 1067.⁴¹ This connection was noted by Pigeon and has been pressed most recently by

³⁵ A point noted in relation to the struggle between the count and bishop over the city of Le Mans in the tenth century at Barton, *County of Maine*, p. 40.

³⁶ Michel Le Pesant, 'Coutances au Moyen Age: le parc l'Évêque, la tour le Comte et les fortifications', *Art de Basse Normandie* 95 (1987), pp. 15-18, at p. 15.

³⁷ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 193.

³⁸ Annie Renoux, 'Palais épiscopaux des diocèses de Normandie, du Mans et d'Angers (XI^e-XIII^e siècles). État de la question' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 173-204, at p. 180.

³⁹ Lucien Musset, 'Recherches sur le tonlieu en Normandie à l'époque ducal' in *Autour du pouvoir ducal normand X^e-XII^e siècles*, Cahier des Annales de Normandie 17 (Caen, 1985), pp. 61-76, at p. 70; Mark Hagger, 'The Norman vicomte, c.1035-1135: What Did He Do?', *ANS* 29 (2006), pp. 65-83, at pp. 78-79.

⁴⁰ Amann and Dumas, *L'Église au pouvoir des laïques*, pp. 227-28.

⁴¹ *WJ*, i, pp. 110-11: 'Roberti archiepiscopi, qui illam restauravit ecclesiam' and *Normannia monastica*, ii, p. 151. For its consecration, *WJ*, ii, pp. 172-73. For this church, see Maylis Baylé, 'Jumièges: Abbatiale Notre-Dame' in *L'architecture normande au Moyen Age*, ed. Maylis Baylé, 2 vols. (Caen, 2001), ii, pp. 32-36.

Baylé, who stated that Coutances' Romanesque cathedral was 'a major edifice, an essential milestone for this period, in the same way as the abbey of Jumièges'.⁴² It is most obvious in the octagonal design of the western façade.⁴³ Herschman identified similarities between the height of the towers relative to the height of the nave at both churches, and he also suggested that the passages in the towers of the western façade opened onto a gutter, an arrangement that was mirrored at Jumièges on top of the west wall of the north transept.⁴⁴ It is also possible that the design of the east end of Coutances cathedral was influenced by that of Jumièges. It has been argued in Chapter 3 that Geoffrey incorporated an ambulatory in the east end of the cathedral and two smaller apses projecting out of the eastern walls of the transepts, an arrangement that is supported by Du Monstier's copy of the 'De statu'.⁴⁵ It is also suggested by the evidence of the internal arrangement of the cathedral in a miracle included in the 'Miracula'. In this story, Daria, a local woman, is locked in the church at night. Having taken a seat at the bottom of the stairs leading to the upper part of the western towers, she saw a procession of women appear from the altar of Saint John, move towards her and pass closely beside her, stop before the image of the Virgin and finally move into the choir where they disappeared.⁴⁶ Since Daria was sitting in the western part of the cathedral and she saw the procession appear from the altar and then move towards her, it is logical to suppose that the altar of Saint John faced west and was therefore located in one of the smaller

⁴² Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 84-85; Maylis Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande au XI^e siècle' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 151-72, at pp. 165-67 quotation at p. 167: 'un édifice majeur, jalon essentiel pour cette période, au même titre que l'abbatiale de Jumièges'. Also Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', pp. 140-41; Mussat, 'Cathédrale Notre-Dame', p. 14; Lauren Wood Breese, 'Early Normandy and the Emergence of Norman Romanesque Architecture', *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988), pp. 203-16, at p. 211; Maylis Baylé, 'Coutances: cathédrale Notre-Dame' in *L'architecture normande*, vol. ii, pp. 43-44, at p. 44.

⁴³ See p. 108.

⁴⁴ Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', p. 130 and n. 49, at p. 133.

⁴⁵ See above, p. 107, n. 86.

⁴⁶ 'Miracula', no. xxxi, pp. 382-83: 'Hæc igitur anus [...] in remotiore et occultiore loco ecclesiæ, in introitu videlicet ascensus gradus occidentalis turrium, ubi de more sedebat [...] obdormierat. Cum ergo post somnum evigilasset, surrexit ut egrederetur; sed ecclesiæ custodibus egressis, et vectibus et seris, foribus cunctis munitis ad eundem locum pavida revertitur [...] ecce ab altari S. Johannis processio veneranda uxorū fulgentium cereos ferentium progrediens, ac per circuitum interiorem ecclesiæ, prope mulierem transitum faciens ante altare Sanctæ Dei Genitricis imaginis constitit; moxque post paululum per chorum transiens, ante majus altare denuo stetit'.

apses of the transept.⁴⁷ Lanfry proposed that Notre-Dame de Jumièges also had an ambulatory in its east end without radiating chapels and smaller apses either side of a central one projecting from the east wall of each transept.⁴⁸ The existence of radiating chapels projecting out of the central apse at Coutances is debateable, but the internal arrangement of the cathedral suggested by this miracle provides further evidence of the similarities between Notre-Dame de Jumièges and Geoffrey's cathedral.

Another influence may have been the more innovative design of the cathedral in the neighbouring diocese of Bayeux. This connection is conjectural because it rests on the height of the bays of the nave at tribune level which cannot be determined precisely. Although the wall opening onto the nave contains some remains of the Romanesque building, it was repointed in the thirteenth century and the arches were raised.⁴⁹ This restoration work also makes it difficult to determine whether it was Geoffrey or Robert who built them.⁵⁰ Pigeon thought that the inner walls of the nave were built by Geoffrey and therefore the second level of the nave was a similar height to the first.⁵¹ Herschman rejected the identification of this wall as part of the Romanesque structure and argued that the nave would have resembled that of Bernay, with a much lower second level.⁵² Having identified Romanesque remains within the Gothic restorations, Baylé proposed that the bays were a little higher than Herschman had

⁴⁷ Leonie Hicks also placed the altar in the transept at *Religious Life in Normandy*, p. 72; cf. Pigeon, who located this altar in one of the radiating chapels on the south side of the central apse, at *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 89.

⁴⁸ G. Lanfry, 'Fouilles découvertes à Jumièges. Le déambulatoire de l'église romane', *Bulletin Monumental* 87 (1928), pp. 107-37.

⁴⁹ Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande', p. 165.

⁵⁰ A view inherent in Pigeon's reconstruction of the cathedral (*Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 81 and 86-87) but dismissed by Herschman on the basis of the evidence of Geoffrey's work in the 'De statu' and the contrast between the masonry of the inner wall and that of the western towers, at 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 122 and 125-26.

⁵¹ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 81; Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande', p. 163.

⁵² Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 125-32 and Fig. 18 at p. 131.

suggested, but not as high as Pigeon thought.⁵³ The height of these bays is significant because if they were as high as Pigeon thought they would have resembled the arrangement at Bayeux, which incorporated more advanced features of Romanesque architecture than the abbey church of Bernay. Indeed, Bayeux represented an intermediate stage in the development of Romanesque architecture between the traditional form, which reflected Carolingian influence, and the style at its most developed stage as represented by the abbey church of Saint-Etienne at Caen.⁵⁴ Therefore if Geoffrey completed the nave by adding the inner walls and incorporating large openings at tribune level, he was imitating the latest architectural developments on display at Bayeux.

There is a clear contrast in the quality of the building work overseen by Robert and Geoffrey. The remains of Robert's work in the outer wall of the nave are made up of fairly primitive masonry. The alternating colours of the voussoirs resemble the Carolingian tradition which can also be seen at the late tenth-century church of Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre at Mont-Saint-Michel.⁵⁵ This evidence of Carolingian influence contributed to Herschman's view of the nave as an imitation of Bernay.⁵⁶ The masonry of Geoffrey's work, which is preserved in the western façade towers, is of a much higher standard.⁵⁷ The contrast with the masonry of the nave clearly reflects the suspension of the construction work at some point before Geoffrey's accession in 1048 and its continuance, under a different master builder, following Geoffrey's return from Italy in c.1050. But it also reflects the greater resources at Geoffrey's disposal and his greater ambition. By incorporating some of the features of

⁵³ Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande', pp. 163-65.

⁵⁴ Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande', p. 171.

⁵⁵ Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 123-25 and Baylé, 'Les évêques et l'architecture normande', p. 163; Maylis Baylé, 'Mont-Saint-Michel: église Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre' in *L'architecture normande*, ii, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁶ Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 130-32.

⁵⁷ Herschman, 'Eleventh-Century Nave', pp. 125-26.

Notre-Dame de Jumièges, Geoffrey was updating the traditional appearance of Robert's work. This is evident in the design of the western towers and the quality of its masonry. It may also have been clear from the east end of the cathedral. Carol Heitz noted the rarity of ambulatories without radiating chapels in the first half of the eleventh century.⁵⁸ Therefore if the east end of the cathedral did not have radiating chapels, it would have been at the forefront of developments in Norman Romanesque architecture at the time of its construction. If it had radiating chapels, its design reflected the cathedral at Rouen.⁵⁹ Either way, the arrangement of the cathedral and the quality of craftsmanship evident in its walls would have provided a striking expression of Geoffrey's charisma.

Episcopal Hall

The impact of the cathedral as a symbol of Geoffrey's charisma was augmented through the construction of a hall ('aula') on the same site.⁶⁰ Although there is insufficient evidence to reconstruct Geoffrey's hall, Canon John reveals that it was joined to the cathedral since it was damaged by debris falling from the lantern tower during the earthquake of 1091, and that the hall formed part of a larger complex that incorporated other buildings, a garden and a vineyard.⁶¹ These other buildings would have included stables, which his predecessors lacked, a grange and storerooms, as well as Geoffrey's private chamber ('camera') and a

⁵⁸ Carol Heitz, 'Influences Carolingiennes et Ottoniennes sur l'architecture religieuse normande' in *L'architecture normande*, i, pp. 37-48, at p. 46.

⁵⁹ Richard Plant, 'Ecclesiastical Architecture, c.1050 to c.1200' in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 215-53, at p. 218.

⁶⁰ *DS*, col. 219: 'episcopalem aulam [...] construxit'.

⁶¹ *DS*, col. 219: 'reliquas officinas construxit, virgultum et vineam non modicam plantavit'. Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 10049, f. 421r: 'ipsamque majorem turrim ab orientali parte scinderent majusque capitium ecclesiae et quæ sunt hinc et inde minora conquassarent [...] De arcubus vero fenestrarum turris maioris lapides magni vi tempestatis eruti, super aulam prædictam corruerunt'. A description of the 'old episcopal manor' is given in the inventory of the episcopal 'mensa' in 1440. It consisted of two buildings and was at the time used as the bishop's prison, *La mense épiscopale*, items 59-60, p. 17: 'Le viel manoir episcopal [...] ouparavant y avoit deux maisons [...] Es prisons de monseigneur faictes'.



Fig. 8 - Coutances, canons' quarters on the north side of the cathedral.

chapel.⁶² Since the episcopal manor was located on the northern side of the cathedral, it is likely that the hall joined the north transept and that the complex was situated on the land currently occupied by the canons' quarter (Fig. 8).⁶³

Halls were synonymous with lordship because all great lords required a base from which they could manage their economic and administrative affairs and where they could entertain guests. Indeed, the scope of Geoffrey's power was reflected in the range of

⁶² For the lack of stables, *DS*, col. 219: 'vel proprius equus eius posset stabulari'. For these features of episcopal palace complexes, Renoux, 'Palais épiscopaux', pp. 184, 188 and 201; the episcopal chapel at Coutances was rebuilt in 1341, at p. 201. Also, Toustain de Billy, ii, pp. 134-35.

⁶³ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 193. Its northern orientation is also suggested by the location of the second door in the wall which King Philip IV authorised to be built around the episcopal manor in 1294; this door was situated 'between the church of Saint Nicholas and the house of the priest William 'de Burgo'', Fontanel, no. 317, p. 455: 'secunda inter atrium Sancti Nicholai et domum Guillelmi de Burgo presbyteri'.

activities associated with the buildings within the complex. Geoffrey's status would have been enhanced by the incorporation of a garden and a vineyard into the complex which provided visual expressions of his control over the landscape, an element of lordship that will be developed below in the discussion of Geoffrey's episcopal manors.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the impact of 'green spaces' was heightened in an urban environment like Coutances.⁶⁵ Therefore the hall and its surrounding buildings constituted an important symbol of Geoffrey's status and prestige. As David Crouch has noted, the hall acted as 'a public stage for the lord to display his greatness'.⁶⁶ Indeed, Geoffrey may have entertained the duke, the archbishop of Rouen and the other great men who attended the dedication of his cathedral in 1056 in his hall.

Cult Centre

One of the principal ways Geoffrey enhanced his charisma was by developing Coutances' reputation as a cult centre. In particular, he cultivated the relationship between the city and the cathedral's patron saint, the Virgin Mary. Geoffrey's devotion to the Virgin, which was discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, is evident as early as 1056 when the cathedral was dedicated. This ceremony took place on 8 December, the date of the feast of the Virgin's Conception. Judging from the evidence of the 'Miracula', the cult was vibrant throughout Geoffrey's episcopate, and miracles continued to occur in the cathedral after 1108.⁶⁷ As noted in Chapter 1, Geoffrey promoted the cult by commissioning an account of the miracles

⁶⁴ See below, pp. 173-75.

⁶⁵ *DS*, col. 219: 'virgultum et vineam non modicam plantavit'; Renoux, 'Palais épiscopaux', p. 185. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, gardens were also sources of food and medicines, Aleksander Pluskowski, 'The Social Construction of Medieval Park Ecosystems: An Inter-disciplinary Perspective' in *The Medieval Park*, ed. Robert Liddiard (Macclesfield, 2007), pp. 63-78, at p. 73.

⁶⁶ Renoux, 'Palais épiscopaux', p. 173; David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000-1300* (London, 1992), p. 254.

⁶⁷ See above, pp. 50-55.

she performed at Coutances.⁶⁸ But its significance in the context of the enhancement of Geoffrey's charisma lay in the emphasis it placed on the importance of the cathedral as the focus of the Virgin's power. Since her miracles only occurred in an area controlled by Geoffrey as bishop, they glorified Geoffrey and his episcopate.⁶⁹ Circumstantial evidence suggests that Geoffrey may have identified his power with the Virgin's. His decision to hold the dedication ceremony on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception is highly significant for it associated the restoration of episcopal power with the arrival of the Virgin's power in the cathedral. Furthermore, in the 'Miracula', it was Geoffrey who, 'by the will of God', discovered a hair of the Virgin amongst the cathedral's relics, and the Virgin's power manifested itself in one of the miracles in Geoffrey's presence.⁷⁰ Geoffrey's perception of the closeness of his relationship with the Virgin may be reflected in the story of the monk of Cerisy's vision of the Virgin, as queen of heaven, welcoming Geoffrey and seating him beside her, which John thought appropriate to include in the 'De statu'.⁷¹

It is likely that Geoffrey also restored some of the relics the cathedral had lost during the Scandinavian attacks in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The composition of the cathedral's relic collection before its dispersal may be inferred from the evidence of the 'De statu', the Angevin manuscript written after 1234 cited in Chapter 3, and an inventory of the relics held in the priory of Saint-Lô at Rouen compiled in 1470.⁷² It is implied in the 'De statu' that the cathedral held the bodies of Lô and Romphaire before the attacks, since the installation of their relics at Rouen is recorded after the description of the church's loss of its

⁶⁸ See pp. 50-55 and 131-34.

⁶⁹ Ott made this point in relation to the bishops of Amiens in their episcopal city at 'Urban Space, Memory, and Episcopal Authority', p. 68.

⁷⁰ 'Miracula', no. xxii, p. 378: 'Dei nutu'; no. xii, p. 375: 'Quadam vero die, quæ est Sexta Pentecostes, deposita coram imagine Virginis, astante reverendo episcopo Gaufrido et canonicis, accepit divinitus integerrimam sanitatem corporis'.

⁷¹ *DS*, col. 224: 'Quæ cum diligenter salutasset eum [...] manumque præsulis dextera manu sua comprehensa per ascensus graduum duxit eum in palatium et secum consedere fecit'.

⁷² *DS*, col. 217; Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 50-53 and 57-60.

relics.⁷³ According to the Angevin manuscript, the bodies of Saints Marcouf, Coronaire and Cariulfe were transferred to Angers with the relics of Lô and Romphaire in the late ninth or early tenth century. Although the date of their installation at Angers is unclear, Étienne Baluze, writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, noted that at the time of Count Fulk Nerra of Anjou, Abbot Primold of Saint-Aubin opened two reliquaries in the presence of monks; the first carried an inscription that indicated it contained the bodies of Lô, Romphaire and Coronaire, and the second held the bodies of Marcouf and Cariulfe.⁷⁴ The inventory from the priory of Saint-Lô indicates that in 1470 the community possessed the bulk of Romphaire's body, including his head, parts of Lô's body as well as one of his shoes, and fragments of Coronaire's bones.⁷⁵ The priory also held most of Fromond's body, which was probably taken to Rouen from the community at Saint-Fromond.⁷⁶ Therefore Geoffrey may have felt entitled to claim some of the relics of Saints Lô, Romphaire, Marcouf, Coronaire and Cariulfe for his cathedral.

With the exception of the hair of the Virgin, the cathedral's relics during Geoffrey's episcopate are not specified. In his account of Geoffrey's discovery of the Virgin's hair, Canon John made a passing reference to the relic collection. He also included phylacteries and reliquaries amongst the precious objects Geoffrey acquired for the cathedral, but he did not identify the relics contained in these objects.⁷⁷ There is some circumstantial evidence of the veneration of Lô's cult during Geoffrey's episcopate, for it is possible that a 'vita' of Lô

⁷³ DS, col. 217: 'reliquiis et Sanctorum corporibus viduatur [...] corpora sanctorum episcoporum Constantiensium, Laudi atque Rumpharii [...] Rotomagum sunt delata'.

⁷⁴ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 52: 'cum sanctorum corporibus, videlicet Marculfi, Coronarii et Carnulfi'. For the confusion over the date, see above, pp. 91-92. For Baluze's evidence, Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 55: 'Hic sunt corpora Sanctorum Lauthonis, Rumpharii et Coronarii [...] Hic sunt corpora sanctorum Marculfi, Caruilli'.

⁷⁵ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', pp. 58-59. Pigeon provides a summary of the parts of Lô's body taken to Angers deduced from the contents of the priory's reliquaries listed in this inventory, at p. 44.

⁷⁶ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 59; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 20.

⁷⁷ 'Miracula', no. xxii, p. 378: 'sæpedictus episcopus Gaufridus reliquias sanctas ecclesiæ, Dei nutu, reviseret'; DS, col. 219: 'Ceterum ornamenta ecclesiastica et ustencilia [...] capsas, phylacteria [...] contulit'.

was written at the church of Saint-Lô at Rouen during Geoffrey's episcopate. Pigeon dated it to the first half of the eleventh century, but Jacqueline suggested that it may have been written by Canon John since its style resembles that of the 'Miracula'.⁷⁸ Another eleventh-century 'vita', which resembles the 'vita' published by Pigeon, is held in the Bibliothèque Mazarine in Paris. According to Auguste Molinier, the part of the manuscript that contains the 'vita' probably belonged to the abbey of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés in Paris in the fourteenth century.⁷⁹ But the 'vita' may have been written or copied in Normandy, since an earlier eleventh-century section of the manuscript was held at the abbey of Saint-Ouen in Rouen.⁸⁰ But the earliest reference to the cathedral's possession of a relic of Lô is an inventory of the episcopal 'mensa' compiled in 1440. According to this record, there were many reliquaries in the cathedral, but only four relics are specified: two hairs of the Virgin Mary, a piece of the True Cross, an arm of Saint Romphaire and an arm of Saint Lô.⁸¹ One of the hairs of the Virgin was discovered by Geoffrey and the piece of the True Cross was probably provided by Saint Louis who visited the cathedral in 1256.⁸² But the provenance of the arms of saints Lô and Romphaire is more difficult to establish. It is likely they were already installed in the church in the thirteenth century, for it is logical to assume that the dedications of the chapels incorporated into the cathedral's interior from this time reflect its relic collection. According to Pigeon, a chapel of Saint Romphaire existed from 1269 and a thirteenth-century ordinal placed the altar of Saint Lô in the centre of the sanctuary.⁸³ Furthermore, although it is

⁷⁸ Pigeon, 'Saint Lo', p. 6; Jacqueline, 'Saint Lô', p. 45.

⁷⁹ Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 1711, f. 381-87v; Auguste Molinier, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Mazarine*, vol. ii (Paris, 1886), p. 186.

⁸⁰ Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 1711, f. 2r-237v; Molinier, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, ii, p. 184; Matthew Gabriele, 'The Provenance of the *Descriptio qualiter Karolus magnus*: Remembering the Carolingians in the Entourage of King Philip I (1060-1108) before the First Crusade', *Viator* 39 (2008), pp. 93-118, at p. 108.

⁸¹ *La mense épiscopale*, pp. 25-27, items 139, 144 and 151. The hairs do not have an item number; they are at the head of the list.

⁸² See above, p. 160; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 190, n. 1.

⁸³ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 192, 199; François Neveux, 'Les saints dans la civilisation médiévale' in *Les saints dans la Normandie médiévale*, pp. 21-37, at p. 36. This approach has also been applied at Bayeux,

difficult to reconstruct the interior of Geoffrey's cathedral, if there were radiating chapels off the ambulatory in the cathedral's east end, they may have accommodated several shrines.⁸⁴

It is possible that Geoffrey restored these relics to the cathedral as part of an attempt to develop the cathedral as a cult centre and, more importantly, to enhance his prestige by associating his authority with the saintly power of his illustrious predecessors. The inclusion of these relics amongst the episcopal 'mensa' in 1440 is suggestive for it links them closely to episcopal power, which, as noted above, was restored at Coutances by Geoffrey. It is also significant that these relics appear next to the hair of the Virgin discovered by Geoffrey.⁸⁵ An instructive parallel is provided by the neighbouring diocese of Bayeux. Like Coutances, Bayeux cathedral had lost its relics during the Scandinavian invasions of the ninth century. François Neveux has argued that the restoration of Bayeux's relic collection coincided with the recovery of ecclesiastical life in the early eleventh century.⁸⁶ The process was initiated by Bishop Hugh d'Ivry who, according to a twelfth-century source, recovered the bodies of Saints Raven and Rasiphe, whose relics formed the most valuable part of its collection in the fifteenth century, and obtained an arm of Saint Quentin, probably through Dudo of Saint-Quentin.⁸⁷ In addition to the commission of a new reliquary for Saints Raven and Rasiphe, Bishop Odo acquired a bone of Saint Aubert from Mont-Saint-Michel, which had probably been brought to Bayeux by the monks who were installed at the abbey of Saint-Vigor, and he made an unsuccessful attempt to buy the relics of Saint Exupère from the community at

François Neveux, 'Les reliques de la cathédrale de Bayeux' in *Les saints dans la Normandie médiévale*, pp. 109-33, at pp. 130-31.

⁸⁴ Although the purpose of an ambulatory is unclear, it may have been incorporated in order to control the movement of pilgrims visiting shrines, Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford, 2000), p. 252.

⁸⁵ *La mense épiscopale*, pp. 25-27, the Virgin's hairs have no item number. Perhaps some of the books and ornaments included with the relics were those provided by Geoffrey for the use of the canons; see items 145, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 155.

⁸⁶ Neveux, 'Les reliques de la cathédrale de Bayeux', pp. 112-14.

⁸⁷ Neveux, 'Les reliques de la cathédrale de Bayeux', pp. 114, 110.

Corbeil.⁸⁸ Therefore it is logical to assume that as Geoffrey reinvigorated ecclesiastical life in the diocese he also restored some the cults of local saints to his cathedral. It should also be noted that Geoffrey's task would have been made easier by the fragmentary state of the bodies.⁸⁹

The Sacred Past

Geoffrey also enhanced his charisma by asserting his authority over the sites linked to the 'collective, mytho-historical past' of the diocese.⁹⁰ The most significant of these sites was Coutances where, as noted above, Geoffrey re-established an episcopal presence. Coutances had been an episcopal seat since at least 549 when Saint Lô attended a council of Orléans as 'bishop of the church of Coutances or Briovère'.⁹¹ But it is likely that the diocese's first bishop, Saint Ereptiole, built a basilica in the city in the early fifth century, since Pigeon referred to the remains of an ancient temple found in the choir of the cathedral, which suggests that the site had been continually used in a religious context since Roman times.⁹² Another ancient church dedicated to Saint Peter, which together with its tithe and a mill on the River Soule formed one of the canons' prebends in 1056, 'had stood from early times' according to Orderic Vitalis.⁹³ It is also possible that a chapel dedicated to Saint Floxel, located near the church of Saint Nicholas, had stood since ancient times. Its antiquity is suggested by the tradition which required the procession of each new bishop to the cathedral

⁸⁸ Neveux, 'Les reliques de la cathédrale de Bayeux', pp. 114-15.

⁸⁹ Saints' bodies were often divided after their removal from their original resting places, Fournée, *La spiritualité en Normandie*, p. 46.

⁹⁰ The phrase is used by Ott in the context of an episcopal city at 'Urban Space, Memory, and Episcopal Authority', p. 45.

⁹¹ Mansi, ix, col. 136: 'Lauto in Christi nomine episcopus ecclesiæ Constantinæ, vel Brioverensis, subscr.'.

⁹² Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 2-3.

⁹³ *OV*, iv, pp. 264-65: 'ab antiquis temporibus constructa'; Fontanel, no. 340, p. 491: 'in prebendarum [...] ecclesia quedam in honore Sancti Petri fundata et decima que ad illam pertinet, sub prescripta civitate molendinum unum in fluvio Sola'.



Fig. 9 - Saint-Lô's fortifications, south-west of the church of Notre-Dame: note the bed-rock on which the walls were reconstructed after World War 2.

to begin at the chapel.⁹⁴ The city was also the location of Saint Lô's most famous miracle, when he restored the sight of a blind woman, in the basilica.⁹⁵ The miracle was still celebrated in the seventeenth century. Toustain de Billy noted that it was customary for Lô's successors to genuflect before the stone on which the saint had stood when he performed this miracle before entering the cathedral for the first time. This stone was located close to the great portal of the cathedral. Furthermore, there were statues of Lô and the blind woman next

⁹⁴ For this tradition, Charles Grosset, 'Hypothèses sur l'évangélisation du Cotentin: II – La passion de Saint Floxel', *RdM* 13 (1971), pp. 249-75, at p. 251 and Deniaux *et al*, *La Normandie avant les Normands*, p. 328. A charter, dated 1241, refers to the newly built church of Saint Nicholas 'situated near the chapel of Saint Floxel', Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 186-88, at p. 187: 'sitam prope capellam sancti Flocelli'. The chapel's antiquity is also noted at Thomas Jarry, 'Les débuts du Christianisme dans le Cotentin', *RdM* 41 (1999), pp. 7-31, at p. 10 and Jacqueline, 'Saint Lô', p. 40.

⁹⁵ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 9; the source of Pigeon's information is a 'Historien primitif, *ms.* du XI^e siècle', at p. 10, n. 1.

to this stone until the Revolution, and the miracle was also depicted above the portal of the abbey of Sainte-Croix at Saint-Lô.⁹⁶ The earliest basilica was probably the original resting place of Romphaire, as well as his saintly predecessors, Ereptiole, Leoncien and Possesseur.⁹⁷

Geoffrey also asserted his authority over the ancient town of Briovère, which eventually became known as Saint-Lô. Saint-Lô had been a centre of episcopal power since at least 511 when Bishop Leoncien attended a council at Orléans as the bishop ‘of the city of Briovère’. Its naturally fortified location offered the bishops greater security (Fig. 9).⁹⁸ As its name suggests, the town was intimately connected to Saint-Lô. Toustain de Billy argued that Lô’s father had been lord of Briovère and that Lô’s familial lands, which he granted to the church of Coutances, formed the barony of Saint-Lô, which the bishops of Coutances held until 1576.⁹⁹ Although this association of Lô with the barony is anachronistic, Jacqueline noted that in the thirteenth century the quarter of Béchevel was called the ‘villa Sancti Laudi’.¹⁰⁰ Lô was certainly buried in the town for his tomb could still be seen in the abbey of Sainte-Croix in 1591.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Du Monstier recorded the tradition which attributed the change in the town’s name to the miracles performed by Lô’s relics in the *Neustria Pia* in 1663.¹⁰² The town also had a community of canons whose origins have been obfuscated by

⁹⁶ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 34; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 9-11; Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l’histoire du Cotentin*, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Mansi, viii, col. 357: ‘Leontianus episcopus ecclesiae Constantinæ subscripti’ and Bernard Jacqueline, ‘Histoire de l’église paroissiale Notre-Dame de Saint-Lô’, *RdM* 17 (1975), pp. 3-44, at p. 3. François Neveux argued that the bishops of Sées were known as the bishops of Exmes in the sixth century for the same reason, at ‘La ville de Sées du haut moyen âge à l’époque ducal’, *ANS* 17 (1994), pp. 145-63, at p. 149.

⁹⁹ He also records another tradition which identified Lô as the chancellor of King Childebert. In this tradition, Lô received the barony for his service. Toustain de Billy interpreted this story as evidence of Childebert’s confirmation of Lô’s grant of the barony to the church of Coutances, Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l’histoire du Cotentin*, pp. 6-11.

¹⁰⁰ Bernard Jacqueline, ‘Le palais des barons-évêques de Saint-Lô’ in *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie*, ed. Sylvette Lemagnen and Philippe Manneville (Caen, 1997), pp. 81-88, at p. 81.

¹⁰¹ Jacqueline, ‘Saint Lô’, p. 45 and n. 55 (at p. 52).

¹⁰² Du Monstier, *Neustria Pia*, p. 836: ‘ob ingentia merita ipsius S. Laudi, maxime vero propter quamplurima inibi ad sacras eius Reliquias cœlitus edicta miracula, de suo nomine deinceps, appellationem tulit’; cf. Toustain de Billy, who doubted the story at *Mémoires sur l’histoire du Cotentin*, p. 14.

conflicting traditions concerning its foundation. One tradition, which derived from a manuscript destroyed in 1944, identified Saint Helena, Constantine's mother, as the founder of a church dedicated to Sainte-Croix, but the *Neustria Pia* records another tradition which attributes its foundation to Charlemagne. It is possible that Charlemagne refounded a community that had been established by Helena who according to Orderic was from Neustria.¹⁰³ Whichever tradition was believed by the local population in the eleventh century, the community must have occupied a prominent place in the town's sacred heritage.

Geoffrey obtained a ducal confirmation of the church's possession of the entire parish of Saint-Lô with everything pertaining to it, Martinville and Pierrefitte, and the parish of Notre-Dame du Château.¹⁰⁴ According to the 'De statu', Geoffrey exploited the economic potential of the town so that its revenues from tolls increased to two hundred and twenty pounds. He also established a pond with a mill and built a stone bridge over the River Vire.¹⁰⁵ Given the extent of this activity, it is possible that Geoffrey's role in the reconstruction of the town has been underestimated. Bishop Robert is usually credited with the restoration of the town's fortifications, the establishment of the chapel of Notre-Dame du Château with its parish, and the construction of an episcopal palace.¹⁰⁶ However, it seems odd that Bishop Robert would carry out all of this work without building a stone bridge over the River Vire. This bridge would have been vital to the economic prosperity of the town and

¹⁰³ Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l'histoire du Cotentin*, pp. 12-13; Jacqueline, 'Saint Lô', p. 40, n. 38 (at p. 51); *Neustria Pia*, p. 836: 'a Carolo magno olim fundatum ann. 805'; A. Descoqs, 'Topographie de l'abbaye de Saint Lô', *Notices, mémoires et documents publiés par la société d'agriculture, d'archéologie et d'histoire naturelle du département de la Manche* 57 (1948), pp. 1-5, at p. 1; *OV*, iii, pp. 48-49: 'et in ipsa prouincia concubinam nomine Helenam habuit, ex qua Constantinum magnum [...] genuit'.

¹⁰⁴ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 491: 'parrochia Sancti Laudi super Viriam fluvium integra cum omni exitu ad eam pertinente et cum terris Martinville et Petreficte necnon et parrochia Sancte Marie consistens in castro predicti sancti Laudi'.

¹⁰⁵ *DS*, col. 219: 'burgum vero sancti Laudi qui est supra Viram fluvium adeo viriliter incrementavit ut teloneum quod erat 15 librarum, fieret 220 librarum ibique stagnum cum molendino et lapideum pontem supra Viram condidit'.

¹⁰⁶ Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l'histoire du Cotentin*, pp. 21-22; Gabrielle Thibaut, 'L'église Notre-Dame de Saint-Lô, ses campagnes de construction', *Congrès archéologique de France* 124 (1966), pp. 280-99, at pp. 280-82; Jacqueline, 'Notre-Dame de Saint-Lô', p. 4.

symbolically important since the town's ancient name, Briovère, meant 'bridge on the Vire'.¹⁰⁷ Geoffrey also asserted his authority over the community of canons in the town. There is little evidence of this community before their replacement by Augustinian canons during the episcopate of Bishop Algar, but in the papal bull which granted Algar permission to establish regular communities at Sainte-Croix and the church of Saint-Lô at Rouen, dated 1132, Pope Innocent II referred to the irregular life of the secular canons who resided in both churches.¹⁰⁸ According to the 'De statu', Geoffrey 'liberated [...] the church of Saint-Gilles from the domain of the monks'.¹⁰⁹ Since Saint-Gilles is situated amongst the estates clustered around Saint-Lô, and it formed part of the barony of Saint-Lô, it is reasonable to identify these monks as the canons at Sainte-Croix.¹¹⁰

The Church of Saint-Lô de Rouen

Geoffrey also asserted his authority over the church of Saint-Lô at Rouen which, as the resting place of relics belonging to Lô, Romphaire and other saints of the Cotentin after 913, occupied a prominent place in the church of Coutances' sacred past (Fig. 10).¹¹¹ It also formed an important part of Geoffrey's episcopal lordship since he inherited certain rights and privileges with the church within the archdiocese of Rouen. The church was granted to the bishops by Rollo when he installed the bodies of Lô and Romphaire in it. According to the 'De statu', Rollo

¹⁰⁷ Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l'histoire du Cotentin*, pp. 4-5. For the symbolic significance of bridge-construction as a reflection of a bishop's devotion to his community and its part in the construction of episcopal sanctity, see, Bowman, 'Bishop Builds a Bridge', pp. 1-16.

¹⁰⁸ GC, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238; L. de Glanville, *Histoire de prieuré de Saint-Lô de Rouen*, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1890-91), ii, pièces justificatives, no. III, p. 289: 'Audivimus enim ibi seculares irregulariter vivere'. The abbey of Sainte-Croix is referred to as 'sancti Laudi in Constantiensi episcopatu'. Regular canons were not installed at Saint-Lô de Rouen until 1144, de Glanville, *Saint-Lô*, ii, pièces justificatives no. IV, p. 290.

¹⁰⁹ DS, col. 219: 'ecclesiam sancti Ægidii a dominatione monachorum liberavit'.

¹¹⁰ Toustain de Billy, *Mémoires sur l'histoire du Cotentin*, pp. 8-9.

¹¹¹ The date is provided by Canon John who stated that the relics were installed in the church two years after 911, at DS, col. 217: 'in anno DCCCCXI [...] et post biennium'.

gave the same church [of Saint-Sauveur] [...] to Lord Theoderic, who at that time was bishop of Coutances, and to all of his successors in perpetual right, also the land next to the aforesaid church, where the bishop might stay with his clerics who were serving the church.¹¹²

Archeologists have discovered the remains of a church on the site which may have been built at the time of Rollo's grant.¹¹³ Neither the 'De statu' nor Duke William's confirmation of the cathedral's possessions specify the nature of the rights and privileges granted with the land by Rollo. In the latter, the duke simply confirmed the cathedral's possession of the church 'just as it was in ancient times with all of the benefices adjacent to it and all the dues undisturbed'.¹¹⁴ There are references to the church's liberties and exemptions in papal bulls issued by Innocent II in 1132 and Gregory IX in 1228, but they are not set out in detail.¹¹⁵ Although there is no evidence of these rights in the eleventh century, it may be inferred from the attempts made by the archbishops of Rouen in the fifteenth century to press their claim to jurisdiction over the church and its possessions that the bishops had always held the right of visitation at the church.¹¹⁶ But there is insufficient evidence to argue, as de Glanville did, that the bishops of Coutances had held a range of rights and privileges 'vis-à-vis' the archbishops of Rouen from at least the installation of regular canons in 1144. It is more likely that these rights were claimed during the crisis of the mid-fifteenth century. De

¹¹² *DS*, col. 217: 'Igitur Rollo [...] dedit eandem ecclesiam [...] domino Theoderico, qui tunc temporis Constantiensis episcopus erat, et omnibus successoribus eius iure perenni, terram quoque juxta prædictam ecclesiam, ubi maneret episcopus et clerici sui qui ecclesiæ servirent'.

¹¹³ Guy Dubois, 'Observations faites sur le site de l'ancienne église Saint Lô de Rouen', *AdeN* 16 (1966), pp. 333-41, at p. 338.

¹¹⁴ Fontanel no. 340, p. 491: 'apud Rothomagum ecclesia Sancti Laudi, sicut antiquitus extitit, cum beneficiis omnibus sibi adjacentibus et omnium exactionum quietudine'.

¹¹⁵ *GC*, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238; de Glanville, *Saint-Lô*, ii, pièces justificatives no. III, p. 289: 'sancti Laudi que in civitate Rothomagensi sita est ecclesiam et sancti Laudi in Constantiensi episcopatu cum pertinentiis et libertatibus suis vobis ut ad canonicum ordinem redigatis assensu principis concedimus'; pièces justificatives no. XXXXV, p. 365: 'libertates et exemptiones secularium exactionum a regibus et principibus vel aliis fidelibus rationabiliter vobis indultas auctoritate apostolica confirmamus'.

¹¹⁶ De Glanville, *Saint-Lô*, i, pp. 40-46. Most notably by Cardinal William d'Estouteville, archbishop of Rouen, in 1456, at pp. 44-46 and Toustain de Billy, ii, pp. 285-91. De Glanville also drew this inference, at i, p. 23.



Fig. 10 - The ruins of the priory of Saint-Lô at Rouen.

Glanville thought these rights had been confirmed in the bulls of a succession of popes from as early as 1144 by the phrase ‘salva auctoritate et Constantiensis episcopi canonica iustitia et reverentia’.¹¹⁷ But this expression was deliberately vague, and it may simply reflect the bishop of Coutances’ jurisdiction over the church and its possessions and his right to the episcopal customs associated with it.

It is equally difficult to identify the properties Geoffrey inherited with the church. The ducal confirmation charter refers to its ‘benefices’ without identifying them, and Canon John simply noted the inclusion of land ‘next to the aforesaid church’ in Rollo’s grant.¹¹⁸ In the earliest record of the church’s possessions, which occurs in a bull of Pope Eugenius III dated 1144, the church held Bréauté with its church and the tithe of the whole parish, Aclou with its church and mill, a prebend in ‘Burdineio’ with its church and mill, the tithes of the churches of Blosseville and ‘Menilleio de Aqua pluta’ and ‘Escuris’, and unspecified rights in the church of Saint-John at Rouen and in the church of Agon, in the Cotentin, with half of the tithe from the parish.¹¹⁹ L.C. Loyd argued that the church’s possessions at Blosseville were donated by Bishop Hugh, who installed seven of the Coutances canons in the church and enlarged the church itself, since his son, Roger ‘filius episcopi’ maintained an interest in it.¹²⁰

Whilst it is likely that the church acquired these lands during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, there is no evidence that it held them during Geoffrey’s episcopate. Lecanu’s

¹¹⁷ De Glanville, *Saint-Lô*, i, pp. 35-40. De Glanville did not identify the sources of his information. He simply noted that it derived from ‘ancient memoirs, written [...] on ancient charters of the archives of the metropolitan church which existed then and which since were lost or burned by the Calvinists’, i, p. 35: ‘les anciens mémoires, rédigés [...] sur d’anciens titres des archives de l’église métropolitaine qui existaient alors et se sont trouvés perdus depuis ou brûlés par les calvinistes’. For the bulls, see ii, pièces justificatives no. V, p. 291: ‘salva Constantiensis episcopi iustitia et reverentia’; no. VI, p. 293: ‘salva Constantiensis episcopi canonica iusticia et reverentia’; no. XXIII, p. 335: ‘salva [...] Constanciensis episcopi canonica iustitia’; no. XXXV, p. 365: ‘salva [...] diocesani episcopi iusticia’.

¹¹⁸ See above, n. 112.

¹¹⁹ De Glanville, *Saint-Lô*, ii, pièces justificatives no. V, p. 291: ‘Brealtare cum ecclesia et decimis totius parrochie, Aclou cum ecclesia et molendino, unam prebendam in Burdineio cum ecclesia et molendino. Decimas ecclesie de Blovilla et Menilleio de Aqua pluta et Escuris. Ius vestrum in ecclesia de Aagon cum medietate decime totius parrochie. Ius vestrum in ecclesia Sti Joannis in Rothom.’

¹²⁰ Loyd, ‘Origin of the Family of Warenne’, pp. 102-3. For Bishop Hugh, see above, pp. 93-95.

suggestion that Archbishop Franco of Rouen relinquished jurisdiction over the parish attached to the church and that of Saint-Jean-sur-Renelle to Theoderic, as well as revenues from the parishes of Bréauté, Aclou, Blosseville, Agon, Raffetot and Froberville, should be disregarded because it appears to have been based on later evidence.¹²¹

If it is assumed that the church and its possessions were exempt from archiepiscopal interference during Geoffrey's episcopate, the privileged position it afforded him in Rouen was an important source of prestige. Geoffrey asserted his authority over the church. In 1056, the duke confirmed the church of Coutances' possession of it.¹²² Before 1056, Geoffrey recalled the seven canons of Coutances cathedral who had been installed in the church by Bishop Hugh.¹²³ Although this action suggests that Geoffrey severed links with the church, he was still described as 'bishop of Saint-Lô' by his contemporaries. In a charter for the abbey of Saint-Denis, dated 13 April 1069, which exists as an original, he used the title in his subscription. He also witnessed a writ for either William the Conqueror or William Rufus as 'bishop of Saint-Lô'. Furthermore, Geoffrey is given the title in the Domesday returns for Gloucestershire and Suffolk.¹²⁴ Almost nothing is known about the community during Geoffrey's episcopate. Since the irregularity of the life of the existing canons is noted in the charter recording the installation of regular canons, some canons must have remained in the church after Geoffrey recalled Bishop Hugh's canons.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 132.

¹²² See above, n. 114.

¹²³ *DS*, cols. 219-20: 'septemque canonicos quos episcopus Hugo Rotomagi in ecclesia S. Laudi irregulariter constituerat, apostolica auctoritate ecclesiæ matri revocavit'.

¹²⁴ Canon John stated that this title was still used by the bishops of Coutances in the early twelfth century, *DS*, col. 217: 'Hæc igitur est vera et certa ratio qua nunc usque Constantiensis præsul nominatur episcopus de S. Laudo'. *Regesta*, nos. 254 and 278; DB Gloucestershire, 6.1 (*Domesday*, 165r, p. 453) and DB Suffolk 21.17 and 29.9 (*Domesday*, 383r, p. 1257; 404r, p. 1271).

¹²⁵ See n. 108.

Episcopal Manors

Geoffrey also enhanced his status through the development of several episcopal manors. The exploitation of the landscape was one of the most potent ways of asserting lordship. The most striking examples are the parks he created at Le Parc near Coutances and Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé. At Le Parc, according to Canon John, Geoffrey planted acorn, oak and beech trees and filled it with English deer, and he enclosed it with a double ditch and palisade.¹²⁶ His park at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé, which John described as ‘most opulent’, contained stags, boars, bulls, cows and horses and it was enclosed by hedges, walls and ditches at the time of its destruction in the eighteenth century.¹²⁷ The imparkment of agricultural land provided a powerful statement of lordly power because it highlighted a lord’s control over nature as well as man. This power was most effectively expressed through the enclosure of parks with ditches and walls, as at Le Parc and probably Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé.¹²⁸ Although parks were sources of wood and food and in some cases were used for grazing animals, they also provided lords with a way of expressing their aristocratic lifestyle and status.¹²⁹ The principal expression of this lifestyle was through participation in hunting, which reflected the amount of leisure time enjoyed by a lord. It was also associated with the provision of venison, a meat which was associated with the aristocracy.¹³⁰ Furthermore, since parks were expensive to establish and would not generate a profit for a lord, they reflected a lord’s wealth.¹³¹

¹²⁶ DS, col. 219: ‘terram parci contra comitem Moritoniensem ex parte expugnavit, ipsumque parcum duplici fossato vallavit et palatio circumsepsit, intusque glandes seminavit, quercus et fagos, ceterumque nemus studiose coluit, cervisque Angligenis replevit’.

¹²⁷ DS, col. 219: ‘parcum opulentissimum cervis et apris, tauris et vaccis et equis constituit’; Casset, *Les évêques aux champs*, p. 417.

¹²⁸ Robert Liddiard, ‘Castle Rising: a ‘Landscape of Lordship’?’, *ANS* 22 (1999), pp. 169-86, at pp. 177, 183; Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, p. 69; S.A. Miles, ‘The Sociology of Park Creation in Medieval England’ in *The Medieval Park*, pp. 11-26, at pp. 15-16.

¹²⁹ Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, p. 67.

¹³⁰ Miles, ‘Sociology of Park Creation’, pp. 16-17; Liddiard, ‘Castle Rising’, p. 177.

¹³¹ Liddiard, ‘Castle Rising’, p. 177; Miles, ‘Sociology of Park Creation’, p. 15.

At Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé, Geoffrey's park was part of a residential complex. In the most recent survey of the manor's history, Marie Casset has attributed the creation of an impressive lordly residence to Geoffrey. In her interpretation, Geoffrey manipulated the landscape in order to maximise the visual impact of the site as an emblem of lordship. This is most clearly demonstrated in the position of the residence on the point of the spur which made it accessible only by routes that passed alongside the park. Despite the lack of evidence of a motte on the site, Casset thought that the vast size of the fifteenth-century castle's enclosure, and the existence of an eleventh-century gatehouse, suggested that Geoffrey had fortified the site. The site also featured a series of tiered ponds that were created in front of the castle by blocking the valley to the north.¹³² Although, as Casset admitted, there is no documentary evidence to support her thesis, Geoffrey's reputation as a patron of construction work and the evidence of the 'most opulent park' established by Geoffrey in the 'De statu' make it highly likely that he developed this site.¹³³

It is possible that Geoffrey developed his manor at Valognes in a similar way. According to Canon John, he built a lordly residence there which consisted of 'the noblest home, a garden and a chapel'.¹³⁴ However, there is no further evidence of this manor until 1146, when it appears amongst the possessions of Bishop Algar which were confirmed by Pope Eugenius III as 'houses, shrubberies, and thirty acres of land [...] with rights in the count's forest [at Brix]' at Valognes.¹³⁵ Similar uncertainty surrounds the episcopal residence at Saint-Lô. It may be inferred from the confirmation charter of 1056, in which the

¹³² Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, pp. 417-21.

¹³³ Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, pp. 417-19 and 425; *DS*, col. 219: 'parcum opulentissimum'.

¹³⁴ *DS*, col. 219: 'in Valloniis terram ubi domum optimam, et virgultum, et capellam construxit'; cf. the confirmation charter in which there is no reference to the cathedral's possession of any land at Valognes, only two parts of the tithe, Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'in Valoniis due partes decime tocius parrochie'.

¹³⁵ The bull exists as a *vidimus* issued between 1223 and 1236, Fontanel, no. 273, p. 411: 'domos, virgultum, triginta acras terre que habes in Valoniis cum libertatibus et quietudinibus in foresta comitis'. For the identification of the forest as Brix, Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, p. 464.

duke confirmed the cathedral's possession of the parish of Notre-Dame-du-Château, that Geoffrey inherited a 'castrum' in the town.¹³⁶ But the extent to which Geoffrey developed the site is unclear. Since he rehabilitated the town's economy by building a stone bridge over the River Vire and establishing a pond with a mill, it is tempting to suggest that he also oversaw the reconstruction of the castle and the town's fortifications.¹³⁷ Indeed, it would be fitting if Geoffrey had built the vast room which Casset has tentatively proposed as an eleventh-century construction.¹³⁸ However, these works have been traditionally attributed to Robert, Geoffrey's predecessor.¹³⁹

These manors were symbols of his status and prestige. The elaborate arrangement of Geoffrey's manor at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé was a clear statement of his aristocratic origins and mentality.¹⁴⁰ The purpose of creating a manor at Valognes may have been to extend his episcopal authority into the northern parts of his diocese. But it may also have been motivated by a desire to strengthen his relationship with the duke. As Casset has pointed out, Valognes was located amongst the ducal possessions in the northern Cotentin. It was a favoured retreat for the dukes due to its proximity to the forest at Brix and, after 1066, the port of Barfleur.¹⁴¹ By establishing a manor at Valognes, Geoffrey may have been trying to facilitate his access to the duke and perhaps ingratiate himself with the ducal family.

¹³⁶ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 491: 'parrochia Sancte Marie consistens in castro predicti sancti'. For the castle, Jacques Le Maho, 'Châteaux d'époque franque en Normandie', *Archéologie médiévale* 10 (1980), pp. 153-65, and Fig. 2, at p. 163.

¹³⁷ See above, pp. 167-68.

¹³⁸ Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, p. 437.

¹³⁹ See n. 106.

¹⁴⁰ Marie Casset, 'Les stratégies d'implantation des châteaux et manoirs des évêques normands au Moyen Âge (XI^e-XV^e siècle)' in *Les lieux de pouvoir au Moyen Âge en Normandie*, pp. 37-52, at pp. 48-50.

¹⁴¹ Casset, *Évêques aux champs*, p. 464.

Personal Bonds

Geoffrey's charisma was also enhanced through the friendships he developed with other lords. It is difficult to establish his friendship network during the pre-Conquest period because of the paucity of the evidence. However, John Meddings' approach to Henry the Young King's friendship network after his coronation in 1170 suggests that Geoffrey's friendships may be reflected in the lists of witnesses or subscribers in the ducal charters in which he appears.¹⁴² Although there are only five charters, their lists of witnesses or signers link Geoffrey to some of those magnates who were closest to the duke: Bishop Odo, the duke's half-brother, who was present at Geoffrey's deathbed, appears in three of the charters; William fitz Osbern also appears in three of the documents; Roger de Montgomery, Walter Giffard and Ralf de Tancarville, the duke's chamberlain, appear in two of the charters.¹⁴³ Geoffrey's relative, vicomte Nigel, also appears twice, as does William de Vauville, who was from Vauville in the north-west Cotentin, who is associated with Geoffrey in south-west England as the first sheriff of Devon.¹⁴⁴ Although this evidence is limited, the links between Geoffrey and those magnates who were already close to the duke suggest that he may have formed relationships with these men before 1066 in order to facilitate his access to the duke.

With the exception of the advice given by Geoffrey to Turstin Haldup concerning the foundation of the abbey of Lessay in 1056, there is little evidence of Geoffrey interacting

¹⁴² John Meddings, 'Friendship Among the Aristocracy in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS* 22 (1999), pp. 187-204, at pp. 196-97.

¹⁴³ For Odo, Fauroux, nos. 132, 141, 227; William fitz Osbern: nos. 132, 141, 163; Roger de Montgomery: nos. 141, 163; Walter Giffard: nos. 141, 227 and Ralf the Chamberlain: nos. 141, 227. For the closeness between the duke and Odo, FitzOsbern and Roger de Montgomery, Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power*, pp. 193-98. For Odo's presence at Coutances in 1093, *DS*, col. 224. Walter Giffard fought for the duke at the battle of Mortemer in 1054, *WP*, pp. 48-49: 'Vrgebat namque ceruices eorum (Odo, son of King Robert; Count Reginald I of Clermont-en-Beauvaisis) [...] mucro Roberti Aucensis comitis [...] una [...] Gualterii Giffardi'. For Ralph de Tancarville, Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 146.

¹⁴⁴ For vicomte Nigel, Fauroux, nos. 132, 141 and *DS*, col. 222: 'consanguineum suum'. For William de Vauville, Fauroux, nos. 132, 163*bis* and Judith A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 63 and n. 79.

with the most prominent families of western Normandy before 1066.¹⁴⁵ But the appearance of Nigel and William de Vauville in the group discussed above suggests that Geoffrey may have formed friendships with those magnates whose power bases were close to Coutances.¹⁴⁶ This would explain his friendship with the duke's half-brother, Count Robert of Mortain, which is evident in post-Conquest England, where Geoffrey defended the count's castle at Montacute in 1069, and where the two men dominated south-west England.¹⁴⁷ Mortain is approximately seventy kilometres south-east of Coutances, but the counts of Mortain held possessions in and around Coutances in the eleventh century. Jacques Boussard highlighted a small group of lands scattered around Coutances amongst the donations made by Count Robert to his new foundation at Mortain in 1082, and Robert also granted an annual payment of sixty shillings from his rents at Coutances to the church.¹⁴⁸ These may not have been his only possessions in the vicinity of the city, for Canon John noted in the 'De statu' that the land which Geoffrey imparked at Le Parc had belonged to the count of Mortain.¹⁴⁹ These lands and the revenues from Coutances highlight the extent to which the lordships of Geoffrey and the other great men of western Normandy overlapped. Although this friendship may not have developed until after Robert's acquisition of the county in the late 1050s or 'not much before 1063', the count of Mortain's possessions in and around Coutances would have

¹⁴⁵ *Regesta*, no. 175, p. 581: 'Gausfridi consilio Constantiensis episcopi'. The date was provided at the beginning of the abbey's cartulary, Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 188.

¹⁴⁶ Meddings notes that geographical proximity would have contributed to the formation of friendships, Meddings, 'Friendship Among the Aristocracy', pp. 195-96.

¹⁴⁷ *OV*, ii, pp. 228-29: 'Saxones occidentales [...] Montem-Acutum assilierunt sed [...] Guentani, Lundonii, Salesberii, Gaufrido Constantiensi præsule ductore superuenerunt'.

¹⁴⁸ J. Boussard, 'Le comté de Mortain au XI^e siècle', *Le Moyen Âge* 58 (1952), pp. 253-79, at pp. 269-71: Lingreville, Equilly, Cérences and Montsurvent and *Regesta*, no. 215, p. 684: 'Ad thesaurum ecclesie [...] quarum postea lx solidos in proprio redditu Constanciarum [...] annuatim statuit haberi'.

¹⁴⁹ *DS*, col. 219: 'terram parci contra comitem Moritoniensem ex parte expugnavit'. This count of Mortain is not named, but it is likely that it was Richard, Robert's predecessor, who is named in the confirmation charter, Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'terra Haye cum ecclesia Sancti Andree et molendino quam Richardus Morituniensis, comes [...] contulit'.

brought him into close contact with Geoffrey.¹⁵⁰ Given the closeness of their relationship in post-Conquest England, it is likely that Geoffrey cultivated his friendship with Robert as part of his *Königsnähe* strategy.

But the most important relationship Geoffrey formed during this period was with the duke. As suggested in Chapter 2, Geoffrey's simoniacal promotion to the episcopate may have established a bond friendship between Geoffrey and the duke. Indeed, as Gerd Althoff has noted, 'rulers wanted to be both respected as lords and loved as friends', and Meddings has highlighted how the bond between a lord and his follower may have been one of friendship.¹⁵¹ In its earliest stages in the aftermath of the battle of Val-ès-Dunes, Geoffrey's friendship with Duke William resembled the contractual arrangement described by Althoff. At its core lay the provision of mutual support which guaranteed peace between them.¹⁵² However, Althoff's interpretation of friendship as a business arrangement overlooks the emotive side of the relationship; in fact, Althoff explicitly rejected the role of 'subjective feeling[s] or emotion' in the formation of friendships.¹⁵³ But as Meddings has noted, affective relationships were extremely important in a society in which the principle form of interaction was face-to-face contact.¹⁵⁴

Geoffrey's friendship with Duke William may have developed as a result of their pursuit of a shared goal. This type of friendship, which derived from Cassian's *Collationes*,

¹⁵⁰ Brian Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', *ANS* 13 (1990), pp. 119-44, at p. 120; quotation at Brian Golding, 'Robert, count of Mortain (d. 1095)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19339>, accessed 20 July 2011].

¹⁵¹ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 67; Meddings, 'Friendship Among the Aristocracy', pp. 189-90.

¹⁵² Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁵³ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 66; also, pp. 71, 77.

¹⁵⁴ Meddings, 'Friendship Among the Aristocracy', p. 188.

was well known in the eleventh century especially in monastic circles.¹⁵⁵ In the context of Geoffrey's early career, this goal was the restoration of ecclesiastical life at Coutances. Although, as Fontanel has argued, the confirmation charter may have been rewritten in the early twelfth century in order to play down the significance of the bishop in the restoration of ecclesiastical life at Coutances, the modifier could not conceal Duke William's generosity to the church.¹⁵⁶ The scale of the grants he made suggests that he was genuinely concerned about the condition of ecclesiastical life in the diocese and he was willing to support its revitalisation by providing Geoffrey with the means to achieve it. This attitude is consistent with Duke William's conscientious governorship of ecclesiastical affairs in Normandy.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, Geoffrey's energetic approach to reform at Coutances may reflect an awareness of its significance as a way of developing a closer bond with the duke. In this sense, to borrow a phrase from an entirely different context, Geoffrey was 'working towards' the duke in the pursuit of self-advancement.¹⁵⁸

Conclusion

Geoffrey's restoration of the church of Coutances constituted a small part of a broader strategy of building up his lordship in order to join the 'charismatic aristocracy' that surrounded the duke.¹⁵⁹ By joining this group, Geoffrey hoped to share in the spoils and glory of the duke's further military achievements. This strategy included the enhancement of the supernatural element of his charisma by asserting his authority over the prominent places

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of this type of friendship in a monastic context, see R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 139-41.

¹⁵⁶ Fontanel, 'La réorganisation religieuse', pp. 195-96 and 204. The duke made grants to Avranches (Fauroux, no. 229) and Bayeux (*Regesta*, no. 27).

¹⁵⁷ Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp. 198-99.

¹⁵⁸ Ian Kershaw, 'Working Towards the Führer.' Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History* 2 (1993), pp. 103-18, at pp. 116-17.

¹⁵⁹ In Weber's model, a charismatic ruler is surrounded by 'a charismatic aristocracy composed of a select group of adherents who are united by discipleship and loyalty and chosen according to personal charismatic qualification', Weber, *Economy and Society*, iii, p. 1119.

of the diocese's sacred past. It was also achieved by establishing links between Geoffrey and the cults of his saintly predecessors, Lô and Romphaire, and the Virgin, to whom he was especially devoted. But this strategy also required Geoffrey to express his status through the development of parks and manors. His participation in the Hastings campaign suggests that he achieved his objective by 1066. His activities in post-Conquest England were motivated by a desire to maintain his position within the 'charismatic aristocracy'.

Chapter 6: *Unus de primatibus Anglorum*¹

Geoffrey of Coutances, who though an overseas bishop was sitting with the others in the council because he held a great deal of property in England.²

By the time of the council of London in 1075, Geoffrey's status had been significantly enhanced through the large number of estates he received from the king as a reward for his participation in the Conquest. The extent of his involvement in the planning of the invasion is unclear. His name does not appear in the list of magnates who provided the duke with ships, but charter evidence suggests that he may have been with the duke at Bayeux in 1066, and Orderic Vitalis included him amongst the bishops and magnates with whom the duke discussed the invasion in that year.³ He accompanied the army to England, where, according to William of Poitiers, he fought for the duke with prayers.⁴ At the king's coronation on 25 December 1066, Geoffrey asked the Normans for their consent to the duke's accession.⁵ For the next two years, he appears to have remained with the king. He returned to Normandy in 1067, for he attended the dedication of the new church at Jumièges on 1 July, and he may have travelled back to England with the king in early December.⁶ He was with the king at Westminster on 11 May 1068 and at Valognes at Christmas.⁷ Following his return to England, he appears to have spent most of his time in the kingdom, for charter evidence does not place him in Normandy again until c.1076, when he heard a plea concerning Mont-Saint-

¹ *Regesta*, no. 68, p. 314.

² *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 11, pp. 74-75: 'qui cum transmarinus esset episcopus in Anglia multas possessiones habens cum ceteris in concilio residebat'. He attested as 'one of the principle men of the English land', p. 74, n. 1: 'unus de Anglicaë terrae primatibus' and p. 79, n. 16.

³ For the 'ship list', van Houts, 'Ship List', p. 176; Fauroux, no. 227; *OV*, ii, pp. 140-43: 'Goisfredus Constantiniensi [...] Omnes hi ad commune decretum iussu ducis acciti sunt'.

⁴ *WP*, pp. 124-25: 'Aderant comitati e Normannia duo pontifices, Odo Baoicensis et Goisfredus Constantinus [...] Id collegium precibus pugnare disponitur'.

⁵ *WP*, pp. 150-51: 'sermocinato ad eos ac sententiam percunctato Constantiniensi praesule'; followed by Orderic at *OV*, ii, pp. 184-85; *Carmen*, pp. 48-49: 'Normannus quidam presul'.

⁶ *WJ*, ii, p. 172 and *Regesta*, p. 78.

⁷ *Regesta*, nos. 181 and 256. Bates preferred Christmas 1068 for no. 256 because he thought the confirmation took place at the same time as no. 280, at *Regesta*, p. 774.

Michel's disputed possession of a mill at Vains.⁸ For his loyal service, Geoffrey was rewarded with extensive estates in England which made him one of the wealthiest men in the country. By using the evidence of Domesday Book, this chapter will examine Geoffrey's landholding in England and the impact it had on his status.

Distribution of Domesday Estates

Between 1066 and 1086, Geoffrey received land in fourteen counties. The bulk of his Domesday estates can be divided into two distinct geographical groups: the smaller group was made up of holdings in north-eastern Buckinghamshire, north-western Bedfordshire and the central hundreds of Northamptonshire (Fig. 12, 13, 14 and 15), while the larger group consisted of holdings across northern Somerset and in north-eastern Devon. Geoffrey also held possessions in Berkshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire (recorded in the Northamptonshire folios) Warwickshire and Wiltshire. He also held Kensington in Middlesex, which is entered in Domesday under the land of Aubrey de Vere but was held of Geoffrey.⁹

As indications of the relative value of each estate, the 'valet' figures in Domesday Book may be used to measure Geoffrey's wealth in each county. These figures, which occur in each estate entry, have been traditionally interpreted as the sum of money actually generated by the estate or the income it had the potential to produce, but David Roffe has

⁸ *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 6.

⁹ The estate was held *TRE* by a king's thegn called Edwin whom John Palmer has identified as 'Edwin son of Burgred', one of Geoffrey's antecessors in the Midlands, DB Middlesex, 21.1 (*Domesday*, f. 130v, p. 366) and E-DB Middlesex, 'Notes (version 1a)', 21.1.

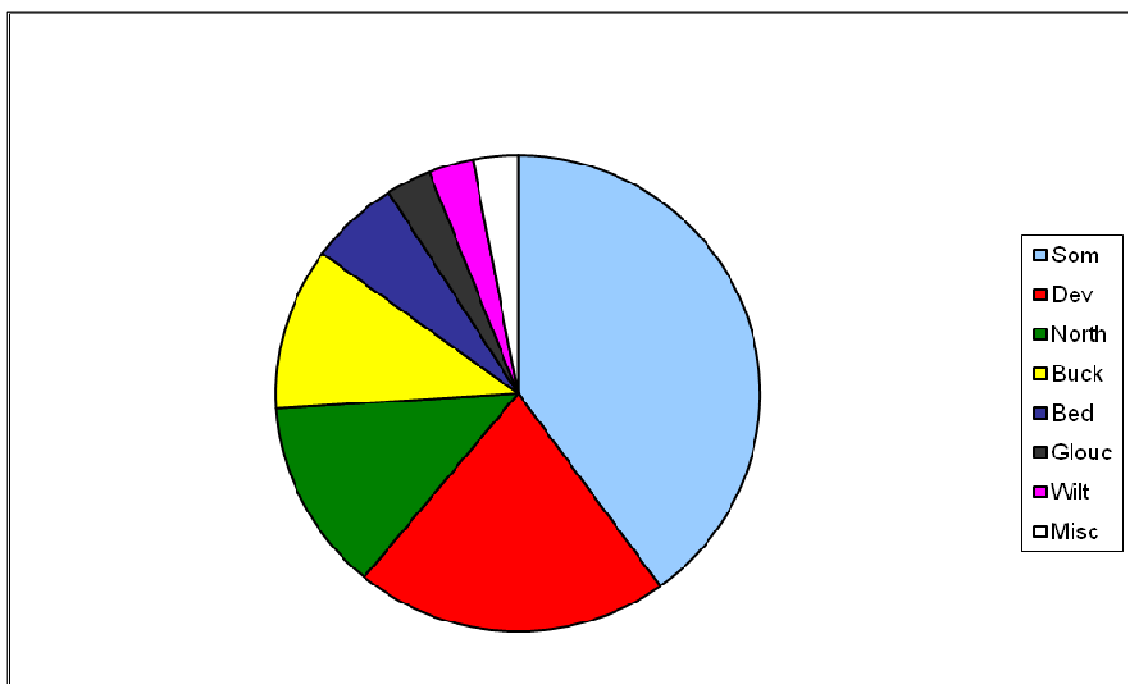


Fig. 11 - Geoffrey's Domesday landholding: distribution of land value across shires (%).¹⁰

most recently argued that the figure is equivalent to a money rent.¹¹ Once the 'valet' figures are added together, the total value of Geoffrey's Domesday estates can be calculated at £781, 2s.¹² As Fig. 11 demonstrates, his estates in Somerset were the most valuable (accounting for 40% of the total), followed by his land in Devon (21%), Northamptonshire (13%), Buckinghamshire (11%), Bedfordshire (6%), Gloucestershire (3%) and Wiltshire (3%).¹³ The distribution of his demesne estates reflects a greater interest in the South West. His demesne land in Somerset and Devon accounted for 38% and 24% respectively of the total

¹⁰ The total value of his land in each shire in the order they are listed in Domesday Book is Berkshire £5; Wiltshire £24, 13s; Dorset £7, 10s; Somerset £310, 19s; Devonshire £166, 17s; Buckinghamshire £89, 13s; Gloucestershire £22, 6s; Huntingdonshire 5s; Bedfordshire £48, 2s; Northamptonshire £100, 7s; Leicestershire £1; Warwickshire £1, 10s; and Lincolnshire £3.

¹¹ David Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 240-50, especially p. 243.

¹² This total does not include the income rendered by possessions within towns or by mills or any other extraordinary revenue listed in the description of each estate because it is not clear whether the 'valet' figures of each manor included this income.

¹³ The 'Misc' category includes Geoffrey's estates in Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Lincolnshire.

value of his demesne estates.¹⁴ Although 21% was located in Buckinghamshire, this figure has been skewed by his retention of several valuable holdings.¹⁵

Principles of Acquisition

Historians have identified six principles which governed the distribution of estates after 1066.¹⁶ Since Geoffrey did not acquire any estates through marriage and there is no evidence to suggest that he obtained estates with an official position, four possible principles remain.¹⁷ Of these four, the possibility that he received grants of individual estates may be set aside, for its significance as a principle of estate distribution was minimal.¹⁸ Therefore Geoffrey's acquisition of estates was governed by the principle of 'antecession', the grant of a geographically coherent group of estates, or by Geoffrey simply taking the estates he wanted by force. According to the principle of antecession, a tenant-in-chief inherited the estates of one or more Anglo-Saxon landholders. These landholders were described as the tenant-in-chief's 'antecessors'.¹⁹ In some counties, the distribution of estates appears to have been shaped by the boundaries of hundreds (or wapentakes) and shires.²⁰ In counties where neither antecession nor geographical distribution can be easily discerned, it has been suggested that estates were acquired through 'private enterprise'.²¹ In the following section, the patterns of Geoffrey's landholding in the Midlands and south-west England will be examined in order to determine which principle governed the distribution of his estates.

¹⁴ The rest of his demesne estates were divided between three counties: Bedfordshire, 10%; Northamptonshire, 6%; and Lincolnshire, 1%.

¹⁵ These included Olney, valued at £12 in 1086, Water Eaton, valued at £12 and Sherington, valued at £10, DB Buckinghamshire, 5.13, 5.7 and 5.20 (*Domesday*, f. 145r-v, pp. 399-400).

¹⁶ For these principles, see Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 166-67.

¹⁷ Ann Williams suggested that Geoffrey was port-reeve of Bristol, at *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 21.

¹⁸ Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 167.

¹⁹ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 71.

²⁰ Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 151-61.

²¹ Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 183-214.

Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire

The principle of antecession is clear in Geoffrey's landholding in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, where the bulk of his estates derived from two antecessors, Burgred, and his son, Edwin. All of his holdings in Bedfordshire were connected to Burgred except three estates inherited from King Edward's men, which he received in exchange for Bleadon in Somerset.²² In Buckinghamshire, nearly half of his holdings were connected to Burgred or Edwin.²³ In Northamptonshire, where lordship bonds are less clear, over half of his holdings were connected to Burgred or Edwin.²⁴ That the principle of antecession lay behind these grants is suggested by Geoffrey's possession of Kensington in Middlesex, which may have been held by Edwin in 1086, as well as two claims he made in Northamptonshire as Burgred's successor.²⁵

Burgred, who is described in Domesday Book as King Edward's thegn, is an enigmatic figure. His family, who held land in the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, was wealthy, and one of his daughters may have been Gytha, the wife of Earl Ralph of Hereford, Edward the Confessor's nephew.²⁶ Charter

²² DB Bedfordshire, 3.8, 3.10 and 3.11 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, p. 564). Bleadon, in Somerset, was held by the bishop of Winchester in 1086, DB Somerset, 2.11 (*Domesday*, f. 87v, p. 235).

²³ DB Buckinghamshire, 5.3, 5.4, 5.9, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.16, 5.17 and 5.20 (*Domesday*, f. 145r-v, pp. 399-400).

²⁴ DB Northamptonshire, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 4.9, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.15, 4.17, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.29, 4.32 and 4.36 (*Domesday*, f. 220v-221r, pp. 593-95).

²⁵ Kensington: DB, Middlesex: 21.1 (*Domesday*, f. 130v, p. 366). For the claims, DB Northamptonshire, 35.1j and 56.65 (*Domesday*, f. 225v, pp. 610-11 and f. 229r, p. 622).

²⁶ For Burgred as King Edward's thegn, DB Bedfordshire, 3.16 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, p. 565): 'Borred teign[us] regis'. Edwin is described in the same way at DB Buckinghamshire, 5.3 (*Domesday*, f. 145r, p. 399): 'Eduuin[us] teign[us] R[egis] E[dwardi]'. Burgred and his three sons held at least 161½ hides of land in these counties, Ann Williams, 'The King's Nephew: the Family and Career of Ralph, Earl of Hereford' in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher J. Holdsworth and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 327-43, at p. 337. Williams suggested that he was Gytha's father since the divisions of individual villas between Gytha and Burgred or their successors (William Peverel and Geoffrey) revealed by Domesday Book implies a close tie between them, at pp. 336-38.

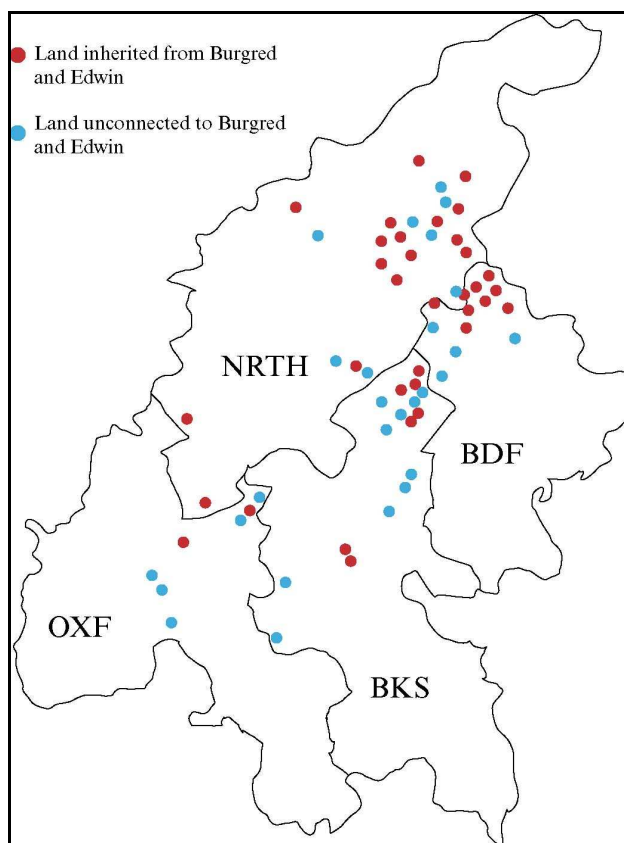


Fig. 12: Geoffrey's estates in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.²⁷

evidence links him to the abbey of St Albans, for which he attested three charters between 1042 and 1066, and Peterborough Abbey, to which he gave land at Barton Seagrave in Northamptonshire, and from which he held land at Woodford in the same county.²⁸ But Burgred can be tentatively linked to the earls of Mercia through his possession of Olney in Buckinghamshire, which Geoffrey inherited. This estate of ten hides may have been a comital manor of the earls of Mercia for it had been granted to Ælfhere, ealdorman of Mercia, by King Æthelred II in 979. The estate was still assessed at ten hides in 1086, and so since it remained intact, Burgred may have received it from one of Ælfhere's successors. Therefore

²⁷ The maps in this chapter are based on the maps in the Morris edition of Domesday Book. Thus they preserve the hundred boundaries of this edition.

²⁸ For the connection with St Albans, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. P.H. Sawyer (London, 1968), nos. 1228, 1235 and 1425, cited at Williams, 'King's Nephew', p. 337, n. 60. For his links to Peterborough, DB Northamptonshire, 4.17 and 4.23 (*Domesday*, f. 220v, pp. 594-95) and Williams, 'King's Nephew', p. 337 and n. 59. As Williams noted, the abbey did not receive Barton Seagrave for it was in Geoffrey's possession in 1086, at p. 337.

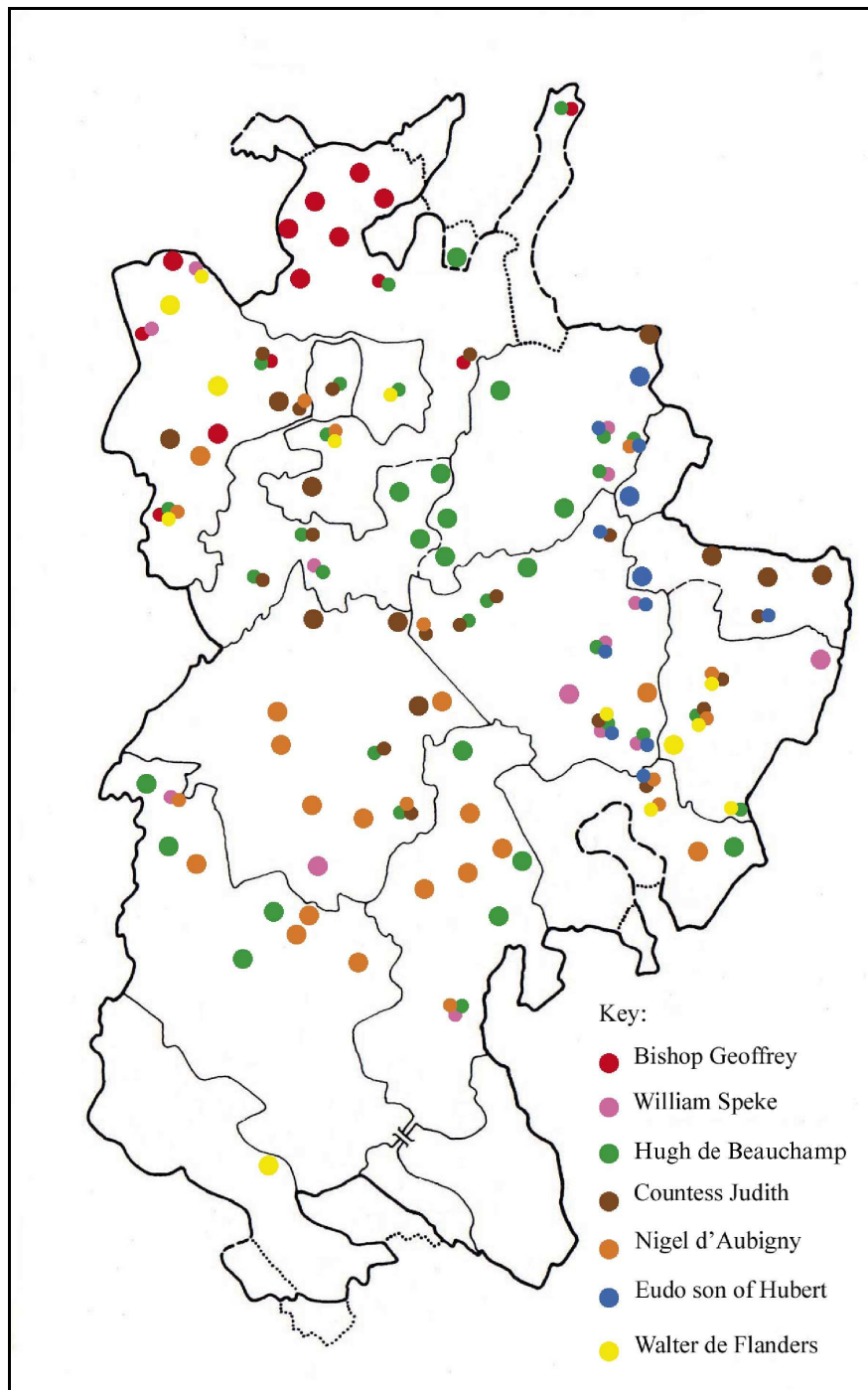


Fig. 13 – Estates of principal landholders in Bedfordshire.

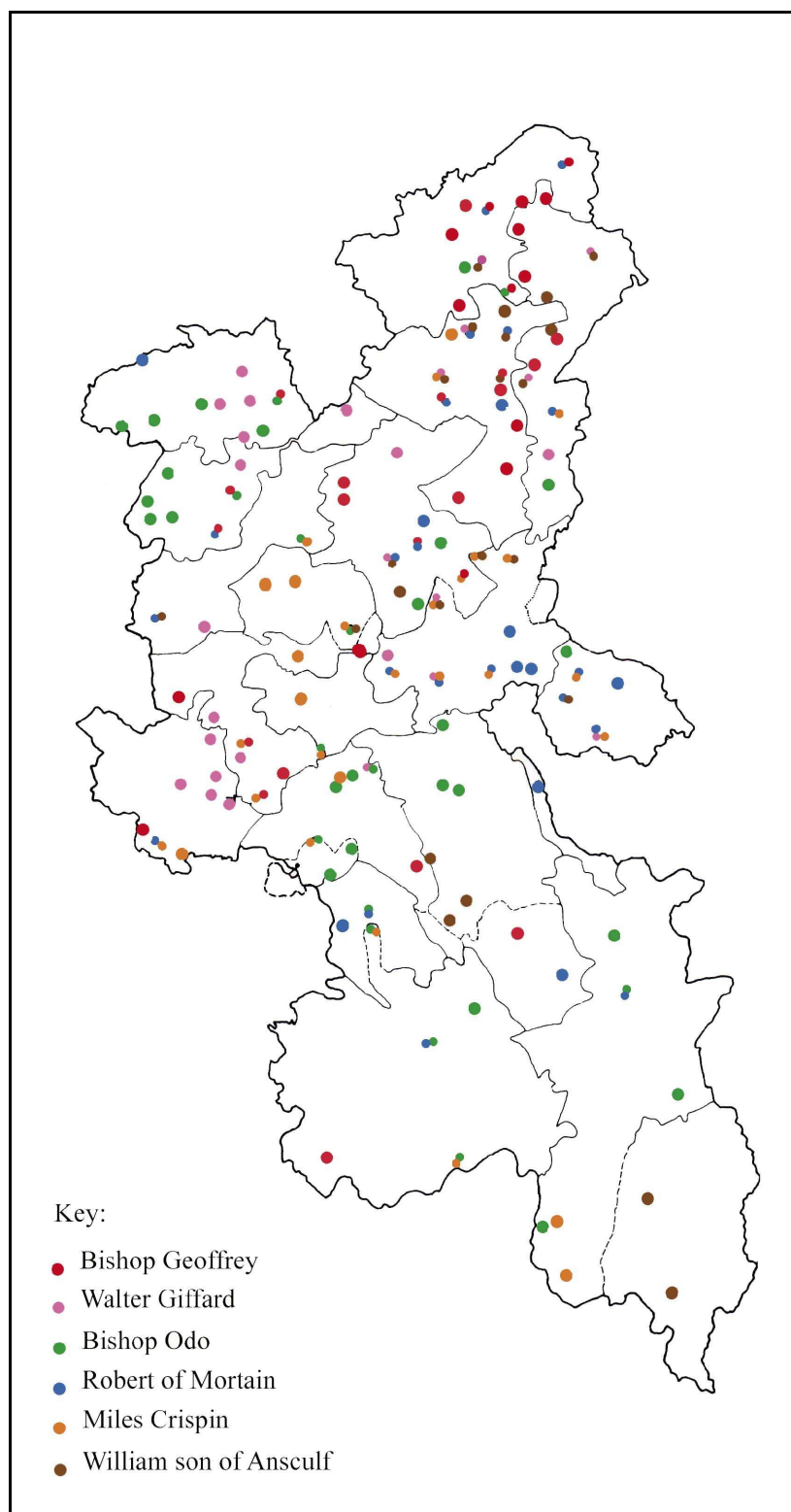


Fig. 14 – Estates of principal landholders in Buckinghamshire.

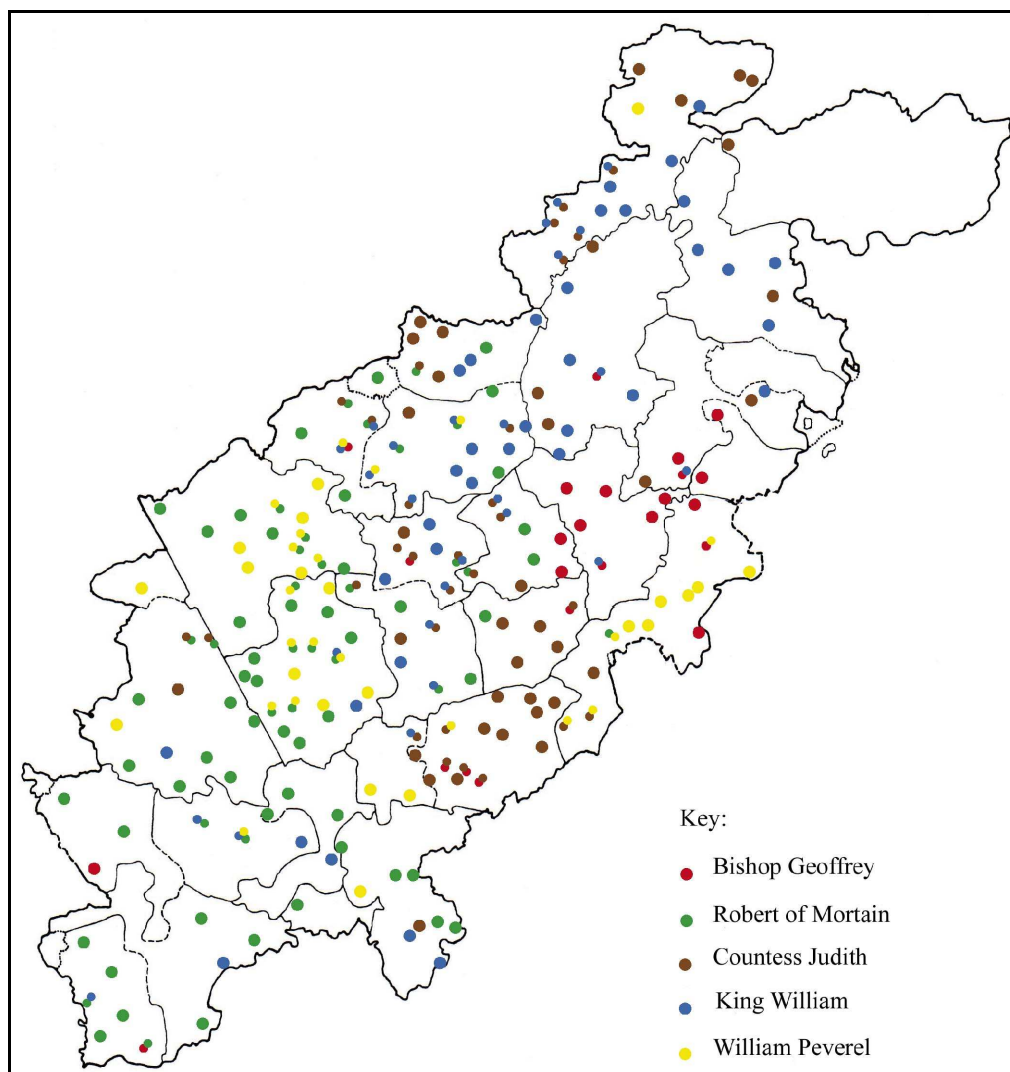


Fig. 15 – Estates of principal landholders in Northamptonshire.

it is possible that Burgred was a commended man of the earls of Mercia.²⁹ His appearance with Earl Leofric in the attestations of one of the charters for St Albans cited above may provide further evidence of this relationship.³⁰ Therefore Burgred may be described as a well-connected thegn of local importance whose family was well-established in the region.

Since title to land after the Conquest appears to have derived from the possession of 'sake and soke', the king's initial grant in the region to Geoffrey would have consisted of the manors which carried it.³¹ 'Sake and soke' meant full jurisdiction. The lord who held it was entitled to the customary dues related to jurisdiction, which were often collectively referred to as 'the king's two pennies', as well as the dues and services which were owed from the land itself.³² As such, David Roffe likened it to bookright, the right associated with the possession of bookland, that is land which had been granted to its holder by royal charter and exempted from most of the dues and services owed to the king. Thus the holder of bookland received these dues and services from which the land had been exempted.³³ The estates which carried sake and soke are found in Domesday Book amongst the lands of the king's thegns, since their status derived in part from possession of bookland.³⁴ Roffe argued that king's thegns can be identified by the 'tenuit' formula in the Domesday text. The description of a *TRE* tenant as holding an estate 'freely' indicates that it was subject to a booklord because the purpose of indicating free tenure was to mark the estates where the successor of a *TRE*

²⁹ *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 834; DB Buckinghamshire, 5.13 (*Domesday*, f. 145v, p. 400); 'Olney', *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* [<http://www.pase.ac.uk>, accessed 23 November 2009].

³⁰ Cf. Stephen Baxter, who suggested that Burgred was 'not necessarily connected with the earls of Mercia' at 'The Earls of Mercia and their Commended Men in the mid Eleventh Century', *ANS* 23 (2000), pp. 23-46, at p. 26 and n. 12.

³¹ David Roffe, *Domesday. The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 28-46.

³² Roffe, *DIB*, pp. 30-33; Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 151-52.

³³ Roffe, *DIB*, p. 33; Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 73-74.

³⁴ Roffe, *DIB*, pp. 32-33; Simon Keynes, 'Thegn' in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (Oxford, 1999), pp. 443-444.

<u>DB Ref</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>TRE Holder</u>
Bedfordshire		
3.1	Knotting	Burgred
3.2	Melchbourne	Burgred
3.4	Yelden	Burgred
3.5	Shelton	Burgred
3.7	Riseley	Burgred
3.16	Sharnbrook	Burgred
Buckinghamshire		
5.1	Worminghall	Queen Edith
5.2	Ludgershall	Queen Edith
5.5	Stewkley	Wulfward <i>cild</i>
5.8	Little Linford	Edeva
5.9	Lathbury	Edwin son of Burgred
5.13	Olney	Burgred
5.20	Sherington	Edwin son of Burgred
Northamptonshire		
4.1	Raunds	Burgred
4.8	Isham	Burgred
4.9	Burton Latimer	Burgred
4.10	Clipston	Burgred
4.11	Edgcote	Burgred
4.12	Burton Latimer	Burgred
4.13	Finedon	Burgred
4.14	Hantone	Alwin Cobbold
4.15	Hackleton	Burgred
4.16	Preston Deanery	Wulfwara the widow
4.17	Barton Seagrave	Burgred
4.20	Newton Bromswold	Azur
4.22	Addington	Azur
4.28	Horton	Fran
4.32	Shelswell	Edwin son of Burgred

Fig. 16 - Midlands estates held by 'tenuit' form of tenure.

tenant's commendation lord held no right over the land. An estate that was described as held ('tenuit') without any qualification appears to indicate that the tenant held sake and soke.³⁵

If this formula is applied to Geoffrey's landholding in these shires, it appears that he inherited sake and soke from Queen Edith, Wulfward 'cild' and Edeva in Buckinghamshire, and Alwin Cobbold, Azor, Fran and Wulfwara the widow in Northamptonshire, in addition to Burgred and Edwin (see Fig. 16).³⁶ A more accurate conclusion may be possible in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire where 'chief manors' may be denoted by a marginal 'M' in the text. Manors have been associated with geld collection, but Roffe preferred to see them as 'tributary centres' or 'the points at which service was rendered', which made them potential locations for a booklord's hall.³⁷ 'Chief manors' probably received the dues from lesser manors, and since Geoffrey would have owed service to the king for them, 'chief manors' probably conferred sake and soke.³⁸ Thus, Knotting, Melchbourne, Olney and Sherington, which are marked with a marginal 'M', were held by the 'tenuit' form of tenure in 1066, and kept in demesne by Geoffrey, were almost certainly amongst the earliest grant of land he received in the region (see Fig. 17).

The grant of a manor which carried the right of sake and soke also bestowed the title to its dependent estates.³⁹ Dependency may be indicated in a number of ways. In some cases, it is explicit. In Northamptonshire, for example, three virgates in Scaldwell belonged

³⁵ Roffe, *DIB*, p. 34.

³⁶ Roffe is compiling a list of king's thegns in Domesday England: <http://www.roffe.co.uk/thegns.htm> (accessed 3 December, 2009). Edeva is not on his list.

³⁷ Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 176-80.

³⁸ Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 159 and 287.

³⁹ Roffe, *DIB*, pp. 35-36; Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 171.

<u>E-DB Ref</u>	<u>Marginal 'M'</u>	<u>Geoffrey's Demesne</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>TRE Holder</u>
Bedfordshire				
3.1	M	D	Knotting	Burgred
3.2	M	D	Melchbourne	Burgred
3.4	M		Yelden	Burgred
3.5	M		Shelton	Burgred
3.7	M		Riseley	Burgred
3.16			Sharnbrook	Burgred
Buckinghamshire				
5.1			Worminghall	Queen Edith
5.2			Ludgershall	Queen Edith
5.5			Stewkley	Wulfward <i>cild</i>
5.8			Little Linford	Edeva
5.9			Lathbury	Edwin son of Burgred
5.13	M	D	Olney	Burgred
5.20	M	D	Sherington	Edwin son of Burgred

Fig. 17 – Midlands estates held by the ‘tenuit’ formula in 1066 against estates held in demesne and those marked with a marginal ‘M’.

to the small estate Aubrey de Vere held of Geoffrey in Wadenhoe.⁴⁰ In others, such as Olney in Buckinghamshire, it is implied where a free man held part of an estate.⁴¹ It may also be indicated by the ‘In X, Y holds’ formula, but the manors identified by the ‘X’ in the formula were not necessarily held by Geoffrey.⁴² As noted above, a notification that a *TRE* tenant was free to sell or grant his land also indicated dependency. The purpose of recording tenure

⁴⁰ DB Northamptonshire, 4.3 (*Domesday*, f. 220v, p. 593).

⁴¹ DB Buckinghamshire, 5.13 (*Domesday*, f. 145v, p. 400).

⁴² For the formula, David Roffe, ‘From Thegnage to Barony: Sake and Soke, Title, and Tenants-in-Chief’, *ANS* 12 (1989), pp. 157-76, at p. 162. DB Bedfordshire, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.17 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, pp. 564-65); DB Buckinghamshire, 5.4, 5.5, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.14, 5.18 and 5.21 (*Domesday*, 145r-145v, pp. 399-400). In Northamptonshire, the formula is ‘Y holds in X’, DB Northamptonshire, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.35 and 4.36 (*Domesday*, f. 220v-221r, pp. 593-95).

in this way was to preserve a record of those estates where the successor of the *TRE* holder's commendation lord ('hlaforð') had no right to the customs that were owed from the land to the landlord ('landhlaforð').⁴³ Anglo-Saxon law codes differentiated between lordship based on commendation and lordship based on the right to customary dues that derived from the possession of land. Since a *TRE* tenant may have had different commendation and land lords, many Normans claimed estates that had belonged to free men or thegns who were the commended men of their antecessors but where they actually had no right to the dues generated from the possession of the land itself.⁴⁴ Indeed, this explanation probably lies behind Geoffrey's claim to an estate at Piddington in Northamptonshire, which was held *TRE* by two of Burgred's men.⁴⁵ Thus a tenant who held land freely could sell it or commend himself to another lord, but the landlord would still be owed the dues and service from the land itself. In this way, free tenure indicates that the estate was dependent because it owed customary dues to the hall of a booklord.⁴⁶ However, the locations of these halls are not identified in the text and the evidence is insufficient to reconstruct the relationships between dependent estates and 'chief manors'.

Therefore the majority of Geoffrey's estates would have been linked to the manors he held with sake and soke. However, these links cannot be identified because the patterns of pre-Conquest lordships are largely concealed in the Domesday text. Many of the estates that

⁴³ For land held 'freely' ('libere') in Northamptonshire, DB Northamptonshire, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.24, 4.25, 4.30, 4.31, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35 and 4.36 (*Domesday*, f. 220v-221r, pp. 593-95). For *TRE* tenants in Buckinghamshire who were free to 'sell' their land ('vendere'), DB Buckinghamshire, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19 and 5.21 (*Domesday*, f. 145r-145v, pp. 399-400). At 5.20, the *TRE* tenants could 'grant and sell' ('dare et vendere'). This formula also appears in Bedfordshire, DB Bedfordshire, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.17 (*Domesday*, f. 209v-210r, pp. 564-65). For this principle, Roffe, *DIB*, p. 34 and Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 158.

⁴⁴ For the different rights of the 'hlaforð' and the 'landhlaforð', Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 73-75 and David Roffe, 'Brought to Book: Lordship and Land in Anglo-Saxon England' (2002) [<http://www.roffe.co.uk/bookland.htm>, accessed 20 October 2009]. For an example of the problems created by this confusion, Ann Williams, 'The Spoliation of Worcester', *ANS* 19 (1996), pp. 383-408, at pp. 392-94.

⁴⁵ DB Northamptonshire, 56.65 (*Domesday*, f. 160r, p. 441).

⁴⁶ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 74-75; Roffe, *DIB*, p. 34.

were held ‘freely’ by their *TRE* tenants would have been sokeland which rendered soke at one of the manors held by Geoffrey with sake and soke. Some of the estates would have been thegnland, land granted to its *TRE* holder by a ‘hlaforð’ in return for service. Thegnland may be indicated where a *TRE* holder held ‘of’ a lord.⁴⁷ Furthermore, although commended men are clearly distinguished in the Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire folios, it is difficult to differentiate those men who looked upon Burgred as their ‘hlaforð’ from those who owed him service as their ‘landhlaforð’ because most of Burgred’s commended men in these shires also held their land freely.⁴⁸ Indeed, Burgred seems to have strengthened tenurial bonds with his tenants through commendation, which may explain why so few of his estates appear to have been held as thegnland.⁴⁹ Therefore although it is likely that Geoffrey’s estates in the Midlands formed coherent groups in pre-Conquest England, the text does not highlight the links between the estates.⁵⁰

Devon and Somerset

The principle of antecession is less clear in Devon and Somerset where Geoffrey inherited the lands of at least forty-three and fifty-nine *TRE* holders respectively. In these shires, the distribution of the greatest landholders’ estates appears to have been geographically organised. In Devon, Geoffrey’s lands were concentrated in the north with some estates spread across the central hundreds. The rest of the shire was dominated by three other lords:

⁴⁷ For Burgred and Edwin’s thegnland, DB Bedfordshire, 3.5 and 3.9 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, p. 564); DB Northamptonshire, 4.29 (*Domesday*, f. 221r, p. 595), which belonged to Edwin. In Buckinghamshire, Edeva held Worminghall ‘under’ Queen Edith and Ludgershall ‘from’ her, DB Buckinghamshire, 5.1: ‘sub regina Eddid.’, and 5.2: ‘de regina Eddid.’ (*Domesday*, f. 145r, p. 399).

⁴⁸ For tenants who were Burgred’s men, DB Bedfordshire, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.17 (*Domesday*, f. 209v-210r, pp. 564-65); DB Buckinghamshire, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.16 and 5.17 (*Domesday*, f. 145v, p. 400). For Edwin’s men, DB Buckinghamshire, 5.4 and 5.20 (*Domesday*, f. 145r-145v, pp. 399-400).

⁴⁹ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 75-76.

⁵⁰ For this likelihood in general, Roffe, *DIB*, pp. 36-37.

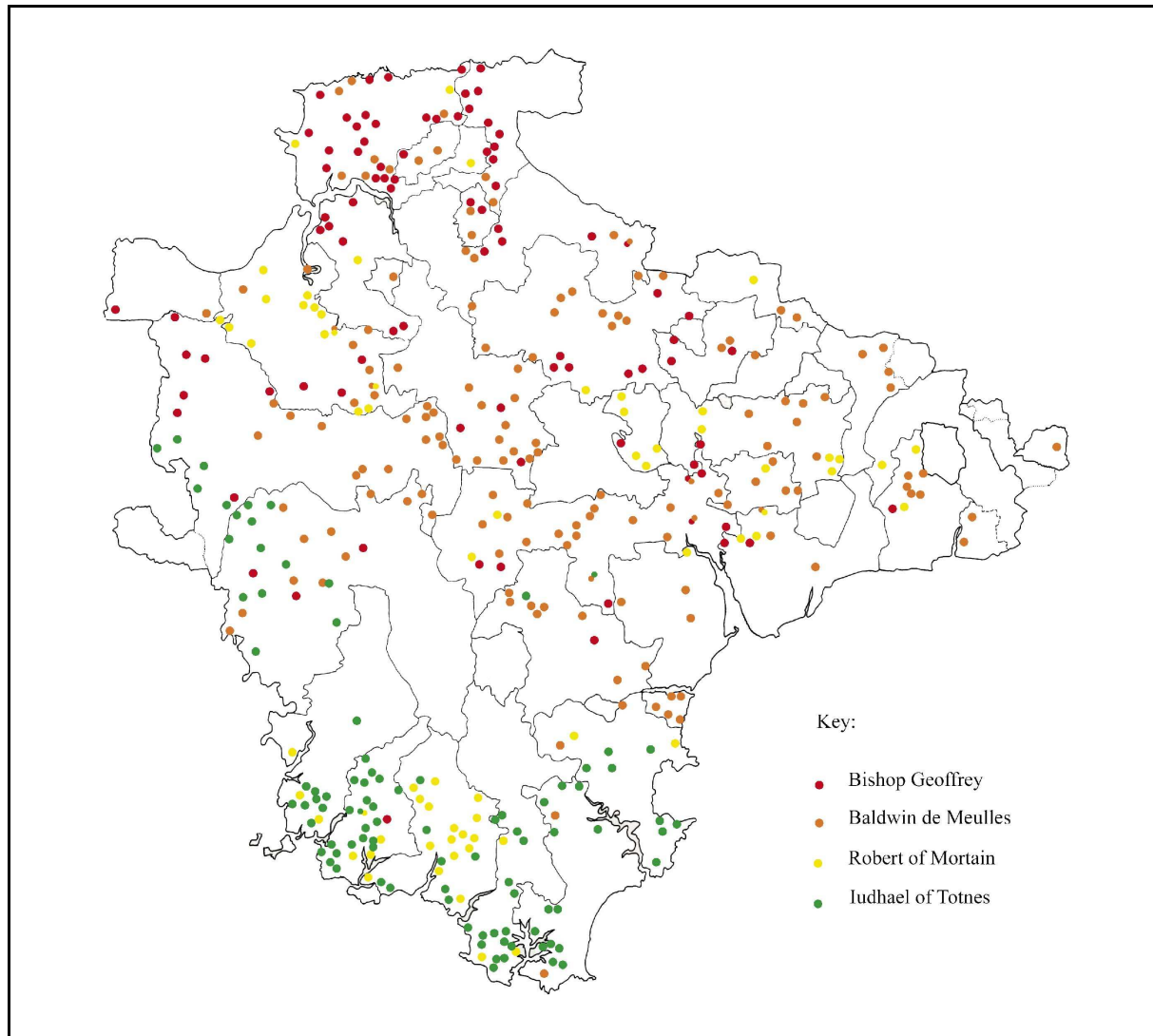


Fig. 18 – Estates of principal landholders in Devon.

Judhael of Totnes' lands were clustered in the south and far west of the shire, Baldwin de Meulles dominated the central hundreds, and Robert of Mortain held three groups of estates in the south-west, east and north-west of the shire (see Fig. 18). A similar pattern can be found in Somerset where Geoffrey's lands were concentrated in the north of the shire, Robert of Mortain's in the south, Roger de Courseulles in the central, western and southern hundreds, and William de Mohun in the west (see Fig. 19). The clarity of these patterns suggests that the settlement of these shires was planned by the king and the great landholders

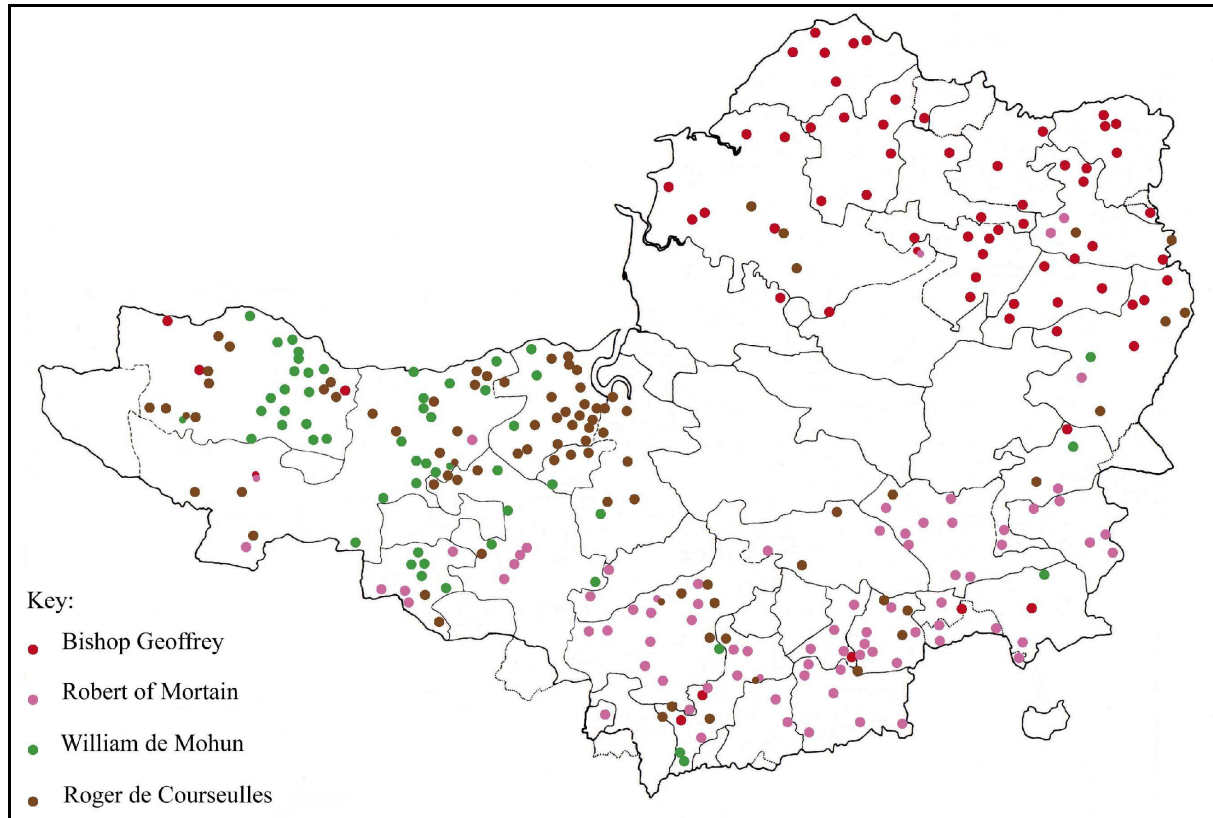


Fig. 19 – Estates of principal landholders in Somerset.

so that each tenant-in-chief had his own sphere of influence. Indeed, the settlement pattern reflects the king's concern for the security of the coastline.

However, in Devon, a small group of antecessors can be identified whose modest holdings may have constituted the earliest grant Geoffrey received in the shire. Whereas first names rarely recur in Somerset, individuals called Algar, Alwin, Brictric, Doda, Edric, Wulfeva and Wulfnoth reappear amongst Geoffrey's antecessors in Devon. Ann Williams argued that lands inherited in the same shire by a single tenant-in-chief from *TRE* holders with the same Anglo-Saxon name probably belonged to the same person, even if their name

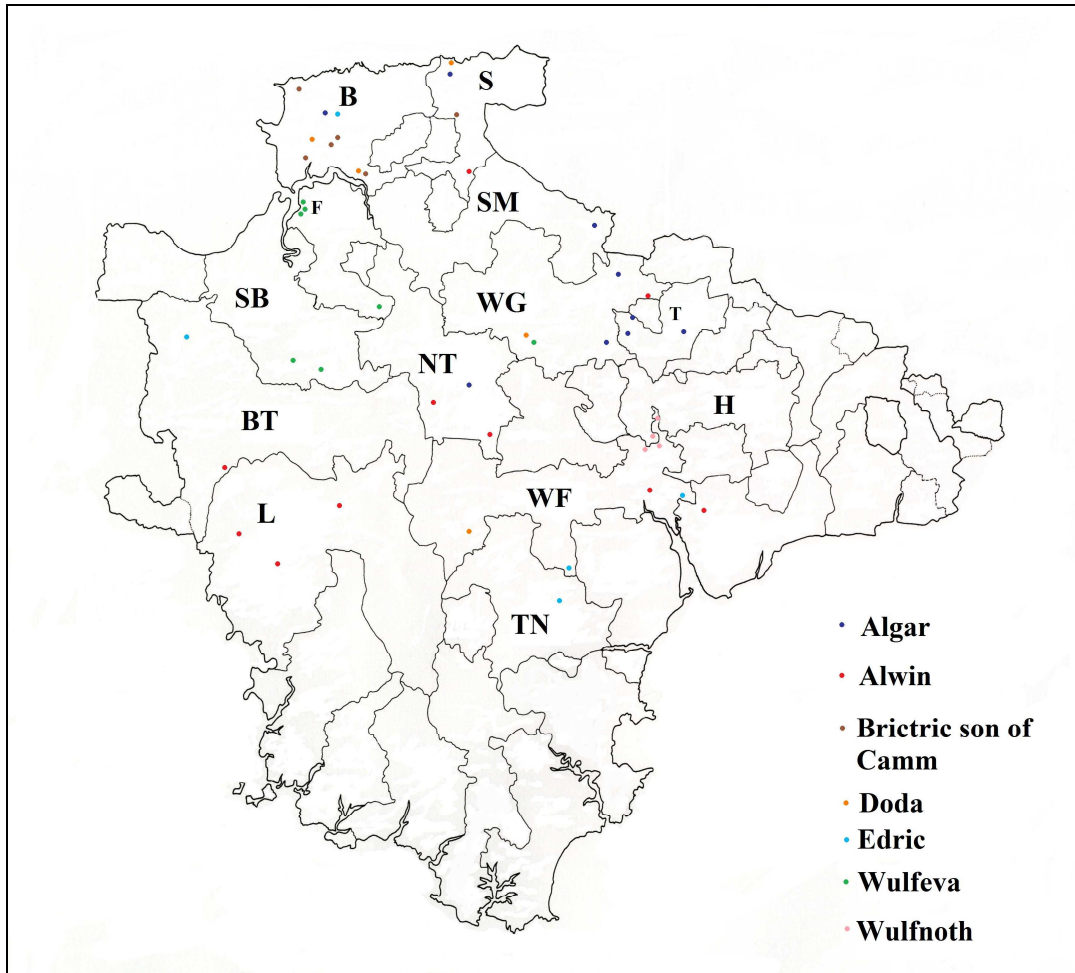


Fig. 20 – Geoffrey's antecessors in Devon.⁵¹

was a common one.⁵² This theory gains credibility where these lands lie close together. For example, as Fig. 20 demonstrates, the five holdings Geoffrey inherited from Wulfnoth surely belonged to the same person since they are located on the eastern edge of Wonford hundred and the western part of Hayridge hundred. Wulfeva's estates also belonged to a single *TRE* holder since they were concentrated in Shebbear and Fremington hundreds with an isolated holding in Witheridge hundred. Those held by Edric in Wonford and Teignbridge hundreds

⁵¹ The hundred abbreviations are: B = Braunton; BT = Black Torrington; H = Hayridge; L = Lifton; NT = North Tawton; S = Shirwell; SB = Shebbear; SM = South Molton; T = Tiverton; TN = Teignbridge; WF = Wonford; WG = Witheridge. The boundaries derive from: DB Devon, Part 2; these boundaries are the modern, nineteenth-century ones.

⁵² Ann Williams, 'A West-Country Magnate of the Eleventh Century: the Family, Estates and Patronage of Beorhtic son of Ælfgar' in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 41-68, at p. 46.

almost certainly belonged to one person, but those in Braunton and Black Torrington were probably held by different men. The lands held by Doda were more diffuse, which suggests that they may not have been held by the same person. It is likely that the same individual held the estates in Braunton and Shirwell hundreds. But the identity of the Doda who held the isolated estate in Witheridge hundred cannot be determined, while the estate in Wonford hundred was probably held by a different Doda, who held three estates in the same hundred that were inherited by Baldwin de Meulles.⁵³

Alwin and Algar are more difficult to identify but the close proximity of four holdings in Black Torrington and Lifton hundreds suggest that they were held by the same Alwin, and three holdings lying in the eastern parts of South Molton and Witheridge hundreds, together with three in Tiverton hundred, probably belonged to the same Algar. Brictric is identified in the *Liber Exoniensis* (henceforth, 'Exon') as Brictric son of Camm. He was certainly Geoffrey's antecessor because Geoffrey claimed one virgate of land Brictric had held at Braunton which William de Vauville had returned to the king's manor.⁵⁴ The proximity of these holdings to Barnstaple, the 'caput' of his estates in Devon, suggests that they were among the first lands he received in the county.⁵⁵ Indeed, the land he inherited from Brictric son of Camm and Doda in the northernmost hundreds of the county, Wulfefa further south and Algar in the east correspond to the principal clusters of his estates.

⁵³ At Hittisleigh, Oldridge, Tedburn St Mary, DB Devon, 16.114, 16.118 and 16.120 (*Domesday*, f. 107v, p. 303). This Doda probably held an estate at Bridestowe in neighbouring Lifton hundred, 16.7 (*Domesday*, f. 105v, p. 297). He may be Doda the priest from whom Baldwin inherited land at Dotton in Budleigh hundred (16.135; *Domesday*, f. 107v, p. 304).

⁵⁴ DB Devon 3.32 (*Domesday*, f. 182v, p. 286); 'Exon Domesday' in *Libri censualis vocati Domesday Book, additamenta ex codic. antiquiss. Exon' Domesday; Inquisitio Eliensis; Liber Winton'*; *Boldon Book*, ed. Henry Ellis (London, 1816), pp. 1-493, at p. 117: 'stric[us] fili[us] ca[m]mi'.

⁵⁵ E-DB Devon, 'Notes (version 1a)', 3.32. Since Geoffrey's lands in Devon eventually formed the honour of Barnstaple, it has been assumed that Barnstaple was the 'caput' of his estates, Frank Barlow, 'An Introduction to the Devonshire Domesday' in *Devonshire Domesday*, ed. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1991), pp. 1-25, at pp. 16 and 20.

Although a similar group of antecessors cannot be identified in Somerset, it is possible that Geoffrey initially acquired a small group of estates in the county which acted as a foothold in the region. Geoffrey may have inherited these estates from an antecessor. His estates in the western and southern hundreds, which stand apart from the bulk of his holdings in the northern hundreds, may have been elements of a pre-Conquest lordship that provided Geoffrey with a platform from which he could extend his landholding.⁵⁶ Geoffrey's landholding in the South West bears some of the signs identified by Robin Fleming of 'private enterprise'. Fleming has stressed the revolutionary nature of the Norman settlement of post-Conquest England which in the shires south of Watling Street amounted to a 'free-for-all'.⁵⁷ In Somerset, where Geoffrey dominated the northern hundreds closest to the River Avon, his estates were not granted by hundred. In Portbury hundred, for instance, there were four other secular landholders: Matthew de Mortagne, William d'Eu and Ralph de Mortimer each held an estate, as did Arnulf de Hesdin, who was probably established first because he inherited his lands from an antecessor, Edric of Oldbury.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Geoffrey encroached on church land. Glastonbury Abbey lost thegnland to thirteen Norman lords, the most rapacious of whom were Robert of Mortain and Geoffrey.⁵⁹ There is also considerable evidence of the manipulation of tenurial arrangements by amalgamating manors and

⁵⁶ Peter Sawyer, '1066-1086: A Tenurial Revolution?' in *Domesday Book. A Reassessment*, ed. Peter Sawyer (London, 1985), pp. 71-85. Roffe has argued that the redistribution of land 'was almost certainly underpinned by the survival of existing tenurial nexus and relationships', at *DIB*, pp. 37-40, quotation at p. 40.

⁵⁷ Robin Fleming, 'Domesday Book and the Tenurial Revolution', *ANS* 9 (1986), pp. 87-102; Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 185 and 210.

⁵⁸ For this feature of 'private enterprise', Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, p. 210.

⁵⁹ *The Early History of Glastonbury. An Edition, Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's 'De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie'*, ed. and trans. John Scott (Woodbridge, 1981), p. 153. Geoffrey held 26 hides, 1 virgate and 10 acres of Glastonbury's lands; Robert of Mortain held 21 hides and an unspecified amount of woodland, Lesley Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury: Church and Endowment* (Woodbridge, 1996), p. 289, n. 104. The problem was not restricted to the South West. In a writ dated c.1077 the king ordered a group of magnates that included Geoffrey to re-seise bishoprics and abbeys of any land they had lost to the sheriffs, *Regesta*, no. 129, p. 444: 'Summonete vicecomites meos ex meo precepto, et ex parte mea eis dicite ut reddant episcopatibus meis et abbatibus totum dominium omnesque dominicas terras'. Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, p. 192.

combining estates which suggests a disregard for existing patterns of tenure.⁶⁰ But this evidence does not amount to a ‘free-for-all’. The fairly neat concentrations of landholding of the principle tenants-in-chief that can be discerned in Somerset and Devon suggests that the settlement of these shires was ordered and relatively organised. Indeed, the spheres of influence implied by these concentrations of landholding suggest that land was distributed according to the needs of defence.⁶¹ Geoffrey may have extended his landholding through patronage. By offering protection, Geoffrey may have drawn lesser landholders to him who became his dependents, just as Abbot Æthelwig of Evesham augmented the landholding of his abbey.⁶²

Estates that carried the right of ‘sake and soke’ are difficult to identify in the South West. Manors can be found in both Devon and Somerset, and the scribe highlighted those manors created by combining existing ones, but his casual use of the term suggests that it did not hold the same significance in the South West as it did in the Midlands.⁶³ Although the ‘tenuit’ formula can be found in both Devon and Somerset, its prevalence suggests that it did not refer to a specific form of tenure. It appears in each entry of Geoffrey’s Somerset landholding, save for the thegnland of Glastonbury Abbey acquired by Geoffrey, and an estate held from Queen Edith by Alfred the steward.⁶⁴ In Devon, it appears in all of the

⁶⁰ Added land can be found at DB Devon 3.8, 3.11 (two estates ‘joined’ (‘adjuncta’) together), 3.19, 3.26, 3.30, 3.76 and 3.80 (*Domesday*, f. 102r-102v, pp. 284-85 and f. 103r, p. 288), and DB Somerset 5.1, 5.2, 5.15, 5.18, 5.37, 5.40, 5.41, 5.43, 5.53 and 5.57 (*Domesday*, f. 87v-88r, pp. 235-37 and f. 88v-89r, pp. 238-39). Amalgamated manors appear at DB Somerset 5.1, 5.2, 5.9, 5.10, 5.34, 5.37, 5.43 and 5.53 (*Domesday*, f. 87v-88v, pp. 235-39).

⁶¹ Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp. 48-54, especially pp. 50-51.

⁶² Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 202-10; R.R. Darlington, ‘Æthelwig, Abbot of Evesham’, *EHR* 48 (1933), pp. 1-22 and 177-98, at pp. 10-11.

⁶³ In Devon, eight estates are described as manors, DB Devon 3.8, 3.12, 3.17 (at 3.11), 3.19, 3.26, 3.30, 3.76 and 3.80 (*Domesday*, f. 102r-102v, pp. 284-86 and f. 103r, p. 288). In Somerset, there are twenty-two, DB Somerset 5.1, 5.2, 5.6, 5.7, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.15, 5.18, 5.34, 5.37, 5.40, 5.41, 5.43, 5.48, 5.53, 5.54, 5.57, 5.62, 5.63 and 5.64 (*Domesday*, f. 87v-89r, pp. 235-40). Ten manors in Somerset were created by combining other manors, 5.1, 5.2, 5.9, 5.10, 5.15, 5.18, 5.34, 5.37, 5.43 and 5.53 (*Domesday*, 87v-88v, pp. 235-39).

⁶⁴ For Glastonbury’s thegnland, DB Somerset, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.43 and 5.50 (*Domesday*, f. 88r, p. 236 and f. 88v, pp. 238-39); for Alfred the steward, 5.46 (*Domesday*, f. 88v, p. 238).

entries apart from four estates which were held ‘freely’.⁶⁵ As in the Midlands, this form of tenure indicates dependence, but it is not clear to which manors these estates were linked. The most striking feature of his landholding in the South West is the proximity of his estates to Bristol and Barnstaple. Since he received a third of the revenue from each borough, these towns formed the foci of his interests in post-Conquest England.⁶⁶ Indeed, the tenurial settlement seems to have been manipulated in order to consolidate Geoffrey’s landholding around these towns (see Fig. 21).

Date of Acquisition

Geoffrey was established in Somerset before 1069.⁶⁷ In this year, according to Orderic Vitalis, he led an English force to Robert of Mortain’s castle at Montacute which relieved the siege being conducted by the people of Dorset and Somerset.⁶⁸ His role in the suppression of this rebellion suggests that he may have been installed in the South West by this time. Indeed, the settlement of Somerset began at an early date. As the siege of Montacute demonstrates, Robert of Mortain had been established long enough to exchange land with

⁶⁵ DB Devon, 3.19 (Barlington), 3.22, 3.26 and 3.40 (*Domesday*, f. 102r-v, pp. 285-86). In a personal communication (2 March, 2010), David Roffe pointed out that the ‘tenuit’ formula was not deliberately employed by the scribe; it emerged as he tried to express commendation lordship. His approach to the problem in the South West (Circuit II) is not clear.

⁶⁶ DB Gloucestershire, 1.21 (*Domesday*, f. 163r, p. 448): ‘Burgenses d[ica]nt q[uo]d ep[iscopu]s G. h[abe]t xxxiii marc[as] argenti et una[m] marc[am] auri p[ro]p[ter] firma[m] regis’; DB Devon, 1.1 (*Domesday*, f. 100r, p. 277): ‘Int[er] om[n]e[s] redd[ant] [...] ep[iscop]o c[on]stantiensi xx solid[os] ad numerum’; and 3.3 (*Domesday*, f. 102r, p. 284).

⁶⁷ Golding prefers to date the siege of Montacute to 1068, at ‘Robert of Mortain’, pp. 125-26; Golding, ‘Robert, count of Mortain (d. 1095)’ [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19339>, accessed 12 Oct 2009].

⁶⁸ *OV*, ii, pp. 228-29: ‘Eo tempore Saxones occidentales de Dorseta et Summerseta cum suis confinibus Montem-Acutum assilierunt sed diuino nutu impediti sunt. Nam Guentani, Lundonii, Salesberii, Gaufredo Constantiensi præsule ductore superuenerunt, quosdam peremerunt, partim captos mutilauerunt, reliquos fugauerunt’.

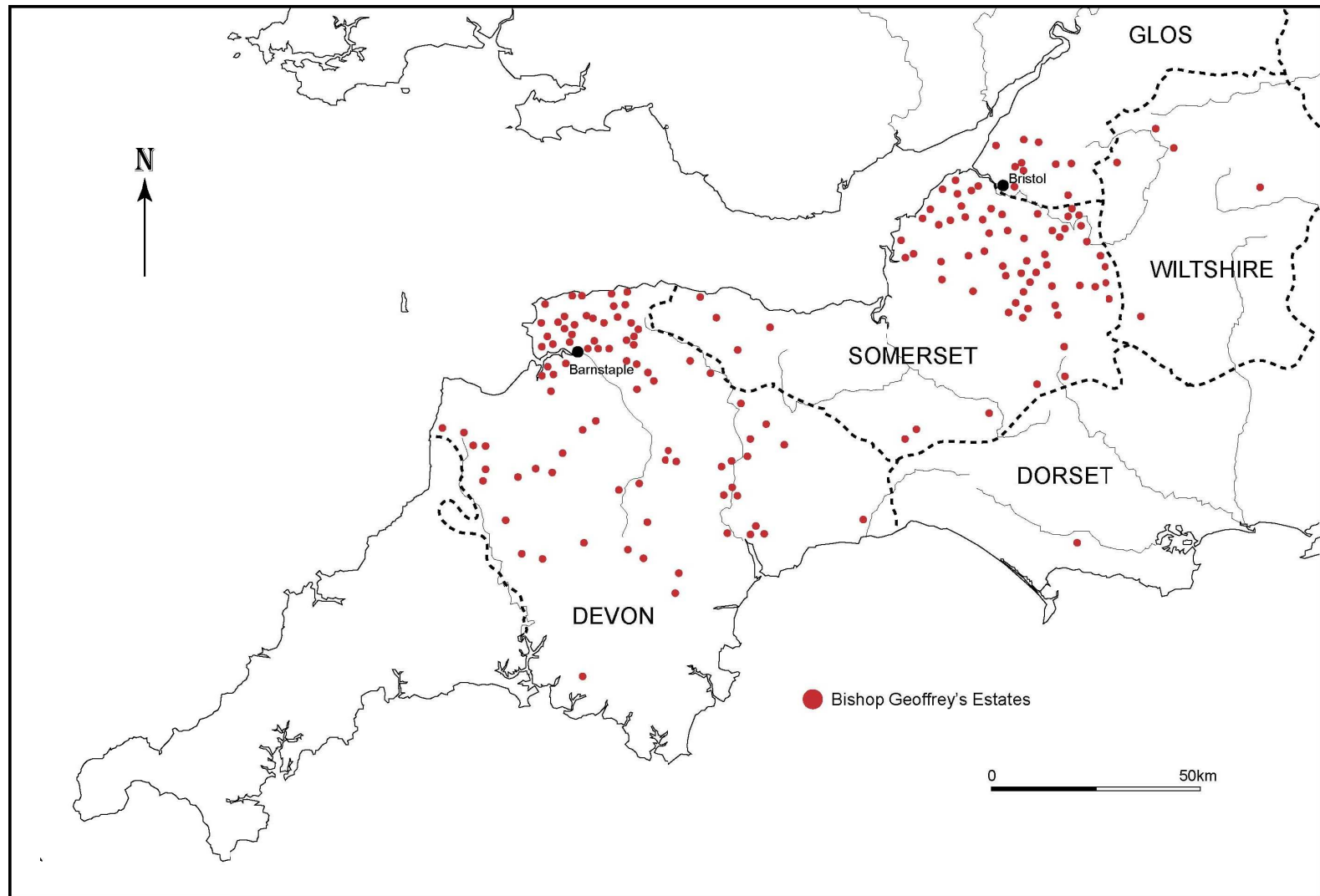


Fig. 21 - Geoffrey's landholding in south-west England

Æthelney Abbey and build a castle on the estate he received, and the attack itself suggests that local landholders felt threatened by the encroaching Normans.⁶⁹ Furthermore, four of the shire's most prominent landholders appeared as witnesses with vested interests in King William's restoration of Banwell to Bishop Giso of Wells in May 1068.⁷⁰ The settlement of Devon began after the suppression of the Exeter rebellion in 1068.⁷¹ The king built a castle in the city and entrusted it to William de Vauville, who was probably appointed sheriff at the same time; he was succeeded by Baldwin de Meulles before 1070.⁷² Count Brian of Brittany was active in Devon by 1069 where he may have been wounded in battle and as a result forced to return to Brittany.⁷³ He was succeeded by Robert of Mortain, who had acquired Count Brian's lands in Cornwall by c.1070.⁷⁴ Judhael's appointment as castellan of Totnes in south Devon has been dated c.1068.⁷⁵

The context for these appointments is provided by the attacks of Harold's sons in 1068 and 1069. Indeed, the concentration of Geoffrey's landholding around Bristol and Barnstaple, the places targeted by Harold's sons, suggests that his installation formed part of the defence of the coastline of the South West against further attacks.⁷⁶ After the failure of the Exeter rebellion in 1068, having received support from King Diarmid of Leinster,

⁶⁹ He received Bishopstone in exchange for Purse Caundle in Dorset, DB Somerset 19.86 (*Domesday*, f. 93r, pp. 253-54) and DB Dorset 15.1 (*Domesday*, f. 78v, p. 208).

⁷⁰ William de Courseulles (his son had inherited his lands in Somerset by 1086), Serlo de Burcy, Roger Arundel and Walter the Fleming, *Regesta* no. 286 and Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 21-22. William de Mohun received Dunster in c.1069, Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp. 50-51.

⁷¹ Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, p. 63.

⁷² For William de Vauville as sheriff of Devon, Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, p. 63 and n. 79, and DB Devon 3.32 (*Domesday*, f. 102v, p. 286). For Baldwin, Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 21. Cf. Orderic, who identified Baldwin as the original castellan at Exeter, *OV*, ii, pp. 214-15: 'Locum uero intra mœnia ad extruendum castellum delegit, ibique Balduinum de Molis [...] reliquit'.

⁷³ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People. A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166. I. Domesday Book* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 48, n. 24. Cf. Orderic who claimed that 'William and Brian' defeated another rebellion at Exeter after this battle, at ii, pp. 228-29: 'Fugientibus obuui Guillelmus et Briennus grandi cede temeritatem punierunt'.

⁷⁴ Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', pp. 126-28.

⁷⁵ Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1986), p. 16 and John Bryan Williams, 'Judhael of Totnes: the Life and Times of a Post-Conquest Baron', *ANS* 16 (1993), pp. 271-89, at p. 275.

⁷⁶ Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp. 50-51 and 66-67.

Harold's sons attacked Bristol, and in 1069 they landed in north Devon but were driven away by Count Brian near the mouth of the river Taw, close to Barnstaple.⁷⁷ King William's robust response to the Exeter rebellion at which 'he fought relentlessly to drive the citizens from the ramparts', suggests that he appreciated that the region was vulnerable to attacks.⁷⁸ The Godwins were influential landholders in the region: over half of the total value of Gytha's Domesday estates derived from lands in Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire, and Godwin, Harold's son, held land at Nettlecombe and Langford Budville in Somerset in 1066.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Exeter and Bristol were wealthy towns capable of fomenting rebellion. Bristol was particularly dangerous because of its trading links with Ireland, which, as Harold's sons proved, may be exploited by rebels.⁸⁰ Although Domesday Book reveals little about the town, it possessed a mint from which there are extant examples of all eight issues of King William's reign, and it may have had its own hundred court after the Conquest.⁸¹ By King Stephen's reign, Bristol was described as 'almost the richest city of all in the country'.⁸² There was clearly a pressing need to secure such an important and potentially dangerous town especially in the wake of Exeter's revolt. Therefore it is likely that Geoffrey received Bristol between Easter and Christmas 1068, when he can be found in England, and Barnstaple

⁷⁷ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS. D [1067], p. 83: '7 amang þisan com an Haroldes suna of Yrlande mid scyphere into Afenan muðan unwær [...] foron þa to Brygestowe, 7 þa burh abreca woldon'; [1068], p. 84: 'Æfter þisum coman Haroldes sunas of Yrlande to þam middansumera md .lxiii. scypum into Taw muðan [...] 7 Breon eorl com on unwær heom togeines mid unlytlan weorode 7 wið gefeaht, 7 ofsloh þær ealle þa betstan menn þe on þam lyðe wæron'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (D) 1067 [1068] and 1068 [1069], p. 203.

⁷⁸ *OV*, ii, pp. 212-13: 'obnixē satagit ciues desuper impugnare'.

⁷⁹ Peter A. Clarke, *The English Nobility under Edward the Confessor* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 25; 76; Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 20 and DB Somerset, 1.14, 1.16 and 5.5 (*Domesday*, f. 87v, pp. 232 and 236).

⁸⁰ For eleventh-century Exeter, John Allan, Christopher Henderson and Robert Higham, 'Saxon Exeter' in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. Jeremy Haslam (Chichester, 1984), pp. 385-411, at pp. 396-98. For Bristol's links with Ireland, Aubrey Gwynn, 'Medieval Bristol and Dublin', *Irish Historical Studies* 5 (1947), pp. 275-86; Ben Hudson, 'The Family of Harold Godwinsson and the Irish Sea Province', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 109 (1980 for 1979), pp. 92-100.

⁸¹ Leslie Grinsell, 'The Mints of Bath and Bristol' in *The Archaeology of Avon*, ed. Michael Aston and Rob Iles (Bristol, 1987), pp. 173-74; Robert B. Patterson, 'Bristol: an Angevin Baronial Capital under Royal Siege', *HSJ* 3 (1993 for 1991), pp. 171-81, at p. 177.

⁸² *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter (London, 1955), p. 37: 'Est [...] ciuitas omnium fere regionis ciuitatem opulentissima'. The work is contemporary, Edmund King, 'The *Gesta Stephani*' in *Writing Medieval Biography 750-1250. Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 195-206, at p. 202.

between late June 1069, when Harold's sons attacked, and c.1070, when Devon's settlement had taken shape.⁸³ Custody of these towns may have formed part of Geoffrey's footholds in the South West from which he accumulated the rest of his estates. If royal confirmations of ecclesiastical patrimonies provide indications of how long this process took, the settlement of Somerset dragged on beyond c.1082. At this time, King William confirmed Glastonbury Abbey's possession of at least three estates in the county.⁸⁴

It is difficult to determine when Geoffrey received Burgred's lands in the Midlands because the date of the latter's death is unknown. His son, Edwin, was alive in 1086; he held two small estates from Geoffrey in Northamptonshire, a significant diminution of his *TRE* holding.⁸⁵ His insignificance in 1086 suggests that he had either survived Hastings or rebelled against the Normans and lost his lands as a result. Since his father may have been connected to Earl Leofric of Mercia, it is possible that Edwin supported one of Earl Edwin's rebellions in either 1068 or 1071 and was dispossessed as a result. The king granted some of the rebels' lands to Earl Waltheof in 1072 and Geoffrey may have received Edwin's lands at the same time.⁸⁶ Burgred was probably killed at Hastings. The thegns of the East Midlands, where the Godwine family were powerful, constituted a significant part of Harold's army.⁸⁷ Therefore it is possible that Geoffrey received Burgred's estates at Pevensey in March 1067

⁸³ For his appearances in 1068, *Regesta*, nos. 181 and 256. Geoffrey may have repelled the invaders in 1068 with Eadnoth the Staller. It has been suggested that the battle in which Eadnoth was killed took place at Bleadon, Hudson, 'Family of Harold', p. 95 and Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 21. In a personal communication (9 January, 2010), Ann Williams revised her view of this point by suggesting that Bleadon is only a possible location for the battle. If the battle was fought there, it may be significant that Geoffrey held it until he exchanged it for five estates in the Midlands, DB Buckinghamshire, 5.10, 5.18 and DB Bedfordshire, 3.8, 3.10 and 3.11 (*Domesday*, f. 145r-v, pp. 399-400 and f. 210r, p. 564). This has been tentatively identified as Bleadon in Somerset, E-DB Buckinghamshire, 'Notes (version 1a)', 5.10; DB Somerset, 2.11 (*Domesday*, f. 87v, p. 235).

⁸⁴ Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, p. 181 and *Regesta*, no. 151. Cf. Bath Abbey whose rights were probably confirmed between 1066 and 1070, *Regesta*, no. 12.

⁸⁵ DB Northamptonshire, 4.25 and 4.26 (*Domesday*, f. 220v, p. 595); for this identification, E-DB Northamptonshire, 'Notes (version 1a)', 4.25 and 4.26.

⁸⁶ Robert of Mortain might have received his estates in Northamptonshire at the same time, Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, p. 86.

⁸⁷ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 19.

or after his return to England in early 1068. If he survived, Burgred was probably dispossessed in 1068.⁸⁸ Geoffrey's inheritance of estates belonging to other pre-Conquest lords who held sake and soke suggests that he received more than one grant of lands in the Midlands. His acquisition of these lands is difficult to date, but it is unlikely that he received the manors connected to Queen Edith until after her death in 1075.⁸⁹

Geoffrey's Household and Retinue

There is little evidence of Geoffrey's household officials in England or their organisation. One of Geoffrey's tenants in Bedfordshire is identified as William, his 'dapifer' or 'steward'.⁹⁰ Le Patourel suggested that this man was William de Meslay who asked the king to restore cattle stolen by the men of William of Saint-Calais, bishop of Durham, at the latter's trial in 1088.⁹¹ This is a plausible suggestion since, as Mason pointed out, the evidence of the type of activities associated with stewards in this period point to their preoccupation with material resources.⁹² Although the office is associated with the oversight of a lord's hall, it is likely that William was responsible for the management of Geoffrey's affairs and the exploitation of his estates.⁹³ However, the localisation of his estates in the Midlands suggests that his responsibilities may have been restricted to this part of Geoffrey's honour and that a second steward was employed in the South West. Although the evidence is

⁸⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS. E [1067], p. 87: '7 he geaf ælces mannes land þa he on gean com'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1067, p. 200; *WP*, pp. 168-69: 'At milites repatriantes, quorum in tantis negotiis fidei opera usus fuerat, larga manu ad eundem portum donavit', followed at *OV*, ii, pp. 196-97; Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 8 and 19.

⁸⁹ Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, p. 71.

⁹⁰ DB Bedfordshire, 3.5; 3.9 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, p. 564): 'Will[elmu]s dapifer ej[us]'.

⁹¹ *English Lawsuits*, no. 134, p. 103: 'Willelmus de Merlao'. It is possible that he may be connected to the Merlay lords of Morpeth, at p. 93, n. 77. For the identification of this place as Meslay, Jean Adigard des Gautries, 'Les noms de lieux du Calvados attestés entre 911 et 1066', *AdN* 3 (1953), pp. 22-36, at p. 32.

⁹² J.F.A. Mason, 'Barons and their Officials in the Later Eleventh Century', *ANS* 13 (1991), pp. 243-62, at p. 251.

⁹³ For a brief overview of the office's function, see David Crouch, 'The Administration of the Norman Earldom' in *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters: A Tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough*, ed. A. T. Thacker, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* 71 (1991), pp. 69-95 at pp. 76-77.

not conclusive, Mason argued that regional stewards probably existed on the great honours.⁹⁴ In the case of Geoffrey's honour, which was divided into two distinct groups, it would have been logical to employ two stewards in order to manage effectively both groups of estates. But a steward cannot be identified amongst Geoffrey's tenants in the South West. In 'Exon', Roger, a tenant at Long Ashton in Somerset, is described as 'dispensator' or dispenser.⁹⁵ He cannot be found elsewhere as a tenant and so it is likely that his duties did not extend beyond the manor.⁹⁶ It is possible that he acted as William the steward's deputy, since the dispensers in the royal household during the twelfth century were subject to the steward.⁹⁷ Geoffrey may have delegated responsibility for his estates in Devon to his most prominent tenant, Drogo, who held seventy-seven estates.⁹⁸ Drogo is identified in 'Exon' as the 'son of Mauger'.⁹⁹ This 'Mauger' may have been Mauger de Carteret, since one of Drogo's tenants may be identified as Humphrey de Carteret, a relative of Mauger.¹⁰⁰ Since Carteret is located in the northern Cotentin, near Valognes, Drogo may have been a trusted subordinate installed in Devon to uphold Geoffrey's interests. No other officials are mentioned apart from Richard, a tenant at Rode in Somerset, who is described in 'Exon' as an 'interpreter'. He may have been a member of Geoffrey's household, but he did not hold all of this land from Geoffrey. He held one hide at Rode which had belonged to Regenbald the priest.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Mason, 'Barons and their Officials', pp. 251-53.

⁹⁵ DB Somerset, 5.34 (*Domesday*, f. 88v, pp. 237-38); 'Exon Domesday', p. 133: 'Roger[us] dispensator'.

⁹⁶ Mason, 'Barons and their Officials', p. 253.

⁹⁷ Crouch, 'Administration of the Norman Earldom', p. 78.

⁹⁸ DB Devon, 3.9-3.85 (*Domesday*, f. 102r-103r, pp. 284-88).

⁹⁹ DB Devon, 3.9 and 3.13, 3.14 and 3.16; 'Exon Domesday', p. 111: 'drogo fili[us] Malgeri'.

¹⁰⁰ For the identification of Mauger as 'de Carteret', E-DB Devon, 'Notes, version 1a', LIST 10. According to 'Exon', Humphrey held Up Exe, DB Devon, 3.70, at 'Exon Domesday', p. 123; for his identification as 'de Careret', E-DB Devon, 'Notes, version 1a', 3.80.

¹⁰¹ DB Somerset, 5.54 (*Domesday*, f. 88v, p. 239); 'Exon Domesday', pp. 138-39: 'Ricard[us] int[er]pres'; DB Somerset, 45.14 (*Domesday*, f. 99r, p. 276); H. Tsurushima, 'Domesday Interpreters', *ANS* 18 (1996), pp. 201-22, at pp. 206-7.

Most of Geoffrey's tenants are identified only by their first name, but the toponyms attributed to some of his tenants in the South West in 'Exon', with some additional information taken from Midlands returns, allow a partial reconstruction of his retinue. The most striking aspect of this evidence is the west-Norman origin of these tenants. In Devon, Drogo and Humphrey, as noted above, were probably from Carteret.¹⁰² Another tenant in Devon, Geoffrey de Trelly, who also held two estates in Bedfordshire, was from Trelly, south of Coutances.¹⁰³ Chibnall has identified the William who held Glympton in Oxfordshire (recorded in the Northamptonshire returns) as William de Clinton, the ancestor of Geoffrey de Clinton, Henry I's chamberlain. This family came from Saint-Pierre-de-Semilly, near Saint-Lô.¹⁰⁴ In Somerset, William de Monceaux[-en-Bessin] held seven estates from Geoffrey; Monceaux-en-Bessin is situated south of Bayeux.¹⁰⁵ Geoffrey Malregard can also be linked to the Bessin because his family may have held land at Langrune-sur-Mer before 1066.¹⁰⁶ Ralph Rufus, a tenant in Somerset, may have been Breton, since a 'Ralph Rufus', 'nepos' of Archbishop Baldric of Dol, attested charters for the abbey of Préaux in the early twelfth century.¹⁰⁷ Ascelin, a royal servant who held twelve tenancies in Somerset, has also been linked to western Normandy by Keats-Rohan.¹⁰⁸ In Bedfordshire, William the steward, as noted above, was probably from Meslay in the Bessin.¹⁰⁹ Aubrey de Vere, who held

¹⁰² Carteret, Manche, cant. Barneville.

¹⁰³ Trelly, Manche, cant. Montmartin-sur-Mer; DB Devon, 3.97 (*Domesday*, f. 103v, p. 289); 'Exon Domesday', p. 126: 'Gauffridus de trailei'; E-DB Devon, 'Notes (version 1a)', 3.97; DB Bedfordshire, 3.4 and 3.10 (*Domesday*, f. 210r, p. 564).

¹⁰⁴ Saint-Pierre-de-Semilly, Manche, cant. Saint-Clair; DB Northamptonshire, 4.33 (*Domesday*, f. 221r, p. 595); Chibnall, 'La carrière de Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 286.

¹⁰⁵ Monceaux-en-Bessin, Calvados, cant. Bayeux; DB Somerset, 5.1, 5.3, 5.25, 5.42, 5.43, 5.63 and 5.64 (*Domesday*, f. 87v-89r, pp. 235-40); 'Exon Domesday', p. 127: 'Willelm[us] de moncels'; E-DB Somerset, 'Notes, version 1a', 5.1.

¹⁰⁶ Langrune-sur-Mer, Calvados, cant. Douvres-la-Délivrande; DB Somerset, 5.46 (*Domesday*, f. 88v, p. 238); 'Exon Domesday', p. 136: 'Gosfrid[us] malruuard[us]'; Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁷ DB Somerset, 5.2, 5.48, 5.66 and 5.67 (*Domesday*, f. 87v, pp. 235-36; f. 88v, pp. 238-39; f. 89r, p. 240); 'Exon Domesday', pp. 127-28: 'Radulfus rufus'; Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 344.

¹⁰⁸ DB Somerset, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.21, 5.22, 5.36, 5.49, 5.50, 5.58, 5.59, 5.60 and 5.70 (*Domesday*, f. 88r-89r, pp. 236-40); Keats-Rohan has identified him as a west Norman who was also a tenant of Roger de Courseulles, Roger Arundel and the abbey of Glastonbury in the same shire, at *Domesday People*, p. 159.

¹⁰⁹ Meslay, Calvados, cant. Thury-Harcourt; see above, pp. 207-8.

tenancies in Northamptonshire and Middlesex, was another Breton.¹¹⁰ Since Geoffrey acquired the rights held by his Anglo-Saxon predecessors over their bookland, and these men had owed military service to the king in return for it, many of the tenants noted above would have held their land in return for military service.¹¹¹

Geoffrey's Lordship and Post-Conquest England

The memory of Geoffrey preserved at Worcester, where he had presided over a plea between the church and the abbey of Evesham over its rights in Oswaldslow probably between 1083 and 1085, highlights the transformation in his status brought about by his involvement in the Conquest.¹¹² According to an anecdote preserved in William of Malmesbury's translation of Colman the monk's Old English life of Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, Wulfstan replied to Geoffrey's enquiry as to why he did not wear the more luxurious fur of a sable, beaver or fox by reminding him that the fur of crafty animals was appropriate only for men like Geoffrey who were 'well versed in the way of the world'.¹¹³ As Geoffrey's preference for expensive furs demonstrates, he had acquired great wealth through the land he obtained. Geoffrey's status after 1066 derived not only from the material resources he accumulated, but also from the significance of his wealth as an indicator of his closeness to the king. As Althoff has noted in his study of the bonds between lords and their men, a lord was expected to reward his followers. Indeed, this bond was strengthened through military successes and the acquisition of booty, since the followers of a successful lord who enjoyed the reflected glory of his achievements and the material rewards they brought were more willing to comply with

¹¹⁰ DB, Northamptonshire, 4.3 and 4.4; DB Middlesex, 21.1. His family probably came from Vair in Ancenis (cant. Ancenis), Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 131.

¹¹¹ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 192-93.

¹¹² For the dispute and its resolution, *Regesta*, nos. 347-50. For its date, see *Regesta*, no. 347, pp. 993-994.

¹¹³ William of Malmesbury, 'Vita Wulfstani', pp. 106-9, at pp. 108-9: 'elegantior respondit eum et homines prudentiae secularis gnaros uersutorum animalium pellibus uti debere'.

his wishes.¹¹⁴ Since one of the ways a king demonstrated his favour was through the giving of gifts, it follows that those closest to the king received the greatest rewards.¹¹⁵ Therefore the scale of Geoffrey's land-holding and the wealth generated by his lands provided a powerful statement of his personal standing with the king.

The scale of Geoffrey's income is difficult to establish precisely. Since the publication of W. J. Corbett's division of tenants-in-chief into classes based on the total value of their 'baronies' in 1926, it has been customary to use the 'valet' figures provided by Domesday Book as a way of measuring the relative wealth of each tenant-in-chief.¹¹⁶ However, Corbett's calculations have been criticised by John Palmer as an oversimplification of the Domesday evidence. He argued that a more accurate assessment of the relative wealth of each tenant-in-chief may be based on the totals of the 'valet' figures for demesne estates.¹¹⁷ But Palmer's approach is also undermined by his understanding of the 'valet' figures as the total income received by a lord. David Roffe has defined these figures as 'soke dues rendered in cash'. Therefore they formed only a part of what a lord extracted from an estate, for he also received dues and services in kind, as well as additional income from other sources, such as mills and churches.¹¹⁸ In addition to the soke dues rendered as cash, Geoffrey received income from a variety of sources.¹¹⁹ At Bristol and Barnstaple, he received a third of the borough's revenues.¹²⁰ Geoffrey also received dues from houses at

¹¹⁴ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 106 and 122; Schlesinger, 'Lord and Follower', p. 76.

¹¹⁵ Althoff, '(Royal) Favor', at p. 250.

¹¹⁶ W.J. Corbett, 'The Development of the Duchy of Normandy and the Norman Conquest of England' in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. v, ed. J. R. Tanner, C. W. Previté-Orton and Z. N. Brooke (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 481-520.

¹¹⁷ J.J.N. Palmer, 'The Wealth of the Secular Aristocracy in 1086', *ANS* 22 (1999), pp. 279-91, at pp. 281-82.

¹¹⁸ Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 240-50, at pp. 248 and 250.

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of the sources of a great magnate's wealth in the early twelfth century, see David Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins. The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 177-95.

¹²⁰ See above, n. 66. For the distinction between the third penny as a third of the profits from pleas and as a third of revenue from a borough, see J.H. Round, 'The *Tertius Denarius* of the Borough', *EHR* 34 (1919), pp. 62-64.

Exeter, Northampton, Huntingdon and Warwick.¹²¹ Although churches are rarely mentioned on his estates, he may have received payments from those at Long Ashton and Huntingdon.¹²² Mills would have provided a substantial source of income through Geoffrey's right to multure. Geoffrey held eighty mills in eight counties and he also shared the control of several others.¹²³ Another source of income would have been the sale of wood from Geoffrey's forests. 'Woodland' is noted throughout Geoffrey's landholding, but it is particularly noticeable amongst his estates in the South West.¹²⁴

Although Geoffrey's status in post-Conquest England was determined by his closeness to the king, his real power derived from his domination of local society as the successor to the position of king's thegn. As Roffe pointed out, the king's thegn provided the link between the king and the free men through his right to soke and commendation and, as such, he was 'the nexus of real power and influence' in pre-Conquest England.¹²⁵ Since Geoffrey inherited the rights held by his predecessors over bookland, as well as rights to the commendation of some free men, he fulfilled a similar function in England after 1066.¹²⁶ Geoffrey's status was enhanced through the possession of sake and soke for it was a right associated with great lords. In the *Leges Henrici Primi*, which was compiled between 1114 and 1118, it is stated that '[a]rchbishops, bishops, earls, and others of high rank have rights of

¹²¹ DB Devon, 3.1 and 3.2 (*Domesday*, f. 102r, p. 284); DB Northamptonshire, B2 (*Domesday*, f. 219r, p. 589); DB Huntingdonshire, B13 (*Domesday*, f. 203r, p. 551); DB Warwickshire, B2 (*Domesday*, f. 238r, p. 650).

¹²² DB Somerset, 5.34 (*Domesday*, f. 88v, pp. 237-38); DB Huntingdonshire, B13 (*Domesday*, f. 203r, p. 551).

¹²³ Geoffrey received income from one and a half mills at Lavendon (DB Buckinghamshire, 5.15; *Domesday*, f. 145v, p. 400), half a mill at Freshford (DB Somerset, 5.35; *Domesday*, f. 88v, p. 238) and half a mill at Acton [Ilger] (DB Gloucestershire, 6.1; *Domesday*, f. 165r, p. 453). He held multiple mills at Rode, but the number is not specified (DB Somerset, 5.54; *Domesday*, f. 88v, p. 239).

¹²⁴ For forests as a source of revenue, see Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, pp. 189-93.

¹²⁵ Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 158.

¹²⁶ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 192.

sake and soke'.¹²⁷ His domination of local society was symbolised by the halls on his chief manors where soke was rendered. Domesday Book does not identify the locations of these halls, but it is possible to gain an idea of the visual impact of such a hall at Raunds in Northamptonshire through the results of the Raunds Area Project archaeological survey. The estate Geoffrey inherited from Burgred may be identified as the manor of Furnells.¹²⁸ In the late eleventh century, the manor incorporated a hall, an antechamber to the south, followed by domestic apartments.¹²⁹ In addition, the manor had its own church and cemetery, the latter of which was in use until 1150, and domestic buildings.¹³⁰ Manorial complexes like Raunds projected Geoffrey's lordly status.

Conclusion

Geoffrey acquired substantial possessions in England after the Conquest as a reward for his participation in the Hastings campaign. The most important concentration of these lands was in south-west England where Geoffrey appears to have been given responsibility for the northern coastline of Somerset and Devon between Bristol and Barnstaple. The acquisition of these estates augmented the honour, status and prestige which made up his charisma. The rights that Geoffrey inherited from his Anglo-Saxon predecessors broadened the scope of his power by extending it into the localities of England. These rights and the income he received from these estates enhanced his status, but it was the extent of his landholding that most clearly reflected his status, for it indicated his closeness to the king. By 1086, the extent of Geoffrey's landholding highlighted his place amongst those magnates who were closest to the

¹²⁷ *Leges Henrici Primi*, ed. and trans. L. J. Downer (Oxford, 1972), 20, 2, pp. 122-23: 'Archiepiscopi, episcopi, comites et alie potestates in terris proprii potentatus sui sacam et socnam habent'; cited at Roffe, *DIB*, p. 45. For its date, Judith A. Green, *The Government of England Under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 74.

¹²⁸ DB Northamptonshire, 4.1 (*Domesday*, f. 220v, p. 593); *Raunds. The Origin and Growth of a Midland Village, AD 450-1150*, ed. Michael Audouy and Andy Chapman (Oxford, 2009), p. 14.

¹²⁹ *Raunds*, pp. 79-82 and Fig. 5.19. For a reconstruction of the manor, see Fig. 3.10 at p. 37 and Fig. 5.27 at p. 86.

¹³⁰ *Raunds*, pp. 34-36 and 82-84. For domestic buildings usually found on estate centres, Ann Williams, *The World Before Domesday. The English Aristocracy, 900-1066* (London, 2008), p. 96.

king. Therefore just as his pre-Conquest activities in the diocese of Coutances formed a strategy for joining the group of magnates who surrounded the duke, his secular activities in post-Conquest England need to be considered in the context of maintaining his position within this group.

Chapter 7: The King's Affairs

[F]or at the time of Lent, wherever he was, either at court, or in another occupation of the king, he frequently wept [for] he became accustomed to be ensnared without spirit.¹

Canon John has little to say about Geoffrey's career outside the diocese after 1066. When he does refer to Geoffrey's post-Conquest career it is in the context of his ascetic practices and his devotion to the church of Coutances.² However, it is clear from the extant evidence of Geoffrey's activities that he was often pre-occupied with the king's affairs after 1066. Geoffrey is associated with a variety of activities as a result of his decision to accompany the ducal army to England in September 1066. In addition to his association with warfare, which began at the battle of Hastings, Geoffrey played a prominent role in the settlement of England, most notably as a judge. It is his participation in these affairs that is largely responsible for his reputation as a representative of an older ecclesiastical tradition. In particular, Geoffrey's involvement in warfare has led to his characterisation as a 'warrior bishop'.³ This chapter will examine the significance of his participation in these activities in the context of his relationship with the king. By adopting this approach, these aspects of Geoffrey's career will be examined from his perspective. Such an approach will also cast light on contemporary attitudes towards episcopal participation in secular affairs. A survey of Geoffrey's activities in the king's affairs will provide the foundation of this chapter. This will be followed by a broader discussion of the notion of an episcopal ideal in the eleventh century and its relevance in the context of the church in Normandy.

¹ *DS*, col. 222: 'tempore namque Quadragesimali, quocumque erat, sive ad curiam, sive in alia regni occupatione, quammultoties flebat (solebat) segniter irretiri'.

² See above, pp. 122-23.

³ For example, Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, p. 25; Katherine Allen Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050-1250', *Speculum* 83 (2008), pp. 572-602, at p. 584; Allen, 'John of Ivry', pp. 198 ('warlike') and 210.

Geoffrey's Secular Activities

Geoffrey's secular activities may be divided into four areas: his position in South West England and the duties it entailed; his role in implementing the king's orders; his activity as a judge; and his participation in warfare. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Geoffrey held an official position at Bristol. By 1088, he had acquired the trappings of a high-status lord in the town. He held Bristol castle during the rebellion against William Rufus in 1088 and Domesday Book reveals that he had been granted extensive woodland in the royal manor of Bedminster nearby, presumably for hunting, and one third of the king's revenue from the burgesses.⁴ Ann Williams suggested that Geoffrey held the position of port-reeve in the town.⁵ A port-reeve was essentially an administrative agent who upheld the king's interests in the town's trade, but the office is associated with high-status men in post-Conquest England, such as Geoffrey de Mandeville, who was port-reeve of London.⁶ Geoffrey may have held an official position at Barnstaple. Domesday Book records his right to one third of the king's revenue from the borough, and it is likely that he held a castle in the town, for which twenty-three houses were destroyed.⁷ It is possible that he suppressed the revolt at Montacute castle in 1069 in an official capacity, but evidence of his activity as a royal official in the South West is limited.⁸

The scope of Geoffrey's authority extended beyond the South West. In a writ which may be dated c.1077, the king instructed Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, Geoffrey,

⁴ See p. 202, n. 66.

⁵ Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 21.

⁶ For reeves as administrative agents in Anglo-Saxon England and the port-reeve's link to trade, see Ann Williams, *Kingship and Government in Pre-Conquest England, c.500-1066* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 109; S. E. Kelly, 'Canterbury' in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 83. For Geoffrey de Mandeville as port-reeve of London, Williams, *World Before Domesday*, p. 29.

⁷ DB Devon, 1.1 (*Domesday*, f. 100r, p. 277): 'Int[er] om[ne]s redd[ant] [...] ep[iscop]o c[on]stantiensi xx solid[os] ad numerum. Ibi s[un]t xxiii dom[us] uastatæ postq[uam] rex uenit in Angliam'; Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 288.

⁸ See below, pp. 221-22.

Robert of Eu, Richard fitz Gilbert and Hugh de Montfort to inquire into the extent of the losses sustained by bishoprics and abbeys at the hands of the sheriffs.⁹ Bates argued that this group of magnates formed a commission who oversaw the restoration of lands to ecclesiastical institutions throughout England, since Robert of Eu, Hugh de Montfort and Richard fitz Gilbert are addressed in another writ for the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds in which they were instructed to ensure the integrity of its lands.¹⁰ Geoffrey's appearance as an addressee in a writ sent by the king from Bayeux on 14 July 1077, the day of the cathedral's dedication, in which he was instructed to re-seise the abbey of Saint Augustine's with Fordwich and other lands lost during the abbacy of Æthelsige is probably connected to this inquiry, since the other addressees are Lanfranc, Robert of Eu and Hugh de Montfort.¹¹ Geoffrey played a leading role in the series of inquiries into the lands and customs of the abbey of Ely. He is one of the addressees in six writs related to these proceedings which David Bates dated between 1081 or 1082 and the end of the king's reign.¹² He was also one of the magnates notified of the king's grants of the church of Saint Mary at Wolverhampton to Samson the chaplain between 1072 and 1085 and the land of Mabel of Bellême, probably located at Horsley in Gloucestershire, to the abbey of Saint-Martin at Troarn between 1078 and 1086.¹³ In addition, Geoffrey may have acted as one of the Domesday commissioners on Circuit VII, which included the shires of Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. In order to collect the data, the shires were divided into groups, and each group of shires formed a 'circuit'.¹⁴ In a writ which may be dated to the period between 1085 and 1087, the king instructed Lanfranc

⁹ *Regesta*, no. 129. The date of c.1077 is based on the similarity between its wording and that of a writ for Saint-Augustine's, Canterbury (no. 83) identified by Bates at p. 444.

¹⁰ *Regesta*, no. 129, pp. 443-44 and no. 42.

¹¹ *Regesta*, no. 83 and p. 348.

¹² *Regesta*, nos. 119 (1081/2 x 1083, perhaps late 1082 or early 1083), 120 (1081/2 x 1083, before 18 July), 121 (1081/2 x 1086, perhaps 1070 x 1086), 123 (1081/2 x 1087, perhaps 1081/2 x 1083), 124 (1081/2 x 1087, possibly 1081/2 x 1083) and 125 (1081/2 x 1087). Geoffrey may also have been addressed in no. 126 because the copy of this writ in the *Liber Eliensis*, and the copies that derive from it, includes the addition 'et Gosfrido' after Lanfranc's name, at no. 126, pp. 436-37.

¹³ *Regesta*, nos. 265 and 285. For the identification of Horsley, see p. 862.

¹⁴ Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 72-74 and Table 3.1.

to enquire ‘through the bishop of Coutances and Bishop Walkelin and others who had the lands of Saint Etheldreda written down and sworn’ into the procedures used and the results produced.¹⁵ Whilst this may be a reference to Geoffrey’s involvement in an earlier inquiry into the abbey’s lands, the absence of Bishop Walkelin from the documents related to these pleas suggests that it could be a reference to the Domesday inquest.¹⁶ Geoffrey may also be found in Domesday Book as a royal agent who ‘delivered’ land on the king’s behalf. In Buckinghamshire, Geoffrey dispossessed Ralph Passwater of land at Drayton Parslow and ‘delivered’ it to Nigel de Berville, and in Yorkshire, Nigel Fossard returned two messuages which he had usurped to Geoffrey.¹⁷

The broad scope of Geoffrey’s authority implied by the evidence of these charters is also reflected in his participation in judicial affairs. Although his activities as a judge in post-Conquest England are better known, he also acted in this capacity in Normandy. In England, the most famous of the pleas presided over by Geoffrey was held at Penenden Heath in Kent in autumn 1072, where Archbishop Lanfranc recovered estates which had been lost by Christ Church, Canterbury from the middle of the eleventh century, probably during the archiepiscopate of Eadsige, and acquired a definition of the church’s privileges.¹⁸ He also

¹⁵ *Regesta*, no. 127, p. 439: ‘Inquire per episcopum Constantiense(m) et per episcopum Walchelinu(m) et per ceteros qui terras sancte Ætheldride scribi et uirari fecerunt’.

¹⁶ J.H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895), pp. 114-15; Le Patourel, ‘Geoffrey of Montbray’, pp. 148-49. Bishop Walkelin is missing from *Regesta*, nos. 117, 118, 119, 120, 122 and 123. Edward Miller argued that Bishop Walkelin was present at the Kentford plea based on twelfth-century evidence, at ‘The Ely Land Pleas in the Reign of William I’, *EHR* 62 (1947), pp. 438-56, at pp. 444-46. For a corrective of this view, *Regesta*, no. 122, p. 429.

¹⁷ DB Buckinghamshire, 40.1 (*Domesday*, f. 151v, pp. 416-17): ‘Hunc Radulfu[m] desaisiuit ep[iscopu]s constantiensis et lib[er]avit Nigello sup[ra]dicto’; Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, p. 49; DB Yorkshire, C.9 (*Domesday*, f. 298r, p. 785): ‘Nigell[us] fossard int[er]cepit ii mans[iones] sed dixit se eas reddidisse ep[iscop]o c[on]stantiensi’.

¹⁸ *Regesta*, no. 69. For the date of the plea, Alan Cooper, ‘Extraordinary Privilege: The Trial of Penenden Heath and The Domesday Inquest’, *English Historical Review* 116 (2001), pp. 1167-92, at p. 1178. David Bates dated the bulk of Christ Church’s losses to the pre-Conquest period, David R. Bates, ‘The Land Pleas of William I’s Reign: Penenden Heath Revisited’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 51 (1978), pp. 1-19, at pp. 14-16. Cooper argued that Versions I and II of the record of the plea contain inflated claims to privileges made in c.1090 and in the early twelfth century, at ‘Extraordinary Privilege’, pp. 1167-92, especially pp. 1182-87.

heard a plea at Worcester between 1083 and 1085 at which Bishop Wulfstan asserted his right to jurisdiction over the abbey of Evesham's land at Hampton and Bengeworth in the triple hundred of Oswaldslow and the services due from them.¹⁹ Geoffrey also participated in at least two pleas concerning the lands and rights of Ely Abbey. The exact number cannot be ascertained because the surviving records of these pleas are conflated accounts of an unspecified number of inquiries, but it is possible that Geoffrey's involvement in the legal affairs of Ely Abbey began as early as 1071 and continued up to 1087.²⁰ In Normandy, Geoffrey judged a dispute over a mill at Vains between the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel and John son of Richard in c.1076.²¹ At Cherbourg on 27 December 1080, Geoffrey presided over a plea concerning the disputed possession of a prebend of the church of Saint-Georges de Bohon between Geoffrey son of 'Nerveus' and the abbey of Marmoutier.²² He also acted as one of the judges in a dispute heard before King William on 12 April 1080 between the abbey of La Trinité-du-Mont and Bishop Gilbert of Evreux over the island of Oissel in the River Seine.²³

The most controversial aspect of Geoffrey's secular career is his participation in warfare. Geoffrey can be associated with warfare on four occasions in England between 1066 and 1088: he was present at Hastings in 1066; he commanded the force which relieved the siege of Montacute castle in 1069; he played a prominent role in the suppression of the 1075 rebellion; and he raised rebellion with his nephew, Robert de Montbray, in the South

¹⁹ *Regesta*, no. 349 and nos. 347, 348 and 350. For the view that jurisdiction was more important than the land involved, Mason, *Wulfstan of Worcester*, pp. 135-36; Patrick Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice in the Early English Kingdom: Oswaldslow Revisited', *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 114-36, at p. 123. The date is provided by Bates, who argued that the double entry for Bengeworth in Domesday Book may indicate a date close to 1086, at no. 347, p. 994.

²⁰ For example, *Regesta*, nos. 117 and 118 (also referred to at no. 122). Further pleas are referred to in nos. 119, 120, 123 and 127. The dating limits are provided by no. 117 (1071) and nos. 122-27 (1087).

²¹ *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 6.

²² *Regesta*, no. 201.

²³ *Regesta*, no. 235.

West against William Rufus in 1088. However, the extent of his participation in any fighting is difficult to gauge. At Hastings, according to William of Poitiers, Geoffrey ‘prepared for the combat with prayers’ with a group of clerics and monks.²⁴ Since Orderic Vitalis’ account of the battle in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* derived from William of Poitiers’ *Gesta Guillelmi*, he repeated this information but added their role as counsellors.²⁵ However, in another part of his work which did not derive from the *Gesta Guillelmi*, Orderic implied that Geoffrey contributed more than just prayers. In a *précis* of his career, Orderic stated that Geoffrey had participated in the ‘battle of Senlac’ as a ‘fautor acer et consolator’. Chibnall translated the phrase as ‘he had fought in the battle of Senlac as well as offering up prayers’, but her translation rests upon the interpretation of ‘fautor acer’ as ‘combatant’. At first glance, her interpretation seems logical, since Orderic goes on to say that Geoffrey acted as ‘magister militum’ in ‘other battles between English and invaders’.²⁶ The title ‘magister militum’, which is literally translated as ‘master of soldiers’, alludes to the offices of ‘magister peditum’ and ‘magister equitum’ created by Constantine I after 312 which assumed the military functions of the praetorian prefects in respect of infantry and cavalry.²⁷ However, it is unlikely that Orderic was attributing an official title to Geoffrey. The appearance of the term should be seen as a reflection of Orderic’s attempt to express his ideas through an archaic language suited to the classical world. It is more likely that he intended the term to convey a more general meaning of ‘commander of troops’.²⁸ ‘[F]autor acer’, as noted above, is translated literally as ‘ardent supporter’. It is an unusual way to describe Geoffrey’s role in the battle of Hastings if Orderic had thought that Geoffrey acted as a ‘combatant’. It is

²⁴ *WP*, pp. 124-25: ‘precibus pugnare disponitur’.

²⁵ *OV*, ii, pp. 172-73: ‘quorum officium erat pugnare precibus et consiliis’. For Orderic’s use of the *Gesta Guillelmi*, see *OV*, ii, p. xviii.

²⁶ *OV*, ii, pp. 266-67: ‘qui certamini Senlacio fautor acer et consolator interfuit, et in aliis conflictibus qui postmodum aduenas et indigenas utrinque contriuerant magister militum fuit’.

²⁷ Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire* (Revised edition, New York, 2002), p. 143.

²⁸ *OV*, ii, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Fascicule VI: M*, ed. D.R. Howlett (Oxford, 2001), p. 1680.

possible that Orderic selected the noun ‘fautor’ in order to portray Geoffrey as an accomplice to those Normans who committed what Orderic perceived as crimes against the English people. In Orderic’s view, the Normans ‘mercilessly slaughtered the native people like the scourge of God smiting them for their sins’.²⁹ ‘Fautor’ was used by medieval authors to describe abettors in crimes or even supporters of heresy.³⁰ Therefore it is not clear that Orderic intended to suggest that Geoffrey participated in these largely unidentified conflicts as a combatant.

Similar uncertainty surrounds the nature of Geoffrey’s role in the other examples of his military activities. Orderic provides the only record of the West Saxon rebellion in 1069, but his account is brief. Having noted the outbreak of revolt, he recorded that

by the will of God [the rebels] failed to take it (Montacute). For the men of Winchester, London, and Salisbury, under the leadership of Geoffrey bishop of Coutances, marched against them, killed some, captured and mutilated others, and put the rest to flight.³¹

However, once again, the extent of Geoffrey’s participation in the killing and mutilation is difficult to establish. Since he led the local force, it is reasonable to assume that he had mustered the army. Although Orderic described Geoffrey as the leader, it is the men of Winchester, London and Salisbury who performed the killing and mutilation. The phrase ‘under the leadership of Geoffrey bishop of Coutances’ is a separate clause, a feature of Orderic’s Latin which Chibnall tried to preserve through her placement of commas.

²⁹ *OV*, ii, pp. 268-69: ‘et indigenas diuino uerbere pro reatibus suis percussos impie mactabant’. For this aspect of the *Historia*, Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, pp. 195-200.

³⁰ *Dictionary of Medieval Latin*, Vol. 1, p. 911.

³¹ *OV*, ii, pp. 228-29: ‘sed diuino nutu impediti sunt. Nam Guentani, Lundonii, Salesberii, Gaufrido Constantiensi præsule ductore superuenerunt, quosdam peremerunt, partim captos mutilauerunt, reliquos fugauerunt’.

Geoffrey, therefore, is not strictly included in the group who are designated by ‘peremerunt’, ‘mutilauerunt’ or ‘fugauerunt’.

Geoffrey’s role in the suppression of the 1075 rebellion is obfuscated by the contradictory accounts of Orderic and John of Worcester.³² John of Worcester described how Bishop Odo of Bayeux and Geoffrey ‘assembled a large force of English and Normans and prepared for battle’ after Earl Ralph had encamped at his manor at Fawdon in Whaddon, near Cambridge. In his version, the rebels took flight at the sight of the royal army.³³ Orderic, on the other hand, described a ‘hard-fought battle’, won by a royal army commanded by William de Warenne and Richard fitz Gilbert, rather than Odo and Geoffrey.³⁴ However, Geoffrey is identified as one of the commanders by Lanfranc in a letter written to the king after the remnants of Earl Ralph’s army had been driven out of Norwich castle. Lanfranc noted that at the time of writing, the castle was in the custody of Geoffrey, William de Warenne and Robert Malet.³⁵ Yet even if it is assumed that battle was joined at Fawdon, neither Orderic nor John of Worcester implicated Geoffrey in any fighting, and Lanfranc’s letter provides no information about the siege of Norwich castle which it implied took place after the battle.

The extent of Geoffrey’s participation in the 1088 rebellion is also obscured by the differences between the narrative sources. Whereas the Anglo-Saxon chronicler and William of Malmesbury provide brief accounts of raids carried out by Geoffrey and his nephew, Robert, John of Worcester, who provides the most detailed version of events, attributed this

³² For a recent discussion of the rebellion and its impact on the settlement of East Anglia, Lucy Marten, ‘The Rebellion of 1075 and its Impact in East Anglia’ in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 168-82.

³³ *JW*, iii, pp. 24-27: ‘congregata magna copia, tam Anglorum quam Normannorum, ad bellum parati occurrerunt [...] [Earl Ralph] multitudinem resistentium ueritus, ad Northuuic clanculo refugit’. For the identification of Fawdon, Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 63.

³⁴ *OV*, ii, pp. 316-17: ‘acriterque [...] dimicant’.

³⁵ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 35, pp. 124-27: ‘In ipso castro remanserunt episcopus Gausfridus, W. de Warennia, Rob. Malet’.

activity solely to Robert.³⁶ McGurk's translation presents Geoffrey as the driving force behind these raids:

Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, holding Bristol castle with his nephew and accomplice in the treasonable conspiracy, Robert of Mowbray, a skilled soldier, put together an army, attacked, set fire to, and plundered the royal city of Bath, and passing through Wiltshire, sacking townships and slaughtering a multitude, he at last reached and besieged Gloucester, and prepared its assault.³⁷

However, in the Latin text, it is clearly Robert who performed these acts because the individual who carried out these raids also besieged Gloucester, and John identified Robert as this person in the following sentences.³⁸ Once again, Geoffrey cannot be linked directly to any fighting. Therefore there is no evidence to suggest that Geoffrey was personally involved in any fighting on any of these occasions. Other than the siege of Montacute in 1069, Orderic does not identify the 'other battles' in which Geoffrey acted as 'magister militum' after Hastings or the battles Geoffrey frequently participated in 'against the Danes and English'. Geoffrey is omitted entirely from Orderic's accounts of the 1075 and 1088 rebellions.³⁹ It appears that Geoffrey's role in warfare was restricted to the organisation of armies rather than personal involvement in combat. As Timothy Reuter has pointed out, this was a distinction made in twelfth-century Germany.⁴⁰ It is possible that the depiction of Bishop Odo of Bayeux on the Bayeux Tapestry wielding a club rather than a sword reflects

³⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. E*, 1087 [1088], p. 99: 'Gosfrið biscop 7 Rodbeard a Mundbræg ferdon to Bricgstowe 7 hergodon 7 brohton to þam castele þa hergunge, 7 syððon foron ut of ðam castele 7 hergodon Baðon 7 eall þet land þærabutan, 7 eall Beorclea hyrnesse hi awæston'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (E)* 1087 [1088], p. 223; WM, *GR*, i, pp. 544-45: 'Gaufridus episcopus cum nepote, Bathoniam et Bercheleiam partemque pagi Wiltensis depopulans, manubias apud Bristou collocabat'.

³⁷ *JW*, iii, p. 52: 'Gosfridus episcopus Constantiensis, in castello Brycestoua, socium coniurationis et perfidie habebat secum nepotem suum Rotbertum de Mulbraio, uirum gnarum militie, qui congregato exercitu inuasit Bathoniam, ciuitatem regiam, igne succendit eam, et illa depredata transiuit in Wiltusciram, uillasque depopulans, multorumque hominum strage facta, tandem adiit Giuelceastram, obsedit, et expugnare disposuit'.

³⁸ Following the successful defence of Gloucester, 'Robert withdrew sadly, deprived of victory', *JW*, iii, pp. 52-53: 'tristis recedit Rotbertus priuatus uictoria'. Le Patourel also noted the presentation of Robert as the leader of the raids in the Worcester chronicle, at 'Geoffrey of Montbray', p. 154.

³⁹ *OV*, ii, p. 266: 'in aliis conflictibus'; *OV*, iv, p. 278: 'Conflictibus ergo contra Dacos et Anglos sepe interfuit'. For the 1075 rebellion, ii, pp. 310-17; for the 1088 rebellion, iv, pp. 120-35.

⁴⁰ Reuter, 'Episcopi cum sua militia', pp. 80-81.

this distinction in England and Normandy at the time of the Conquest.⁴¹ Indeed, Orderic may have used the term ‘magister militum’ to convey the role of commander.

As this survey has demonstrated, Geoffrey neither specialized in one aspect of royal service nor held a specific title related to the governance of England or Normandy. He simply implemented the king’s will as the member of an informally constituted group of magnates to whom the king entrusted various aspects of royal business. Membership of this group must have been fluid, but at its core were the king’s half-brothers, Bishop Odo of Bayeux and Count Robert of Mortain. Odo exercised broad authority in England. An impression of its scope may be gleaned from an account of a dispute between Bishop Gundulf of Rochester and Picot, sheriff of Cambridge, over land at Isleham in Cambridgeshire, which was resolved by Odo between 1077 and 1082/3. The land was originally awarded to Picot, but Gundulf complained about the judgement to Odo after he discovered that the jurors had perjured themselves. Odo had the power to summon the perjurers to London and resolve the dispute in Gundulf’s favour by convening another plea.⁴² Orderic may have tried to convey a sense of the nature of Odo’s authority by describing him as ‘consul palatinus’, another potentially misleading term that sits awkwardly in a medieval context. In this case, Orderic probably used it to highlight Odo’s pre-eminence at court.⁴³ The writ concerning the inquest into the losses suffered by English abbeys and churches identifies Geoffrey, Lanfranc, Count Robert of Eu, Richard fitz Gilbert and Hugh de Montfort as members of this group, and in his account of the 1075 rebellion, Orderic described

⁴¹ Musset, *Bayeux Tapestry*, pp. 248–49.

⁴² Odo had the power to order the perjurers to defend themselves by the ‘ordeal of iron’, *Regesta*, no. 225, p. 714: ‘Baiocensis episcopus dixit ut hoc ipsum iudicio ferri probarent’. Odo may have initiated the inquiry into the landholding of Ely Abbey at Kentford between 1075/6 and 1081/2. This plea was ‘ordered through the bishop of Bayeux’, *Regesta*, no. 118, p. 419: ‘per Baiocensem episcopum precepit’.

⁴³ *OV*, ii, pp. 264–65; iv, pp. 124–25; Bates, ‘Character and Career of Odo’, p. 7.

William de Warenne as one of the ‘chief ministers for all business in England’.⁴⁴ Lanfranc’s prominence in royal affairs is also reflected in the evidence of his correspondence with the king.⁴⁵ Geoffrey’s place in this group is reflected in the number of his appearances in royal charters as a witness or signer. Indeed, Geoffrey was one of the most frequent witnesses or signers to the king’s ‘acta’.⁴⁶ The frequency with which each magnate acted on the king’s behalf and the nature of the service undertaken were determined by practical considerations, such as the geographical location of the problem that needed to be resolved and the availability of magnates who usually had their own interests either side of the Channel. For example, Geoffrey took responsibility for the suppression of the West Saxon rebellion in 1069 as a prominent landholder in the South West who had a vested interest in the suppression of the revolt.

Membership of this group was determined by closeness to the king. As David Bates noted in relation to Odo of Bayeux, the broad scope of his authority was a reflection of his kinship with the king. This relationship allowed Odo to ‘act without direct reference to the king’.⁴⁷ The authority of the other members of this group rested on the same principle. The dependence of Lanfranc’s authority on his personal relationship with the king is highlighted in two of his letters written to Roger of Breteuil, earl of Hereford, during his rebellion against the king in 1075. In the first, Lanfranc gave Roger ‘an unqualified assurance that you will not be hindered in any way by me or by the king’s men either in making the journey or in returning home’, and in the second, on hearing that Roger wanted Lanfranc to intercede with

⁴⁴ *Regesta*, no. 129. Orderic’s description applied to Richard fitz Gilbert as well, *OV*, ii, pp. 316-17: ‘præcipuos Angliæ iusticiarios [...] in regni negotiis’. For the members of this group as royal deputies, F.J. West, *The Justiciarship in England 1066-1232* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵ *Letters of Lanfranc*, nos. 34 and 35.

⁴⁶ C. Warren Hollister, ‘Magnates and “Curiales” in Early Norman England’, *Viator* 8 (1977), pp. 63-81, p. 65, Table A.

⁴⁷ Bates, ‘Character and Career of Odo’, p. 8; David Bates, ‘The Origins of the Justiciarship’, *ANS* 4 (1981), pp. 1-12 and 167-71, at p. 8.

the king on his behalf, Lanfranc promised him ‘all the help that is compatible with my allegiance to him’.⁴⁸ Geoffrey’s closeness to the king is reflected in the nature of the authority he exercised as a judge. At Penenden Heath in 1072, Geoffrey acted ‘in loco regis’ (‘in the king’s place’).⁴⁹ In the plea brought by Mont-Saint-Michel in c.1076, Geoffrey was appointed as the presiding judge, ‘e quibus [...] est delegatus regali auctoritate’ (‘to whom royal authority was delegated’).⁵⁰ At Worcester, between 1078 and 1085, the king ordered the plea to be heard before Geoffrey, who would act ‘in meo loco’ (‘in my place’).⁵¹ The attribution of delegated royal authority in the records of these pleas may reflect the authors’ concern to establish the authority of the court, but it is significant that these phrases suggest that Geoffrey was sharing the king’s power by presiding over these pleas.⁵² Therefore Geoffrey’s participation in secular activities was a reflection of his prominence amongst the king’s followers after the Conquest and his closeness to the king which this status implied. An instructive parallel is provided by Tellenbach’s study of the ‘imperial aristocracy’ in the Carolingian Empire whose pre-eminence was reflected in the nature of their royal service. This service included the command of armies and a wide range of governmental responsibilities.⁵³ In this sense, Geoffrey’s secular activities provide proof of the success of the strategy he employed in pre-Conquest Normandy to move closer to the duke.

Indeed, Geoffrey’s participation in these activities formed a strategy for maintaining his closeness to the king. Geoffrey’s command of armies, his participation in pleas acting in the king’s place and his association with other great magnates such as Odo, Robert of

⁴⁸ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 32, pp. 120-21: ‘securas proculdubio quod neque in eundo neque in redeundo per nos uel per regios / homines impediementi aliquid patieris’; no. 33, pp. 122-23: ‘te salua eius fidelitate prout melius potero / adiuuabo’.

⁴⁹ *Regesta*, no. 69, p. 320 (Version I); p. 325 (Version II).

⁵⁰ *Regesta*, no. 214, p. 674.

⁵¹ *Regesta*, no. 347, p. 994.

⁵² Bates, ‘Land Pleas’, p. 13; *Regesta*, pp. 74-75.

⁵³ Tellenbach, ‘From Carolingian Imperial Nobility’, pp. 207-8.

Mortain and Lanfranc were public expressions of his close relationship with the king. In this sense, each act augmented his honour, reputation and prestige, the elements of his charisma. Whereas his *Königsnähe* strategy before 1066 had been based on the enhancement of his charisma in an ecclesiastical context, his strategy for maintaining his closeness to the king following the Conquest was based on his participation in the king's affairs. The need for a new strategy was determined by the impact of the Conquest on Geoffrey's status. Since he started to receive the rewards that were appropriate to those closest to the king in the form of grants of land in the South West and probably the Midlands soon after 1066, he was expected to participate in activities that were appropriate for men in his position. It was vital for those closest to the king to augment their charisma through royal service for their status and continued prosperity rested on their relationship with the king and, as Janet Nelson noted in relation to Charles the Bald's reign, 'space close to the king was limited, and few occupied it for more than a decade or so'.⁵⁴ Geoffrey would have been aware of the importance of 'keeping his balance on the revolving Wheel of Fortune'.⁵⁵ Therefore he undertook the secular activities outlined above in order to enhance his charisma and thereby strengthen his relationship with the king.

The Episcopal Ideal in the Eleventh Century

Geoffrey's participation in secular affairs contravened the behaviour associated with the notion of an episcopal ideal in the eleventh century, which advocated a mixed life of pastoral care and spiritual contemplation for bishops. As noted in Chapter 1, this ideal derived from biblical references to the appropriate characteristics of a bishop, the story of Mary and

⁵⁴ Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), p. 70. For the competitive nature of life at court, see Timothy Reuter, 'Nobles and Others: The Social and Cultural Expression of Power Relations in the Middle Ages' in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe. Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 85-98, at pp. 86-87.

⁵⁵ Emma Mason, 'Magnates, Curiales and the Wheel of Fortune: 1066-1154', *ANS* 2 (1979), pp. 118-40 and 190-95, at p. 120.

Martha which served as an allegory of the mixed life, and the works of the Church Fathers, the most important of which was Gregory the Great's *Liber regulæ pastoralis*.⁵⁶ The ideal of a bishop who blended concern for his own spiritual welfare with devotion to pastoral care was complemented by the canons of the early Church's ecumenical councils which attempted to prohibit clerical participation in secular affairs. The Church's stance on this issue reflected its concern over the sin inherent in secular activities which polluted the clergy and consequently contaminated the sacraments. An example of this view may be seen in the Church's attempts to prohibit clerical participation in warfare which derived from an abhorrence of the spilling of blood.⁵⁷ This activity was prohibited as early as 451 at the Fourth Ecumenical Council convened at Chalcedon.⁵⁸ But it was also reflected in the prohibition of clerical participation in other secular activities. Clergy who managed property were denounced at the same council and clerics who practiced usury out of greed were deposed at the council of Nicaea in 325.⁵⁹ The Church's anxiety over the contamination of the Holy Spirit also affected clerical participation in judicial pleas. A canon of the eleventh council of Toledo, convened in 675, forbade those who touched the sacraments from passing judgements of blood.⁶⁰ Attempts at preventing the pollution of the clergy went as far as criticising the pride of bishops and clerics who wore costly apparel and perfume at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 787.⁶¹

⁵⁶ See above, pp. 41-43.

⁵⁷ Ferminio Poggiaspalla, 'La chiesa e la partecipazione dei chierici alla guerra nella legislazione conciliare fino allo decretali di Gregorio IX', *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* 15 (1959), pp. 140-53, at p. 141.

⁵⁸ Chalcedon, c. 7, Mansi, vii, col. 362: 'Eos qui in clero semel ordinati sunt, et itidem monachos, statuimus nec ad militarem expeditionem, nec ad sæcularem dignitatem posse venire'.

⁵⁹ Chalcedon, c. 3, Mansi, vii, col. 359: 'Definiit ergo sancta synodus, neminem deinceps [...] vel possessiones conducere, vel sæcularibus possessionum administrationibus seipsum ingerere'; Nicaea I, c. 17, Mansi, ii, col. 682: 'si quis inventus fuerit post hanc definitionem usuras accipiens [...] dejiciatur a clero, et alienus existat a regula'.

⁶⁰ Toledo XI, c. 6, Mansi, xi, col. 141: 'His a quibus domini sacramenta tractanda sunt, iudicium sanguinis agitare non licet'.

⁶¹ Nicaea II, c. 16, Mansi, xiii, col. 433: 'Eos ergo episcopos vel clericos qui se fulgidis et claris vestibus ornant, emendari oportet'.

The Church's attitude towards clerical participation in secular affairs intensified as the reform movement associated with Pope Leo IX and his successors gathered momentum. This movement was motivated in part by fears over the extent to which Christian society had been contaminated by clergy who had participated in certain secular activities.⁶² The reformers not only intended to correct the clergy's moral laxity; their ultimate goal was the removal of lay influence over the clergy and the Church's affairs.⁶³ The danger posed by the worldliness of bishops is elucidated in a letter written by Pope Gregory VII to Lanfranc in c. July 1073. Gregory condemned bishops whose

insatiable craving for worldly glory and the delights of the flesh, are not only confounding all holiness and piety within themselves, but the example of their conduct is dragging their subordinates into every kind of sin.⁶⁴

Simony, clerical unchastity and the bearing of arms were targeted in particular by the reformers as the most significant manifestations of clerical impurity.⁶⁵ Clerical participation in warfare, which is central to this discussion of Geoffrey's post-Conquest career, was repeatedly prohibited at reforming councils during the second half of the eleventh century. For example, it was prohibited at Reims in 1049, at which Geoffrey was present, at Tours in 1060 where clerics who performed military service were threatened with deposition, at Poitiers in 1078 where it was decreed that clerics who carry arms may be excommunicated, and at Gerona in 1078 where a similar promulgation was made and where clerics were also

⁶² Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076' in *The Peace of God. Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 280-307.

⁶³ Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, p. 95.

⁶⁴ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 8, p. 64: 'mundi gloriam et delicias carnis insatiabili desiderio prosequentes non solum in semetipsis quae sancta quaeque sunt religiosa confundunt, sed subditos suos ad omne nefas operum suorum exemplo pertrahunt.'

⁶⁵ Remensnyder, 'Pollution, Purity, and Peace', pp. 285-86.

forbidden from wearing military clothing.⁶⁶ As a result of the reformers' vigorous attacks on this behaviour the focus of the ideal shifted slightly towards an expectation that a bishop's actions should be directed towards the advancement of the principles of the reform movement. This shift is reflected in the depiction of reforming bishops in their 'vitae' as 'men of action' whose sanctity stemmed from their commitment to the implementation of reform ideals.⁶⁷ Moreover, Gregory VII not only expected bishops to be committed to reform; he required bishops to be faithful servants of the papacy.⁶⁸

However, in reality, it was impossible to detach bishops from secular affairs entirely. Indeed, the reformers' attack on clergy who participated in secular affairs represented an attempt at 'align[ing] reality with the ideal of purity as enunciated in the canons'.⁶⁹ In order to protect his church's possessions and augment its income, a bishop was required to have some experience of worldly affairs.⁷⁰ As community leaders, bishops had traditionally been prominent in political life at a local level.⁷¹ Their prominence may be traced back to the episcopate's earliest history when bishops became closely linked to cities and the land surrounding each city came to form a diocese with boundaries that usually corresponded to a regional division of secular administration. Therefore it was natural for bishops to fill the

⁶⁶ Reims, c. 6, 'Anselme de Saint-Remy', pp. 252-53: 'Ne quis clericorum arma militaria gestaret, aut mundanae militiae deserviret'; Tours, c. 7, Mansi, xix, col. 927: 'Quicumque autem clericorum deinceps in armis militaverint; et beneficium, et consortium clericorum amittant'; Poitiers, c. 10, Mansi, xx, col. 499: 'Clerici arma portantes, et usurarii excommunicentur'; Gerona, cs. 6 and 7, Mansi, xx, cols. 518-19: 'clerici arma ferentes, nisi dimiserint arma, sint alieni a Corpore et Sanguine Domini, et ab ingressu totius ecclesiae, et Christianorum sepultura, et omni communione ecclesiastica' and 'ne clericus [...] induat militaria indumenta'. (The last three were legatine councils.)

⁶⁷ Kathleen G. Cushing, 'Events that Led to Sainthood: Sanctity and the Reformers in the Eleventh Century' in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 187-96; for the phrase, see p. 187.

⁶⁸ I.S. Robinson, 'Periculosus homo': Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority', *Viator* 9 (1978), pp. 103-31, at pp. 109-12.

⁶⁹ Remensnyder, 'Pollution, Purity, and Peace', p. 285.

⁷⁰ For the importance of 'temporal means' to the Church's mission of preaching salvation, J. Gilchrist, *The Church and Economic Activity in the Middle Ages* (London, 1969), p. 6.

⁷¹ Frend, *Early Church*, p. 40.

void left by the decline of local government between the fifth and seventh centuries.⁷² The assumption of civil duties had the effect of blurring the line between a bishop's spiritual and temporal functions.⁷³

An additional complicating factor was that bishops were often drawn from local noble families, a fact that led Friedrich Prinz to argue that the aristocratic mentality of these bishops conditioned their attitude towards their participation in warfare.⁷⁴ Prinz attributed a 'hereditary psychological blocking mechanism' to these bishops, which precluded their adherence to the Church's canons.⁷⁵ By the reign of Charlemagne, Prinz argued that noble bishops and abbots were distinguished from the rest of clergy. For example, the omission of bishops and abbots from the prohibition of clerical participation in warfare in the 'Admonitio generalis' of 789, but the inclusion of priests and deacons reflected this distinction.⁷⁶ Remensnyder has rejected the principle of Prinz's argument by citing the example of Archbishop Wifred of Narbonne who prohibited bishops from bearing arms at a provincial council in 1043.⁷⁷ But it is logical to assume that noble bishops, whose mentality was aristocratic, would have been the members of the clergy who were most unwilling to adhere to the prohibition.⁷⁸ This is a crucial factor in an assessment of Geoffrey's attitude towards his participation in the king's affairs.

⁷² Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (London, 1987), pp. 59 and 72-73; Friedrich E. Prinz, 'King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians' in *Saints, Scholars and Heroes. Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, ed. Margot H. King and Wesley M. Stevens, 2 vols. (Collegeville, 1979), ii, pp. 301-29, at p. 304.

⁷³ Fontaine, 'L'évêque dans la tradition littéraire du premier millénaire en Occident', p. 48.

⁷⁴ Bishops continued to be drawn from aristocratic backgrounds even after the Gregorian reform movement, Howe, 'Nobility's Reform of the Medieval Church', pp. 329-32.

⁷⁵ Prinz, 'King, Clergy and War', p. 304.

⁷⁶ Prinz, 'King, Clergy and War', pp. 315-16.

⁷⁷ Remensnyder, 'Pollution, Purity, and Peace', p. 287.

⁷⁸ Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, p. 198.

This gap between ideal and reality can be seen in the evidence from eleventh-century Normandy where the mixed life supported by conciliar legislation is contrasted by examples of bishops participating in a variety of secular affairs. The mixed life of pastoral care and inner contemplation was known in Normandy during Geoffrey's lifetime, for it informed William of Poitiers' description of Hugh of Lisieux, whom William worked under as archdeacon of Lisieux, in the *Gesta Guillelmi*.⁷⁹ He depicted Hugh as an exemplary bishop because he was able to balance the active and contemplative lives. Whilst Hugh 'kept strict control over his own manner of life, and devoted himself to feeding his flock with equal care', he also spent the night 'in prayer, in assiduous observance of the sacred offices, in close study of the Bible, and finally in his unfailing love for every holy work'.⁸⁰ However, if Hugh had commissioned the work, which is suggested by the length of the description and its laudatory nature, it must have been intended to flatter him.⁸¹ In reality, certain Norman bishops were prominent in secular affairs. Archbishop Robert of Rouen and Bishop Hugh of Bayeux held the 'comtés' of Évreux and Ivry respectively in addition to their bishoprics.⁸² Following the death of his nephew Arnulf in late 1048 or early 1049, Bishop Ivo of Sées held his bishopric conjointly with the lordship of Bellême.⁸³ Each of these bishops was implicated in warfare. At Évreux, probably in 1027 or 1028, Archbishop Robert 'barricaded himself within the city walls with a military force' against Duke Robert the Magnificent.⁸⁴ At Ivry, between 1028 and 1032, Bishop Hugh fortified his castle against Duke Robert.⁸⁵ Before

⁷⁹ For William as archdeacon, see above, p. 15.

⁸⁰ *WP*, pp. 92-95: 'Propriae conuersationis directioni attente uigilabat, iugi cura speculabatur pascendo gregi'; 'orationibus [...] diuinorum officiorum studiosa concelebratio, sacrae bibliothecae cultus perfamiliaris, denique sancti cuiusque operis indefessus amor'.

⁸¹ For this suggestion, Leah Shopkow, *History and Community. Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1997), pp. 43-44.

⁸² For Archbishop Robert, Bouet and Dosdat, 'Les évêques normands', p. 19. For Bishop Hugh, Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p. 100.

⁸³ Decaens, 'L'évêque Yves de Sées', pp. 122-23.

⁸⁴ *WJ*, ii, pp. 48-49: 'intra urbis menia se obstruxit cum militari manu'; for the date, see n. 2.

⁸⁵ *WJ*, ii, pp. 52-53: 'Ibroicum castrum [...] sufficienter muniuit'; for the date, see n. 1.

October 1049, Bishop Ivo laid siege to the church of Saint-Gervais.⁸⁶ Archbishop Robert also acted as a judge, as did Archbishop Maurilius and Bishop Hugh of Lisieux in pre-Conquest Normandy, albeit with other magnates.⁸⁷ Geoffrey was present at the council of Lisieux where clerics were prohibited from carrying arms or assaulting anyone, and practicing usury or acting as overseers or managers of secular offices.⁸⁸

This reality is reflected in the evidence of episcopal conduct found in Lanfranc's letter-collection. This collection had been compiled by 1100, but the most likely period for its composition is the interregnum at Canterbury following Lanfranc's death, between 1089 and 1093. Therefore it probably constituted part of the Canterbury community's memorial for Lanfranc, prompted by his renown as a scholar.⁸⁹ Since letters in the Middle Ages were 'quasi-public literary documents', Lanfranc's letter-collection provides a valuable insight into contemporary perceptions of good and bad episcopal behaviour. Although Lanfranc was archbishop of Canterbury from 1070, his letter-collection provides an insight into Norman perceptions of good and bad episcopal behaviour since his world view had been shaped by his experiences as a monk in the abbeys of Bec and Saint-Étienne de Caen.⁹⁰ In Lanfranc's view, the provision of pastoral care was a bishop's primary function. In a letter written in 1072 to Pope Alexander II regarding the primacy dispute, Lanfranc noted that from the time of Saint Augustine of Canterbury, his predecessors had 'extended pastoral care to all'.⁹¹ He criticised Bishop Peter of Chester for not providing the monks of Coventry with the 'spiritual advice of a discerning pastor' and reminded him that his 'words and actions' should set

⁸⁶ *WJ*, ii, pp. 112-15: 'et Sorengos in turre monasterii fortiter expugnari fecit'. The date is provided by the council of Reims at which Ivo had to explain his actions to Pope Leo IX; see above, p. 79.

⁸⁷ Fauroux, nos. 72 and 209.

⁸⁸ Delisle, 'Canons du Concile', p. 517: c. 5: 'Ut etiam clerici arma non ferant' and c. 8: 'Ut clerici non sint feneratores, vel laicorum officiorum prepositi vel administratores'.

⁸⁹ *Letters of Lanfranc*, pp. 11-12; Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, p. 60.

⁹⁰ For letters as evidence of the author's world view, Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, pp. 11-12 and 33.

⁹¹ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 4, pp. 50-51: 'curam pastorem omnibus impendisse'.

‘edifying standards of a good life and godly conduct’.⁹² But it is clear from Lanfranc’s letters that participation in secular affairs was not incompatible with pastoral duties. Indeed, in another letter to Pope Alexander II, Lanfranc stated that as a young man, Bishop Hermann of Ramsbury had been ‘a suitable enough person for the office of bishop, for he was conversant with both sacred and secular affairs’. Further on, he stated that Hermann was not ‘unduly’ encumbered with royal service as an older man as though it was the norm.⁹³ Lanfranc twice admitted in the mid 1070s that he was preoccupied with secular affairs: in a letter to Abbot Reginald of Saint Cyprien, he complained that he was distracted ‘with many of this world’s great affairs’, and in a letter to John of Rouen, he lamented his ‘wretched life’; ‘I am for ever enmeshed [...] in so many of the world’s great snares’.⁹⁴ Lanfranc acknowledged the role of bishops in the secular world, but he denounced scandalous behaviour that led to the neglect of spiritual duties.⁹⁵ Peter of Chester, for example, was told that it was ‘neither your role as a bishop nor within your power’ to break into the dormitory at Coventry Abbey and steal the monks’ valuables, horses and goods.⁹⁶ Herfast of Thetford’s way of life also attracted his censure. Lanfranc encouraged him to read Scripture and the canons of church councils instead of devoting himself to ‘dicing [...] and the world’s amusements’.⁹⁷ Therefore in light of this evidence of the reality of episcopal conduct in Normandy and the standard of episcopal behaviour set by Lanfranc as it is revealed in his letters, Geoffrey’s participation in the activities outlined above would not necessarily have shocked his contemporaries.

⁹² *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 27, pp. 112-13: ‘pastorali discretione consulere, bonorumque morum sanctarumque actionum uerbis et operibus salubria exempla praeberere’.

⁹³ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 2, pp. 36-37: ‘scientia diuinarum atque mundanarum rerum peditus ad pastorale officium satis utilis persona extitit’; ‘ultra uires pregrauatus’.

⁹⁴ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 46, pp. 144-45: ‘tot tantisque huius mundi negotiis’; no. 15, pp. 88-89: ‘miserabilis uitae [...] Tot enim tantisque huius mundi [...] incessanter subiaceo’.

⁹⁵ Lanfranc advised the king to ensure that all magnates, including bishops, keep household knights at their disposal, William of Malmesbury, ‘Vita Wulfstani’, pp. 130-31: ‘Omnium fuit sententia Lanfranco auctore curias magnatum militibus muniendas’, cited at *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 36, p. 127, n. 3.

⁹⁶ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 27, pp. 112-13: ‘nec tui officii nec tuae potestatis esse cognoscas’.

⁹⁷ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 47, pp. 152-53: ‘aleis [...] ludisque secularibus’.

Orderic and the 'Warrior Bishop'

Orderic described Geoffrey as 'devoted more to knightly than to clerical activities, and so better able to instruct knights in hauberks to fight than clerics in vestments to sing psalms'. He added that Geoffrey often took part in battles against the Danes and English and that his success in these conflicts earned him significant possessions in England.⁹⁸ In light of the evidence of Lanfranc's letters, Chibnall's suggestion that Orderic was simply stating a fact when he described Geoffrey's military experience appears correct.⁹⁹ However, as Pierre Bouet has demonstrated, Orderic's treatment of episcopal conduct was more nuanced than his depiction of Geoffrey as a warrior bishop suggests.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, it was influenced by the didactic purpose of his work and the expectations of a monastic audience. Indeed, at the beginning of the sixth book of the *Historia*, Orderic states

[t]he human mind needs to be constantly occupied with useful learning if it is to keep its keenness; it needs too by reflecting on past and interpreting present events to equip itself with the qualities necessary to face the future.¹⁰¹

Therefore in order to determine whether Orderic's comments on Geoffrey's participation in military affairs were intended as criticism, it is necessary to set his comments in the broader context of the purpose of the work and to consider briefly his treatment of other prelates.

⁹⁸ *OV*, iv, pp. 278-79: 'Prefatus enim presul nobilitate cluebat, magisque peritia militari quam clericali uigebat, ideoque loricated milites ad bellandum quam reuestitos clericos ad psallendum magis erudire nouerat. Conflictibus ergo contra Dacos et Anglos sepe interfuit et ingentes subactis hostibus possessiones optinuit, quas moriens Roberto nepoti suo comiti Nordanhimbrorum dimisit'. For Orderic's treatment of Geoffrey, see above, pp. 219-22.

⁹⁹ Chibnall, 'Geoffroi de Montbray', p. 292.

¹⁰⁰ Pierre Bouet, 'L'image des évêques normands dans l'œuvre d'Orderic Vital' in *Les évêques normands*, pp. 253-75.

¹⁰¹ *OV*, iii, pp. 212-13: 'Humani acumen ingenii semper indiget utili sedimine competenter exerceri, et preterita recolendo presentiaque rimando ad futura feliciter uirtutibus instrui'; Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and William of Poitiers: A Monastic Reinterpretation of William the Conqueror', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 50 (1972), pp. 1116-27, at pp. 1123-25.

Orderic admired bishops who were devoted to the development of their churches and committed to the improvement of the clergy under their care and the protection of the monks who resided in their dioceses. Ivo of Sées, for example, who conjointly held his bishopric with the lordship of Bellême and who burned down his cathedral during his dispute with the Sor brothers, is nevertheless remembered fondly by Orderic because of his love for his clerics and monks.¹⁰² William Bonne-Âme, archbishop of Rouen, is described as a ‘good man’ who protected his flock and ‘greatly enriched his cathedral church’.¹⁰³ Similarly, Orderic remembered Odo of Bayeux as a bishop who ‘held men of religion in great respect, readily defended his clergy by words and arms, and enriched his church in every way with gifts of precious ornaments’.¹⁰⁴ He admired Archbishop John of Rouen for his zealous attempt at improving the clergy’s way of life, and he noted Odo’s generous patronage of clerics whom he sent to Liège and other centres of learning.¹⁰⁵ Orderic criticised behaviour that he saw as inappropriate to the episcopal office. This criticism reflects the Church’s concern over the inherent sin of secular activities, for it is actually focused on the weaknesses of the character of each bishop concerned. Thus Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux, who preferred hunting and hawking to his episcopal duties, is described as ‘a slave to his own desires and to bodily ease’.¹⁰⁶ The downfall of Odo of Bayeux is attributed to his ambition by Orderic, for Odo attempted to become pope ‘neither by divine choice nor by canonical election, but only by the

¹⁰² See above, p. 79; *OV*, ii, pp. 46-47: ‘Clericos et monachos [...] amabat’.

¹⁰³ *OV*, iii, pp. 22-23: ‘Hic bonus [...] extitit, gregemque [...] custodiuit. Matricem basilicam [...] affatim locupletauit’.

¹⁰⁴ *OV*, iv, pp. 114-17: ‘Religiosos homines diligenter honorabat, clerum suum acriter ense et uerbo defendebat, æcclesiamque preciosis ornamentis copiose per omnia decorabat’.

¹⁰⁵ *OV*, ii, pp. 200-1: ‘Hic ardore uirtutum in uerbis et operibus multipliciter feruebat, nimioque zelo in uitia ut Phinees seuiebat’; iv, pp. 118-19: ‘Dociles quoque clericos Leodicum mittebat, et ad alias urbes ubi philosophorum studia potissimum florere nouerat, eisque copiosos sumptus ut indesinenter et diutius philosophico fonti possent insistere largiter administrabat’.

¹⁰⁶ *OV*, iii, pp. 20-21: ‘propriæ uoluptati et carnis curæ nimis seruiebat [...] In cultu æcclesiastico erat piger et negligens’.

unrestrained presumption of his insatiable ambition'.¹⁰⁷ In Orderic's mindset, Odo's lust for power led to pride, which is identified as the source of all sin in the Bible. Since pride led to the fall of the devil who had coveted God's power, Orderic's description of Odo as an 'irreligiosus presul' after the failure of the 1088 rebellion did not mean that he was 'worldly', as Chibnall translated the term; it meant that he was guilty of sins that were unbecoming for a bishop.¹⁰⁸ However, whilst he may have highlighted a bishop's vices, these vices were overshadowed by a bishop's praiseworthy attributes, such as his devotion to his church. Therefore, as the example of Odo demonstrates, it was entirely possible in Orderic's view for a bishop to mix vices and virtues.¹⁰⁹

Therefore it is likely that Orderic would have produced a more balanced view of Geoffrey if he had been aware of his contribution to the development of his diocese. But Orderic does not appear to have had any knowledge of Geoffrey's activities at Coutances. Indeed, as Pierre Bouet has demonstrated, Orderic does not seem to have been particularly interested in the affairs of the dioceses of Coutances and Avranches. He included only a brief summary of the city of Coutances' legendary history by the Roman emperor Constantius I in the early fourth century, which probably derived from the *Gesta Romanorum*, a lost legendary.¹¹⁰ Therefore, as a result, it is likely that his portrayal of Geoffrey as a warrior bishop was intended to be critical. A monastic audience would have interpreted this image of Geoffrey in a negative light because pride was allegorized as a man on horseback in the

¹⁰⁷ *OV*, iv, pp. 44-45: 'quem ad hoc non cogeat diuina assumptio, nec canonica electio, sed insatiabilis cupiditatis immoderata presumptio'.

¹⁰⁸ Ecclesiasticus 10: 13; Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research', *Speculum* 43 (1968), pp. 1-22, at p. 4; Lester K. Little, 'Pride goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom', *American Historical Review* 76 (1971), pp. 16-49, at p. 20; *OV*, iv, pp. 134-35.

¹⁰⁹ *OV*, ii, pp. 266-67: 'Permixa [...] in hoc uiro uitia erant cum uirtutibus'.

¹¹⁰ Bouet, 'L'image des évêques normands', pp. 254-55; *OV*, iii, pp. 48-49: 'Hic in Neustria ciuitatem condidit, quam a nomine suo Constantiam nominauit'; p. 48, n. 3 and pp. xxv.

twelfth century.¹¹¹ Finally, it is interesting to note that Orderic's description of Geoffrey as more skilled in military affairs than spiritual matters may have been based on a popular saying in the early 1130s when this part of the work was written, for a similar phrase may be found in a letter of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Writing to Pope Calixtus II in 1125, Saint Bernard referred to the Holy Land's requirement of 'soldiers to fight not monks to sing and pray'.¹¹² Therefore it is possible that modern historians have placed greater significance on the phrase than it actually deserves.

Conclusion

Geoffrey's participation in secular affairs after 1066 formed a new strategy aimed at maintaining his closeness to the king. In this way, Geoffrey's secular activities were shaped by the circumstances created by the Conquest. Whereas his relationship with the duke before 1066 had been built upon the enhancement of his charisma in an ecclesiastical context, after the Conquest, he maintained his position amongst the king's followers by participating in activities associated with those closest to the king. Although Geoffrey's secular activities contravened the Church's theoretical ideal of episcopal behaviour, they were not necessarily at odds with the realities of episcopal conduct in the duchy. However, this did not prevent Orderic from portraying Geoffrey in a negative light.

¹¹¹ Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armor', pp. 576-77; Little, 'Pride goes before Avarice', pp. 31-37.

¹¹² Book VIII was written between 1133 and 1135 'possibly with additions a year or two later', *OV*, iv, p. xix. Bernard wrote, 'who cannot see, fighting knights are more necessary in that place than singing or praying monks', Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera omnia* in *PL* 182, no. ccclix, cols. 560-61, at col. 561: 'quis non videat, plus illic milites pugnantes, quam monachos cantantes aut plorantes necessarios esse?'. For its date, Watkin Williams, 'Arnold of Morimond', *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1939), pp. 370-75, at p. 374.

Chapter 8: The Conqueror's Sons

The Conqueror's death on 9 September 1087 caused widespread panic in Normandy. According to Orderic Vitalis, after the king uttered his final words, those who attended him were

almost out of their minds. But the wealthier among them quickly mounted horse and rode off as fast as they could to protect their properties. The lesser attendants, seeing that their superiors had absconded, seized the arms, vessels, clothing, linen, and all the royal furnishings, and hurried away leaving the king's body almost naked on the floor of the house.¹

Those most seriously affected were the great magnates like Geoffrey, whose wealth, status and prominence at court rested on their personal relationship with the king. The uncertainty was worsened by the king's arrangements for the succession. On his deathbed, he divided Normandy and England between his sons Robert Curthose, who inherited the duchy, and William Rufus, who acquired the kingdom.² This created an intolerable situation for Geoffrey and the other magnates who, as a result, were expected to serve two lords. As Orderic noted in a debate attributed to the magnates on the eve of the 1088 rebellion, loyal service to Curthose would result in the loss of their English lands and 'vice versa'.³ Therefore Geoffrey spent the final years of his life adjusting to the political realities of England and Normandy after the death of the man who had brought them together. His objective was to create circumstances conducive to the preservation of his pre-eminent

¹ *OV*, iv, pp. 100-3: 'uelut amentes effecti sunt. Porro ditiores ex his ilico ascensis equis recesserunt ac ad sua tutanda properauerunt. Inferiores uero clientuli ut magistros suos sic manicasse perspexerunt arma uasa uestes et linteamina omnemque regiam suppellectilem rapuerunt, et relicto regis cadauere pene nudo in area domus aufugerunt'.

² *OV*, iv, pp. 96-97: 'Robertus habebit Normanniam et Guillelmus Angliam'.

³ *OV*, iv, pp. 122-23: 'Si Roberto duci Normannorum digne seruierimus, Guillelmum fratrem eius offendemus unde ab ipso spoliabimur in Anglia magnis redditibus et precipuis honoribus. Rursus si regi Guillelmo congrue paruierimus Robertus dux in Normannia penitus priuabit nos paternis hereditatibus'.

positions in England and Normandy. But it is also possible to discern a desire to ensure the future prosperity of his family in Geoffrey's actions during this period.

The 1088 Rebellion

It is likely that Geoffrey was involved in the plot to replace Rufus with Curthose from its inception. There is a consensus amongst the chroniclers that the plotting did not begin until the start of March, but Geoffrey may have offered his support to the rebels' cause as early as January or February, when he appeared in the king's entourage at York with Bishop Odo and Bishop William of Durham.⁴ The chroniclers identified Geoffrey as a leader of the rebellion, and his role in it is well known.⁵ Using his castle at Bristol as a base, Geoffrey and his nephew Robert de Montbray plundered the royal city of Bath and devastated the large royal manor at Berkeley.⁶ According to John of Worcester and William of Malmesbury, they also attacked part of Wiltshire, and John included in his chronicle an account of an unsuccessful siege of Gloucester.⁷

⁴ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. E*, p. 99: 'innan þam lengtene'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1087 [1088], p. 223. John of Worcester reported that the rebellion was organised during Lent, *JW*, iii, pp. 48-49: 'Execrabile autem hoc factum clam tractauerunt in Quadragesima'. According to Stephen of Whitby, Geoffrey attended the foundation of Saint Mary's Abbey at York; for the text, see Richard Sharpe, '1088 – William II and the Rebels', *ANS* 26 (2003), pp. 139-57, at p. 140, n. 7: 'Interfuerunt etiam foundationi nostre ecclesie multi ex primoribus palatii quorum ista sunt nomina [...] Odo Baiocensis episcopus [...] Gosfridus Constantiensis episcopus [...] Willelmus Dunelmensis episcopus'. He probably witnessed *RRAN*, i, no. 306 before travelling north.

⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. E*, p. 99: 'On þisum ræde wæs ærest Oda biscop 7 Gosfrið biscop 7 Willelm biscop on Dunholme'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1087 [1088], p. 222; *WM, GR*, i, pp. 544-45: 'Haec ipse (Odo), haec Rogerius de Mont Gomerico, haec Gaufridus Constantiensis episcopus cum nepote Rotberto comite Humbrensi et cum reliquis primo clam fremebant'; *JW*, iii, pp. 48-49: 'Huius execrande rei principes extiterunt Odo episcopus Baiocensis [...] Rotbertus etiam frater eius [...] Rotberto [...] comite Northymbrie, Gosfridus episcopus Constantiensis, Rogerus comes Scrobbsbyriensis [...] Willelmus episcopus Dunholmensis'.

⁶ See above, pp. 222-24.

⁷ *JW*, iii, pp. 52-53: 'illa depredata transiuit in Wiltusciram [...] tandem adiit Giuelceastram, obsedit [...] Tandem [...] recedit Rotbertus priuatus uictoria'; *WM, GR*, i, pp. 544-45: 'partemque pagi Wiltensis depopulans'.

If Geoffrey's participation in the rebellion is taken at face value, he appears to have been motivated by a desire to replace Rufus as king with Curthose.⁸ To a certain extent, Geoffrey and the other rebels may have felt obligated to press Curthose's claim to England because he had been formally designated as his father's heir on at least three occasions before 1087. Moreover, Geoffrey and the other magnates had acknowledged Curthose's precedence in the succession arrangements by swearing an oath of allegiance to him on each of these occasions.⁹ However, Geoffrey does not appear to have been a close supporter of the duke. He rarely appears as a witness in Curthose's charters, and he is conspicuous by his absence in the earliest ducal 'acta' of the reign.¹⁰ Furthermore, Curthose's grant of a large part of western Normandy to Henry within the first year of his reign, which undermined Geoffrey's pre-eminence in the region, reflects his indifference towards Geoffrey. Instead, Geoffrey's support for Curthose should be seen as an expedient to the preservation of his own position at the centre of Anglo-Norman political life. Geoffrey's primary objective was to recreate the conditions of the Conqueror's reign by supporting Curthose's claim to England. However, in the event of the rebellion's failure, Geoffrey's show of force in the South West would

⁸ The chroniclers unanimously agree that this was the rebels' objective. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS. E, p. 99: 'woldon habban his broðer to cyng Rodbeard'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1087 [1088], p. 222; followed by *JW*, iii, pp. 48-49; *WM*, *GR*, i, pp. 544-45; *HH*, pp. 412-13. This objective is also recorded in *OV*, iv, pp. 122-25: 'Robertum ducem [...] iurauimus principem Angliæ ac Neustriæ'; *WJ*, ii, pp. 204-5: the rebels at Rochester were 'Robertum ducem expectant'.

⁹ The first designation occurred before 29 June 1063, when Robert confirmed a gift to the abbey of Saint-Ouen as the duke's chosen successor, Fauroux, no. 158, p. 344: 'Rodberti, eorum filii, quem elegerant ad gubernandum regnum post suum obitum'. The second was made on the eve of the invasion of England: *OV*, iv, pp. 92-93: 'Ducatum Normanniæ antequam in epitimio Senlac contra Heraldum certassem Roberto filio meo concessi'; ii, pp. 356-57; iii, pp. 98-99. The third was made in 1073, after the Conqueror had fallen ill at Bonneville-sur-Touques: *OV*, iii, pp. 112-13: 'sicut olim apud Bonamvillam aeger concesserat'; ii, pp. 356-57 (unidentified location). In the debate Orderic attributes to the magnates on the eve of the 1088 rebellion, one of the reasons for their support of Curthose is that they had sworn fealty to him during the Conqueror's lifetime: *OV*, iv, pp. 122-25: 'cui (Robert) iamdudum [...] fidelitatem iurauimus'. Rufus and Henry probably swore allegiance with the magnates, Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 75.

¹⁰ Geoffrey does not witness or subscribe any of Curthose's charters, but he witnessed Archbishop William of Rouen's grant of privileges to Bec, which was probably issued at the ecclesiastical council convened in June 1091 (*OV*, iv, pp. 252-53), and he may be the bishop of Coutances who witnessed Gerard of Gournay's gifts to Bec, which, if he did, can only be dated to 1087-1093: Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 68, nos. 8 and 9. Jouvelin's description of the latter reads 'l'évêque de Coutances, qui n'est point nommé', at Adolphe André Porée, *Histoire de l'Abbaye du Bec*, 2 vols. (Évreux, 1901), i, p. 339, n. 3. He is absent from Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, pp. 66-70, nos. 1, 2, 6, 28 which date from 1087-89. This point is also noted at Richard Allen, 'Robert Curthose and the Norman Episcopate', *HSJ* 21 (2009), pp. 87-111, at p. 93.

demonstrate his power in the region and would therefore allow him to negotiate a new relationship with William Rufus. This would explain why Geoffrey and Robert de Montbray targeted royal lands. Since these attacks were not directed at the king's person, they represented a less serious way of expressing disaffection.¹¹ Indeed, Geoffrey probably expected a redistribution of political influence at court following Rufus' accession which may have resulted in the loss of his closeness to the king.¹²

Geoffrey's determination to maintain his position in England was also motivated by a desire to bequeath his English lands to his nephew Robert de Montbray. Although the date of Geoffrey's nomination of Robert as his heir cannot be established precisely, it is likely that it coincided with Robert's inheritance of his father's lands, which had taken place by 14 July 1080. On this day, Robert witnessed the Conqueror's confirmation of Lessay's foundation charter with Geoffrey as 'Roberti de Molbraio'; his use of the family toponym suggests that he was now the head of the family.¹³ This date is also suggested by the appearance of Robert's 'signum' with Geoffrey's on two charters for the abbey of Saint-Étienne de Caen dated after 1080. Furthermore, one of the documents preserves a record of Robert's grant of land at Villers-sur-Mer to the abbey, which suggests that Robert had inherited the family's lands.¹⁴ Both Geoffrey and Robert would have been aware of the vulnerability of the latter's

¹¹ Geoffrey targeted Bath and Berkeley; see above, pp. 222-24. Matthew Strickland, 'Against the Lord's Anointed: Aspects of Warfare and Baronial Rebellion in England and Normandy, 1075-1265' in George Garnett and John Hudson (eds.), *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy. Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 56-79, at pp. 64-65.

¹² For a similar analysis of the situation following the death of Charlemagne, Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 117-22.

¹³ *Regesta*, no. 175 (Version II). Bates thought that version II (ms. B) 'may well preserve the attestations [...] of a group of Norman magnates and abbots which could well have been made on that one occasion', at p. 580. Orderic stated that Geoffrey gave his possessions to his nephew Robert as he was dying, but the designation must have occurred before then, *OV*, iv, pp. 278-79: 'quas moriens Roberto nepoti suo [...] dimisit'. For the usefulness of toponyms as indicators of the possession of inherited estates, J.C. Holt, 'Politics and Property in Early Medieval England' in J. C. Holt, *Colonial England 1066-1215* (London, 1997), pp. 113-59, at p. 117.

¹⁴ *Regesta*, nos. 49 (1081 x 1082, or 1081 x 1087); 53 (1080/1 x 1083). For Robert's grant, *Regesta*, no. 49, p. 233: 'id quod habeo in territorio de Vileriis'. But Robert may have inherited his father's lands by 1079. Another charter of Saint-Etienne, which has been dated to the period 1079-1082, records Serlo de Lingèvres'

position after Rufus' accession to England for Robert had been a close associate of Curthose. Orderic identified him as one of the youths who accompanied Curthose into exile in either 1077 or 1078, and it is likely that he had grown up with Curthose at the Conqueror's court.¹⁵ Furthermore, Robert's inheritance of Geoffrey's lands in the South West would have made him extremely powerful because he was already earl of Northumbria.¹⁶ These considerations may lie behind Rufus' apparent reluctance to confirm Robert as earl. Robert had been appointed by the Conqueror, but he does not appear in a royal charter with his title until the end of 1091.¹⁷ Indeed, Rufus' refusal to acknowledge Robert's title undoubtedly contributed to Geoffrey's decision to join the rebellion. By negotiating a new relationship with Rufus, Geoffrey was trying to guarantee Robert's succession to his English lands.

Reconciliation

The rebellion came to an end when Bishop Odo surrendered Rochester castle. This probably occurred in July, since William de Warenne died from injuries sustained at the preceding siege of Pevensey castle on 24 June, and Odo was not taken to Rochester until after its

grant of the church of Bucéels with three and a half acres of land, the tithe of his demesne lands and its villeins, and a third of the tithe of his warriors and the rest of the church's parishioners, which he made with the agreement of Robert, of whose fief he held the land, *Regesta*, no. 48, p. 226: 'de quorum foedio predictae ville terram et ecclesiam teneo'. The same grant is recorded in *Regesta*, no. 49. Finally, Orderic records Saint-Evroul's payment of one hundred shillings to Robert for his consent as 'chief lord' to Richard of Coulonces' grant of the church of Étouvy to the abbey, but the grant cannot be dated, *OV*, iii, pp. 230-31: 'Rodberto etiam de Molbraio qui capitalis dominus erat centum solidos dederunt'.

¹⁵ *OV*, iii, pp. 100-1: 'Tunc cum illo abierunt [...] Rodbertus de Molbraio'; Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977), pp. 114-15. At the time of Curthose's first exile, Orderic has the Conqueror complain that Curthose had 'lured away my young knights, whom I have educated and invested with arms', *OV*, iii, pp. 110-13: 'tirones meos quos alui et militaribus armis decoravi abduxit'. The king repeated this complaint in an address to the magnates before he arrested Bishop Odo in 1082: 'Robert my son and the young men whom I had trained as squires and invested with arms rebelled against me', *OV*, iv, pp. 40-41: 'Robertus filius meus et tirones quos enutriui et quibus arma dedi contra me rebellauerunt'.

¹⁶ William M. Aird, 'Mowbray, Robert de, earl of Northumbria (d.1115/1125)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19457>, accessed 14 March 2011].

¹⁷ Robert is identified as 'comitis Northymbrorum' in a grant of William the Conqueror made during his last visit to England in 1086, which is preserved within a spurious Durham charter: *Regesta*, no. 115; for its provenance, see p. 407. It is implied in Domesday Book that the lands of Aubrey de Courcy, Robert's predecessor as earl, had escheated to the king, Aird, 'Mowbray, Robert de'. Robert appears as earl in a charter of Bishop William of Durham, dated August-December 1091, *RRAN*, i, no. 318. For further appearances, *RRAN*, i, nos. 349, 368; ii, nos. 372a, 372c.

surrender.¹⁸ There is no indication in the sources of when Geoffrey and Robert de Montbray laid down their arms, but Geoffrey appears to have been reconciled with Rufus shortly after the siege at Rochester, when he witnessed a royal confirmation of a grant to the abbey of Bec.¹⁹ Robert was not reconciled with Rufus at this time. He does not appear in the witness lists of any royal charters before the end of 1091, but he may have been present at the trial of Bishop William of Durham in November. According to the contemporary account of the trial, Bishop William requested ships so that he could accompany Robert to Normandy.²⁰ Richard Sharpe identified Robert as ‘Roberti comitis’ in Rufus’ confirmation of William de Warenne’s grant to Lewes Priory. However, if Sharpe is correct to date it to the period between 24 June (Warenne’s death) and the end of the siege of Rochester, it is more likely that ‘Roberti comitis’ should be identified as Robert of Mortain, who had just surrendered Pevensey to Rufus.²¹ Therefore it may be inferred from the evidence of the ‘De iniusta’ that Robert chose to return to Normandy in exile rather than submit to Rufus.

The significance of Geoffrey’s reconciliation with Rufus lies in the oath of allegiance which was incumbent on all of the rebels who submitted to the king.²² By swearing loyalty to Rufus, Geoffrey secured his title to his English lands; there is no evidence of Geoffrey losing

¹⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. E*, 1087 [1088] p. 100: ‘Ealswa se biscop ferde 7 sceolde agifan þone castel 7 se cyng sende his men mid him’; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (E)* 1087 [1088], p. 224; Sharpe, ‘1088’, pp. 146-51 and p. 146, n. 35.

¹⁹ Davis dated it to c.1091, *RRAN*, i, no. 320. Sharpe has revised the date to July or August 1088, at ‘1088’, pp. 151-53. Sharpe’s date is based on the appearance of Henry, Count Alan of Brittany and Roger of Poitou as witnesses. Henry witnessed a ducal charter on 7 July 1088 and therefore could not have been in England any earlier, Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, pp. 287-89, no. 7a. Count Alan and Roger of Poitou arrived at Durham by 8 September, a journey which they may have started at the end of August: *English Lawsuits*, no. 134, p. 94: ‘Comes Alanus et Rogerus Pictavensis et comes Odo dederunt fidem suam Dunelmensi episcopo in nativitate Sanctae Mariae’. Geoffrey also appeared in a charter for the abbey of Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin, Ghent: *RRAN*, i, no. 323; Sharpe dated it to the same period, at ‘1088’, p. 153.

²⁰ *English Lawsuits*, p. 104, where Robert is erroneously called ‘Roger’: ‘ut naves sibi liberarent, et liceret ei transfretare cum Rogero de Molbraio’; Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (New Haven and London, 2000), p. 168.

²¹ *RRAN*, i, no. 325; Sharpe, ‘1088’, pp. 154-55. For Robert’s surrender of Pevensey, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. E*, p. 100: ‘Syððan heom ateorede mete wiðinnan þam castele, ða gyr<n>don hi griðas 7 agefan hine þam cyng’; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (E)* 1087 [1088], p. 224.

²² WM, *GR*, i, pp. 548-49: ‘Ceteri omnes in fidem recepti’; Sharpe suggested that the court assembled in late July or August to reconcile the rebels with the king, at ‘1088’, p. 157.

any lands as a result of the rebellion. However, charter evidence suggests he was unable to recover his prominence at court. In addition to the confirmation for Bec cited above, he appeared in only two other royal charters: in July or August 1088, he attested Rufus' confirmation of the possessions of Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin in Kent, and on 27 January 1091, he witnessed the king's grant of Bath Abbey to Bishop John of Bath.²³ The uneasy nature of his relationship with Rufus is suggested by the record of his intervention in the trial of Bishop William of Durham. According to this source, Geoffrey defended Bishop William's right to episcopal privilege, a stance that would have only antagonized Rufus.²⁴

Geoffrey's decision to support Rufus had a similar effect on his position in Normandy. His absence from ducal charters suggests that his oath to Rufus possibly prevented a reconciliation with Curthose. Furthermore, Curthose may have associated Geoffrey with the conspiracy of Henry and Robert de Bellême, whom he imprisoned on their return to Normandy in 1088.²⁵ He can be located in Upper Normandy only once after the Conqueror's death when he witnessed Archbishop William of Rouen's charter for Bec in June 1091.²⁶ In fact, the only evidence of Geoffrey's presence in Normandy between his reconciliation with Rufus and his appearance in 1091 is provided by Canon John's account of Geoffrey's resistance to Henry in the Cotentin from which it may be inferred that Geoffrey was in his diocese.²⁷ This activity, which is discussed in detail below, most likely took place between the summer of 1089 and March 1091. But these gaps in Geoffrey's itinerary do not

²³ *RRAN*, i, no. 323 and Sharpe, '1088', p. 153; *RRAN*, i, no. 315.

²⁴ See above, pp. 140-41.

²⁵ *OV*, iv, pp. 148-49: 'Henricus frater suus et Robertus Belesmensis cum rege Rufo essent pacificati, ac ad ducis dampnum sacramenti eciam obligatione confederati'.

²⁶ See n. 10.

²⁷ *DS*, col. 221: 'ecclesiamque Constantiensem [...] neminem habere dominum, nisi quem Rotomagensis haberet ecclesia, verbo edixit et opere complevit'.

necessarily mean that he was mostly absent from Normandy. It means that when he returned to the duchy, his activity was largely confined to western Normandy.

But Geoffrey did not simply fade into obscurity after the rebellion. Although he lost much of the prestige he had acquired through his relationship with the Conqueror, he remained an important landholder in England and a prominent member of the Norman episcopate. The brief notices of his activity in the sources between his reconciliation with Rufus and his death on 2 February 1093 suggest that he was actively engaged in maintaining his position on both sides of the Channel by adapting to the political situation as it changed. He sought reconciliation with Rufus after it became clear that England and Normandy would not be reunited under Curthose. By swearing allegiance to Rufus, Geoffrey was trying to create a situation that would facilitate service to two lords and preserve the integrity of his nephew's inheritance. But this situation proved unsustainable because of the threat to Geoffrey in western Normandy posed by Henry, and so it seems likely that Geoffrey supported Rufus' decision to seek peace with Curthose in 1091 in order to bolster his position and secure the cathedral's patrimony. Geoffrey was at Dover on 27 January 1091 where he attested a royal charter and it is likely that he accompanied the king to Normandy on 2 February where a peace treaty was arranged between Rufus and Curthose.²⁸ It is unclear whether Geoffrey was directly involved in the negotiations, but he benefited in two ways. First, his position in western Normandy was considerably strengthened through Rufus' acquisition of Cherbourg and Mont-Saint-Michel and the brothers' decision to expel Henry

²⁸ *RRAN*, i, no. 315. Davis thought that the charter was issued at Dover, but Barlow preferred Hastings, Barlow, *Rufus*, p. 92, n. 187. For the treaty, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *MS. E* [1091], p. 102; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1091, pp. 225-26; *JW*, iii, pp. 56-59; *OV*, iv, pp. 236-37; *WM*, GR, i, pp. 548-51.

from the duchy.²⁹ Second, the clause which allowed those magnates who had supported Curthose in 1088 to recover their English lands facilitated Robert de Montbray's return to England and thereby reassured Geoffrey that his family would keep hold of his English acquisitions.³⁰ Although this settlement is traditionally interpreted as an attempt by the magnates to reach a compromise between the brothers that would allow them to serve two lords, it is possible that it marks the moment when Geoffrey decided to back Rufus.³¹ By 1091, the king had already secured the allegiance of a number of important magnates in Upper Normandy and having been isolated by Curthose's grant to Henry, Geoffrey was under attack from Henry and his followers.³²

Count Henry and the Diocese of Coutances

Shortly before the outbreak of the 1088 rebellion, Curthose granted rights over a large part of western Normandy to Henry in return for funds that would support his attempt to wrest England from Rufus. Since it is likely that the Conqueror's deathbed bequest of money to Henry had depleted the ducal treasury, and Curthose was able to pay for troops which he sent to England, the transaction must have taken place by Easter 1088 when the rebellion broke out.³³ This 'terminus ad quem' is also suggested by Henry's attestation as 'count' in ducal charters for the abbeys of Jumièges on 30 March and Fécamp on 7 July.³⁴ Since Geoffrey refused to submit to Henry, it seems unlikely that the grant took place while Geoffrey was in

²⁹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS. E [1091], p. 102: 'se eorl him to handan let [...] Kiæresburh'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1091, p. 226; John of Worcester adds Mont-Saint-Michel, *JW*, iii, pp. 58-59: '(Curthose) abbatiam in Monte Sancti Michaelis sitam, et Keresburh [...] concederet'.

³⁰ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS. E [1091], p. 102: '7 þet ealle þa þe on Englelande for þam eorle æror heora land forluron, hit on þisum sehte habban sceoldan'; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) 1091, p. 226; *JW*, iii, pp. 58-59: 'omnibus etiam Normannis terras quas in Anglia ob fidelitatem comitis perdiderant, redderet'.

³¹ Le Patourel, *Norman Empire*, p. 198; Neil Strevett, 'The Anglo-Norman Civil War of 1101 Reconsidered', *ANS* 26 (2003), pp. 159-75, at p. 163.

³² Walter of Saint-Valéry, *JW*, iii, pp. 56-57; Stephen of Aumâle, Gerard of Gournay, Robert of Eu, Walter Giffard, Ralph of Mortemer 'and almost all the lords between the Seine and the sea', *OV*, iv, pp. 182-83: 'et pene omnes qui trans Sequanam usque ad mare'.

³³ *WM*, *GR*, i, pp. 710-12: 'omnem illam pecuniarum [...] in stipendiarios suos absumpsit'.

³⁴ Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, pp. 287-89, no. 4a and 290-91, no. 6.

Normandy.³⁵ It would have been foolish for Curthose to alienate one of his most powerful supporters by installing Henry in the west this early. Therefore Henry must have received the grant between January or February, when Geoffrey can be found in England, and Easter.

The extent of the grant is difficult to establish. Orderic described it as consisting of the Cotentin and the cities of Coutances and Avranches, with the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel and the fee of Hugh d'Avranches.³⁶ But in his additions to the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Robert de Torigni stated that Curthose gave Henry only the 'county of the Cotentin'.³⁷ This version is supported by Wace, who described how Curthose offered the 'whole of the Cotentin' as a pledge to Henry in return for his money on the proviso that he did not make a permanent claim to it.³⁸ But in the 'De statu', Canon John stated that the grant consisted of the *pagi* of Avranches and Coutances.³⁹ Clearly, the Cotentin formed the principal part of Henry's appanage. But Henry's authority over the Avranchin seems to have been more carefully defined so that it did not extend to overlordship of Curthose's and Henry's uncle, Robert of Mortain.⁴⁰ However, by granting Henry the city of Avranches, the fee of the vicomte, Hugh, and the most important abbey in the region, Curthose gave Henry 'de facto'

³⁵ *DS*, col. 221: 'Cum ergo Abrincensis episcopus dominatum prædicti principis suscepisset, Gaufridus Constantiensis funditus abnuit'. Cf. Aird who argued that the grant occurred soon after Curthose's accession in 1087, at *Robert Curthose*, pp. 106-7.

³⁶ *OV*, iv, pp. 120-21: 'totum Constantinum pagum quæ tertia Normanniæ pars est recepit. Sic Henricus Abrincas et Constantiam Montemque Sancti Michahelis in periculo maris, totumque feudum Hugonis Cestrensis consulis quod in Neustria possidebat primitus optinuit'.

³⁷ *WJ*, ii, pp. 204-5: 'comitatum Constantiniensem'.

³⁸ Wace, lines 9380-9384, p. 298: 'A Henri son frere parla / qui le tresor son pere avait / e si li dist qu'il li dorreit / tot Costentin en nom de gage / mais n'i clamast altre eritage'.

³⁹ *DS*, col. 221: 'omnem pagum Constantiensem simul et Abrincatensem'.

⁴⁰ Robert of Mortain held land north of Coutances after 1080, but there is no evidence that these possessions brought him into conflict with Henry, Éric Van Torhoudt, 'Henri Beauclerc, comte du Cotentin reconsidéré (1088-1101)' in *Tinchebray, 1106-2006. Actes du colloque de Tinchebray (28-30 septembre 2006)*, ed. Véronique Gazeau and Judith Green (Flers, 2009), pp. 101-21, at p. 113. Robert of Mortain may have been one of Curthose's closest supporters, Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 95 and n. 192.

control of the ‘pagus’.⁴¹ This is reflected in the description of the grant as the ‘pagi’ of Coutances and Avranches in the ‘De statu’.

The inclusion of Hugh d’Avranches’ fee and the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel would have made Henry the overlord of their lands in the Hiémois, Bessin and Passais.⁴² Hollister even suggested that Curthose’s grant in 1088 included the Bessin with the exception of Bayeux and Caen.⁴³ Whilst this suggestion is intriguing, it may be disregarded immediately because none of the sources cited above refer to the Bessin. Furthermore, Hollister’s argument rests on the dubious assumption that the disorder in ducal government weakened Curthose’s authority in western Normandy.⁴⁴ He also cited a Curthose charter for La Trinité, Caen in which he granted to the abbey lands outside Caen and a market at Ouistreham ‘with the consent of his brother Henry’. He dated this charter ‘early to mid-1088’ and argued that this phrase suggests that ‘Henry’s jurisdiction ran up to the very walls of Caen’.⁴⁵ But this charter may belong to a group witnessed by Henry as ‘chief ducal counsellor’.⁴⁶ It is possible that Henry held land in the Bessin without having authority over the entire county. Van Torhoudt has suggested that his mother’s lands may have formed the core of Henry’s ‘comte’ in 1088. It may be significant that in La Trinité’s summary of its losses during Curthose’s

⁴¹ Cf. Le Patourel, who expressed doubts over Henry’s comital authority in the Avranchin at *Norman Empire*, p. 343, n. 2.

⁴² Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 53-54; Van Torhoudt, ‘Henri Beauclerc’, pp. 107-8.

⁴³ Hollister argued that Rufus’ confirmation of Henry’s possession of the Bessin and the Cotentin with the exception of Bayeux and Caen in 1096 renewed Curthose’s original grant in 1088 at *Henry I*, pp. 54-56. Cf. Le Patourel, who dated Henry’s acquisition of the Bessin after 1096, at ‘Henri Beauclerc, Comte du Cotentin, 1088’, *Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger*, Quatrième série 53 (1975), pp. 167-68, at p. 167.

⁴⁴ The traditional interpretation of ducal administration under Curthose is expressed by Haskins at *Norman Institutions*, pp. 62-84. For correctives of this view, see Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 120; Jean-Michel Bouvris, ‘Un bref inédit de Robert Courte-Heuse, duc de Normandie, relatif à l’abbaye de Montebourg, au diocèse de Coutances’, *Actes du 105^e congrès national des sociétés savantes (Caen, 1980)*, vol. II, pp. 125-50, at pp. 148-49. For a summary of Curthose’s interventions in the west, see Van Torhoudt, ‘Henri Beauclerc’, p. 104.

⁴⁵ Thomas Stapleton, ‘Observations in disproof of the pretended marriage of William de Warren, earl of Surrey, with a daughter begotten of Matildis, daughter of Baldwin, comte of Flanders, by William the Conqueror, and illustrative of the origin and early history of the family in Normandy’, *The Archaeological Journal* 3 (1846), pp. 9-26, at p. 26: ‘concessu Henrici mei fratris’; Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 56.

⁴⁶ Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 48; see n. 34.

reign, Henry is accused of taking toll from Quettehou, which Matilda ‘was holding on the day she died’.⁴⁷

Geoffrey reacted to the grant by refusing to submit to Henry. According to Canon John, he believed that ‘no one was to hold [the church of Coutances] as lord unless he held the church of Rouen’. As a result, Henry and his followers devastated Geoffrey’s possessions, houses and parks.⁴⁸ These estates are not identified, but it is likely that Henry targeted Geoffrey’s parks at Coutances and Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé.⁴⁹ Canon John implied that Geoffrey single-handedly resisted, but he was certainly supported by his nephew Robert, and the abbots of Lessay and Montebourg may have followed his lead.⁵⁰

These attacks could not have taken place before the middle of 1089. Until Geoffrey’s reconciliation with Rufus in July or August 1088, both men were at least nominally supporters of Curthose, and Henry was imprisoned by his brother on his return to Normandy following an unsuccessful attempt to claim his mother’s lands after the rebellion until

⁴⁷ Van Torhoudt, ‘Henri Beauclerc’, pp. 106-7; Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 63: ‘Comes Henricus pedagium accepit de Chetelhulmo’; *Regesta*, no. 65: ‘burgum de Chetehol cum suis appendiciis [...] sicut regina tenebat die qua finivit’.

⁴⁸ *DS*, col. 221: ‘neminem habere dominum, nisi quem Rotomagensis haberet ecclesia’; ‘Quapropter ipsius domini, potentium quoque baronum et parochianorum longas inimicitias, bonorum suorum crebras deprædationes, domorum concremationes, parcorum suorum destructorias confractiones viriliter diuque sustinuit’.

⁴⁹ *DS*, col. 219: ‘Fecit præterea Constantiis [...] terram parci [...] in parochia S. Ebreundi [...] parcum opulentissimum [...] constituit’; Le Pesant, ‘Coutances au Moyen Age’, p. 15; Casset, *Les évêques aux champs*, pp. 417-19.

⁵⁰ For Robert’s resistance to Henry in c. 1090, *OV*, iv, pp. 220-21: Henry had secured the loyalty of the barons of the Cotentin ‘preter Robertum de Molbraio’. Van Torhoudt suggested that the local abbots remained loyal at ‘Henri Beauclerc’, p. 112; Roger de Lessay and Roger de Montebourg attended Geoffrey on his deathbed, *DS*, col. 223. Van Torhoudt also identified vicomte Nigel, Robert de Bellême and Eudes Haldup as adversaries of Henry’s in the west, at ‘Henri Beauclerc’, pp. 112-13. But if Nigel is identified as the ‘Aigellus de Constantino’ who witnessed a Curthose charter on 24 April 1089, he may have been one of Henry’s supporters who secured his release from prison: *Antiquus Cartularius Ecclesiæ Baiocensis*, i, no. 4; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 125; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 66-68. Robert de Bellême only became Henry’s adversary after the Rouen rebellion when he is associated with Curthose, Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 70-72 and 75-76. Eudes Haldup’s marriage to Muriel, the sister of Robert of Mortain and Bishop Odo of Bayeux, may have secured his independence; for his marriage, Wace, lines 6003-6005, p. 228: ‘E Yon manda al Chapel / qui a feme aveit Muriel / seror le duc de par sa mere’.

spring.⁵¹ Therefore Henry barely had time to establish himself in the west until the second half of 1089.⁵² Following his release, Henry appears to have returned to western Normandy in order to reclaim it from Curthose. Although Orderic's chronology is less clear at this point, he implied that Henry was governing the Cotentin and gathering support prior to the Rouen rebellion in 1090.⁵³ At the same time, Orderic added, Henry's failure to secure his mother's lands in England meant '[h]e was no less a foe of the king of England'.⁵⁴ In light of Geoffrey's allegiance to Rufus, and Henry's vigorous attempt to establish his authority after his release from prison, Henry's attacks on Geoffrey's possessions probably took place between summer 1089, as noted above, and the siege of Mont-Saint-Michel, which Hollister plausibly dated March 1091.⁵⁵ Geoffrey's decision to travel with Rufus to Normandy in February 1091 suggests that Henry was still attacking his lands at this point.

In the 'De statu', Geoffrey's resistance is attributed to his loyalty to Curthose. He believed that submission to a lord who did not hold the church of Rouen would diminish the dignity of his church.⁵⁶ However, Geoffrey had little reason to support Curthose after the grant. The reason for Geoffrey's refusal to submit is the nature of Henry's authority. The

⁵¹ *OV*, iv, pp. 148-49: 'In estate [...] Henricus clito Constantiniensis comes in Angliam transfretavit, et a fratre suo terram matris suæ requisivit [...] Dux [...] prefatos optimates preoccupavit'; for the date of Henry's release, Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 66.

⁵² As noted at Kathleen Thompson, 'From the Thames to Tinchebray: The Role of Normandy in the Early Career of Henry I', *HSJ* 17 (2006), pp. 16-26, p. 20.

⁵³ For Curthose's seizure of western Normandy, *WJ*, ii, pp. 204-5: 'quod dederat indecenter extorsit'; *OV*, iv, pp. 220-21: 'Eodem tempore Constantinienses Henricus clito strenue regebat'.

⁵⁴ *OV*, iv, pp. 220-21: 'Regi nichilominus Angliæ hostis erat'. According to William of Malmesbury, Henry had sought favour with Rufus after his release in 1089, but he had been fobbed off with 'empty promises', *WM*, *GR*, i, pp. 712-13: 'inanibus sponsionibus'.

⁵⁵ Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 80 and n. 224. John of Worcester states that the siege took place 'during the whole of Lent', *JW*, iii, pp. 58-59: 'per totam Quadragesimam'. According to Orderic, the siege began 'in the middle of Lent' and lasted for fifteen days, *OV*, iv, pp. 250-51: 'In medio igitur quadragesimæ Guillelmus rex et Robertus dux Montem Sancti Michahelis odsederunt [...] et fere xv diebus eum [...] cohercuerunt'.

⁵⁶ *DS*, col. 221: 'neminem habere dominum, nisi quem Rotomagensis haberet ecclesia [...] ne in posterum dignitas ecclesiæ vilesceret hoc initio'.

grant had made Henry ‘count of the Cotentin’.⁵⁷ Although it is likely that Henry performed homage to Curthose for his lands, he appears to have exercised ducal powers in the region.⁵⁸ Orderic noted his possession of the castles at Avranches, Cherbourg, Coutances and Gavray, as well as other unidentified fortifications in 1090.⁵⁹ There is evidence to suggest that Henry acted as the overlord of the vicomte of the Cotentin as well as the vicomte of Avranches. In a charter for the abbey of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, Eudes, vicomte of the Cotentin, granted the church of Saint-Germain-de-Tournebut with a vavassor and the tithe of the whole parish ‘with the consent of Count Henry’.⁶⁰ Henry also felt that he was entitled to the toll from the whole county. In the summary of La Trinité’s losses, the nuns complained that ‘Count Henry took the toll from Quettehou and from the whole of the Cotentin’.⁶¹ Furthermore, it is clear from Geoffrey’s resistance and Bishop Michael of Avranches’ submission that Henry’s authority extended over the Church.⁶² As Hollister noted, the grant placed Henry between Curthose and the vicomtes and by doing so it made him the pre-eminent lord in western Normandy.⁶³

Geoffrey rejected Henry’s authority because it undermined his own domination of the Cotentin. The Conqueror’s control of Lower Normandy had rested on his close ties with his

⁵⁷ *OV*, iv, pp. 148-49: ‘Constantiniensis comes’. Henry used his comital title in two ducal charters in 1088; see n. 34. Green, *Henry I*, p. 28; Le Patourel, ‘Henri Beauclerc’, pp. 167-68.

⁵⁸ There is no direct evidence of Henry’s homage in 1088, but Curthose ‘released him from the homage which he had previously done him’ in 1101, *OV*, v, pp. 318-19: ‘ipsumque de homagio quod sibi iam dudum fecerat [...] absoluit’. Le Patourel argued that eleventh-century Norman counts exercised ducal authority in their counties, at ‘Henri Beauclerc’, p. 168; Le Patourel, *Norman Empire*, pp. 342-43; also, Thompson, ‘Thames to Tinchebray’, p. 19.

⁵⁹ *OV*, iv, pp. 220-21: ‘Abrincas et Cesaris burgum, et Constantiam atque Guabreium, aliasque munitiones possidebat’.

⁶⁰ Delisle, *Histoire du chateau*, pièces justificatives, no. 45, p. 53: ‘Ecclesiam de Tornebusc, cum uno vavassore, et decimam totius parrochie dedit Eudo vicecomes, concessu Henrici comitis’.

⁶¹ Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 63: ‘Comes Henricus pedagium accepit de Chetel hulmo et de omni Constantino’.

⁶² For Bishop Michael’s submission, *DS*, col. 221: ‘Abrincensis episcopus dominatum prædicti principis suscepisset’; Canon John explicitly includes the bishopric of Coutances in the grant, at col. 221: ‘necnon et episcopatus nunc et usque’.

⁶³ Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 52.

half-brothers Bishop Odo of Bayeux and Count Robert of Mortain, and with Geoffrey. As Geoffrey enhanced his charisma as bishop of Coutances and bolstered his personal standing amongst the king's followers by strengthening his bond with the Conqueror after 1066, he became the pre-eminent magnate in the Cotentin. In the late 1080s, Geoffrey was not used to living in the shadow of anyone other than William the Conqueror. Hence he treated the grant as an affront to his dignity. Geoffrey was faced with a direct challenge to his lordship in his episcopal city. The Conqueror's grant of the suburbs of the city to the cathedral had divided Coutances into two halves either side of a street which ran from north to south. The episcopal half of the city lay to the east of this street and the ducal half to the west. The 'Tour le Comte' has not survived, but it was located in the vicinity of Rue Tour Morin, south of the cathedral, between Rue Geoffrey de Montbray and Rue Quesnel-Morinière in the modern city.⁶⁴ The conflict between Geoffrey and Henry was a clash between two lords who were trying to protect and extend their lordships respectively. Canon John used a language of lordship to describe it: Geoffrey refused to submit to Henry's 'lordship'; 'lordship' over the church of Coutances was at stake; Geoffrey claimed that he did not reject Henry's right to be his 'lord' as the son of his lord, King William; and Geoffrey resisted Henry as a 'lord'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Canon John described the targets of Henry's attacks as Geoffrey's, and not the church's, possessions.⁶⁶ Geoffrey's houses and parks were the most visible manifestations of his lordship. Therefore in this context Henry's attacks constituted an attempt to destabilise

⁶⁴ Fontanel, no. 340, p. 492: 'contulit et propria manu firmavit, videlicet medietatem urbis Constantiensis'; Le Pesant, 'Coutances au Moyen Age', p. 15; Léopold Quenault, *Recherches archéologiques historiques et statistiques sur la ville de Coutances* (Deuxième édition, Coutances, 1862), pp. 277-78. Robert de Torigni included the 'tower of Coutances' in a list of castles restored by King Henry, *Chronique de Robert de Torigni, abbé du Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. Léopold Delisle, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1872-73), i, pp. 196-97: 'ex integro fecit Henricus rex [...] turris Constantiarum'.

⁶⁵ *DS*, col. 221: 'Cum ergo Abrincensis episcopus dominatum prædicti principis suscepisset, Gaufridus Constantiensis funditus abnuît'; 'ecclesiamque Constantiensem [...] neminem habere dominum'; 'non quod aspernaretur, ut aiebat, dominum suum esse filium regis domini sui'; 'ipsius domini [...] viriliter diuque sustinuit'.

⁶⁶ *DS*, col. 221: 'bonorum *suorum* crebras deprædationes, domorum concremationes, parcorum *suorum* destructorias confractiones' (my italics).

the Conqueror's highly effective system of control in the Cotentin by undermining Geoffrey's position.⁶⁷

But Henry was unable to establish his authority in the Cotentin. He was driven out of western Normandy by his brothers after the siege at Mont-Saint-Michel.⁶⁸ With the support of Curthose and Rufus in particular, Geoffrey was too entrenched in the Cotentin to be ousted. Geoffrey is not mentioned in the accounts of the siege and his role in Henry's expulsion cannot be determined. His appearance at Dover on 27 January 1091 with Rufus and the subsequent peace treaty with Curthose which included grants of land to the king in the west imply that Geoffrey had sought Rufus' assistance in his struggle with Henry.⁶⁹ If so, he proved, once again, adept at adapting to the political situation as it changed in order to maintain his own position.

Geoffrey's Final Years

As suggested in Chapter 1, Geoffrey's final illness formed a key part of Canon John's vision of the church's past. It occupies almost three columns of the text as it was published in the *Gallia Christiana*, and it provided John with the opportunity to highlight Geoffrey's devotion to the church and his special relationship with the Virgin.⁷⁰ However, it is almost certain that John witnessed the rites that followed Geoffrey's death.⁷¹ His account of the events that followed the dedication of a local church, when Geoffrey was physically incapable of performing the dedication Mass, is probably based on information provided by his father,

⁶⁷ Henry dismantled this system after his victory at Tinchebray in 1106, Van Torhoudt, 'Henri Beauclerc', p. 113.

⁶⁸ *OV*, iv, pp. 250-51: 'Henricus itaque redditus munitionibus suis per Britanniam transiit [...] et confines postmodum Francos expetiit'; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 82-83.

⁶⁹ See above, pp. 246-47.

⁷⁰ *DS*, cols. 222-224, 'Appropinquante autem tempore glorificationis [...] sicut ipse præceperat vivens adhuc in corpore'.

⁷¹ All the clerics had come together on the day of Geoffrey's death, *DS*, col. 224: 'omnis clerus quem nutrierat'.

Peter the Chamberlain.⁷² If the church is identified as Saint-Pierre-de-Marigny, which is likely since the church was close to Saint-Lô, where Geoffrey was taken to recuperate after the ceremony, Peter was present, since he witnessed the charter recording grants to the church made on this occasion.⁷³ Therefore as an outline of events, John's evidence may be accepted.

According to John, the 'grief and desolation' of the church of Coutances that accompanied Geoffrey's 'glorification' was presaged by an earthquake which struck the city on 2 November 1091.⁷⁴ Some of the local people interpreted the earthquake as a portent of the death of Peter the Chamberlain, who was gravely ill at that time, but others thought that the dislodgement of the weathervane and the destruction of the lantern tower was an omen of Geoffrey's death and the break-up of his clergy.⁷⁵ Shortly after the earthquake, Geoffrey experienced pain in his stomach. Although the pain was so intolerable by the vigil of the Assumption on 14 Aug that he could barely finish the vespers service, he performed the funeral of his relative, Nigel II, at that time.⁷⁶ However, by 14 September, Geoffrey was incapacitated, since he was unable to perform the Mass at the dedication of the local church noted above. The Mass was carried out by his chaplain while Geoffrey sat near the altar.⁷⁷

⁷² *DS*, col. 223: 'sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit, ipseque interim iuxta aram resedit'.

⁷³ *DS*, col. 223: 'Recessit itaque idem, et apud S. Laudum diebus aliquibus iacuit'; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', pp. 475-77, at p. 476: 'Petro camerario episcopi Gaufridi'.

⁷⁴ *DS*, col. 222: 'Appropinquante autem tempore glorificationis suæ, luctus et desolatio Constantiensis ecclesiae evidentibus pronunciata fuit signis'.

⁷⁵ *DS*, col. 222: 'Recedente autem tempestatis nimietate, visisque confractionibus turris et materialium, affuit qui diceret Petrum camerarium ex infirmitate gravi qua astringebatur moriturum [...] alii quidem altius conspicientes, ad invicem susurrabant, dicentes deiectionem supereminens galli turrisque maioris conquassationem, depositionem ipsius præsulis prætendere et conquassationem cleri cui cognoscitur præesse'.

⁷⁶ *DS*, col. 222: 'Et non multo post venerabilis idem præsul gravi fibre correptus, sequenti quoque Augusto interno viscerum dolore constrictus est. In vigilia namque Assumptionis beatæ et gloriosæ Dei genitricis Mariæ in eiusdem ecclesie vespas festine cantavit [...] Eadem namque nocte Assumptionis celeriter expetitus, ut Nigellum vicecomitem consanguineum suum defunctum sepeliret, summo mane ipsius festivitatis profectus est'.

⁷⁷ *DS*, cols. 222-23: 'Igitur die 15 qui est XVIII calendas Septemb. cum quamdam ecclesiam ipso die dedicare deberet [...] nec ullo modo per se complere valuit, sed capellanum suum dedicationis missam decantare iussit, ipseque interim iuxta aram resedit'.

Geoffrey recuperated for a few days at Saint-Lô before returning to Coutances where he made a public confession of his sins and a display of penitence, gave alms to the poor and vicariously washed the feet of three poor people each day, and asked for the mercy of anyone he had offended.⁷⁸ Perceiving his death to be imminent, he sent for an English plumber called Brismet to complete the repairs to the cathedral.⁷⁹ Then he had a charter drawn up in which he anathematized despoilers of the church and its possessions, which was witnessed by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Bishop Michael of Avranches, Bishop William of Durham and the abbots of Saint-Étienne de Caen, Lessay and Montebourg.⁸⁰ At this point, John included a description of the monk of Cerisy's vision, which was discussed in Chapter 1, as evidence of Geoffrey's 'blessedness'. The monk interpreted the vision as an indication of Geoffrey's death or a portent of it.⁸¹ In the evening of 2 February, in fullness of faith, confession and penitence, Geoffrey died in the presence of the clergy and people.⁸² According to John, having been purified from the filth of flesh with vigils and sacred rites, Geoffrey's body was preserved and a procession was arranged to glorify him.⁸³ The 'De statu' ends with a description of how the clergy, dressed in silk vestments provided by Geoffrey, and the people, observed a vigil around Geoffrey's body. A Mass was performed accompanied by prayers and oblations to God, and on the following day, 3 February, the bishops and abbots

⁷⁸ *DS*, col. 223: 'Recessit itaque idem, et apud S. Laudum diebus aliquibus iacuit. Deinde Constantias ad ecclesiam dilectæ suæ dominæ deportari se fecit; ibi publicam confessionem peccaminum suorum faciens et satisfactionem pro posse suo, orationi, et pœnitentiæ, et eleemosynæ vacabat, et quotidie coram se quod per seipsum facere non poterat, per manum sui capellani tribus pauperibus pedes abluens [...] si quem iniuste offendisset, ut ab eo misericordiam flagitaret et satisfactione emendaret'.

⁷⁹ *DS*, col. 223: 'Cernens autem venerandæ memoriæ præsul mortem sibi imminere, et condolens casibus ecclesiæ, misit in Angliam, et vocavit ad se Brismetum plumbarium'.

⁸⁰ For the charter, *DS*, col. 223: 'Gaufridus, misericordia Dei [...] Fiat, amen'; col. 224: 'Hoc itaque scriptum ipse legit et confirmavit, pluriesque coram se recitari fecit; necnon episcopi et abbates qui eum adhuc in corpore viventem visitaverunt'.

⁸¹ See above, p. 47. *DS*, col. 224: 'Sed quid de beato sine ipsius præsulis ostenderit Dominus, omnino silere non debemus'; 'adfuit qui diceret, forsitan venerandus idem episcopus obiit, aut in proximo obiens'.

⁸² *DS*, col. 224: 'in plena fide et confessione et pœnitentia, præsente et psallente clero et populo, vitam relinquit transitoriam'.

⁸³ *DS*, col. 224: 'ipse in eius celebri Purificatione ab squalore carnis purificari vigiliis sacrisque eius corpus conservari festivaque processione decorari promeruit'.

who had been at his deathbed, with the clergy and people, celebrated the divine mysteries and buried Geoffrey in the churchyard.⁸⁴

Certain elements of this story conform to the ‘topoi’ of an idealised death identified by David Crouch.⁸⁵ One of the most important features of this ideal is the announcement of an individual’s death through the agency of supernatural power. In Geoffrey’s case, according to John, his death was presaged by the earthquake in 1091, and foretold in the monk of Cerisy’s vision.⁸⁶ It is also possible that John included the charter issued by Geoffrey on his deathbed in order to demonstrate that Geoffrey had anticipated the disorder that accompanied Henry’s attempt to consolidate his power in the Cotentin after 1093. In the charter, any potential despoiler of the church and its property are threatened with ‘perpetual damnation [...] with Judas, Herod, Pilate and Caiaphas, and all of the enemies of the holy church in eternal fire’ where ‘he may be forever tormented with the devil and his angels’.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Geoffrey did not die alone. It is clearly significant in an ecclesiastical context that Geoffrey was attended on his deathbed by the bishops of the neighbouring sees of Avranches and Bayeux, as well as the abbots of two of the diocese’s most important abbeys, Lessay and Montebourg, and the abbot of the Conqueror’s foundation of Saint-Étienne de Caen. The appearance of William de Saint-Calais is surprising, since he had returned to Durham in 1091 following his exile in November 1088. Charter evidence places him in

⁸⁴ *DS*, col. 224: ‘Ipsa namque die omnis clerus quem nutrierat [...] et omnis populus qui eo die ad festivam processionem venerat, indutus sericis cappis ceterisque vestibus pretiosis quas vir Dei undequaque collegerat, [...] circumsteterunt eximii patris dilectum corpus [...] corporis et sanguinis Domini mysteria, precumque et oblationum vota Domino persolverunt. Sequenti vero die qui est 111 nonas Februarii, episcopi et abbates præscripti una cum clero et populo, celebratis divinis mysteriis, omnibusque rite dispositis, sepelierunt eum honorifice in stillicidio ecclesiæ’.

⁸⁵ Crouch, ‘Culture of Death’, pp. 158-62.

⁸⁶ For the earthquake, see above, p. 157; for the vision, see above, p. 47; Crouch, ‘Culture of Death’, p. 159.

⁸⁷ *DS*, col. 223: ‘perpetuæ damnationis [...] in perpetuum cum Juda traditore, et Herode, Pilato et Caipha, cunctisque sanctæ ecclesiæ adversariis ignem æternum possideat, semperque cum diabolo et angelis eius crucietur’; Crouch, ‘Culture of Death’, p. 160.

England from September in 1093, but it is possible that he visited Normandy earlier in the year.⁸⁸

However, the funeral rites that followed Geoffrey's death appear to reflect authentic practices, which were influenced by monastic customs. Indeed, Sarah Hamilton has noted how the liturgical rites for the dying preserved in the twelfth-century Magdalen Pontifical, which was probably written for the monastic community at Christ Church, Canterbury, was written in such a way as to make it applicable outside the cloister.⁸⁹ The impact of monastic customs on these practices can be seen by comparing John's account of Geoffrey's funeral rites with the procedure set out by Lanfranc in his *Monastic Constitutions*. Following the individual's death, the body was washed, covered and placed on a bier, as indicated in Geoffrey's case by John's reference to the preservation of his corpse.⁹⁰ In the *Monastic Constitutions*, the body is taken into the church where a vigil is kept over it. Since 'the corpse should never be left without psalmody', those watching over it 'shall recite the psalter in order, with the prayers for the commendation of a soul, Vespers, Vigils and Lauds of the dead with *Verba mea*'. These rites may be identified as the 'prayers and oblations' that accompanied the vigil in the 'De statu'.⁹¹ The burial is accompanied by a Mass, which occurred in John's account, and followed by further services, of which there is no evidence in Geoffrey's case.⁹² The adherence of Geoffrey's funeral rites to standard practices reinforced his image as a saint-bishop.

⁸⁸ Crouch, 'Culture of Death', p. 178; Aird, 'An Absent Friend', pp. 293-95; *RRAN*, i, nos. 336 and 337.

⁸⁹ Crouch, 'Culture of Death', p. 179; Sarah Hamilton, 'Rites of Passage and Pastoral Care' in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, ed. Julia Crick and Elisabeth van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 290-308, at pp. 300-1.

⁹⁰ See above, p. 256; *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 182-85.

⁹¹ *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 184-87; pp. 184-85: 'numquam enim sine psalmodia corpus esse debet [...] Psalterium ex ordine psallant, commendationem anime agent, Vesperas, uigilias cum laudibus, *Verba mea*'; see above, pp. 256-57.

⁹² *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 186-87: 'Omnes, qui possunt, ipso die pro eo missam celebrent', and pp. 188-89.

According to John, Geoffrey had instructed his clergy to bury him ‘in stillicidio ecclesiæ’.⁹³ Toustain de Billy located Geoffrey’s tomb under the ‘lavatoire’ of the church, a basin for washing hands during the liturgy.⁹⁴ Lecanu and Pigeon followed this argument, but Le Patourel, Musset and Chibnall interpreted ‘stillicidio’ as the churchyard.⁹⁵ A charter dated 3 July 1504, which sets out the rule for the children of the choir, appears to include a reference to the location of Geoffrey’s tomb on the left side of the altar where the relics were positioned.⁹⁶ Fontanel identified this Bishop Geoffrey as Geoffrey de Montbray in the index to her edition of the cartulary in which the charter is found, but in her summary of its content she correctly identified him as Bishop Geoffrey Herbert who died in 1510.⁹⁷ The information in the charter is in fact a reference to the tomb that had been prepared for Geoffrey Herbert, as indicated by the use of ‘a esleu’, which in this context implies that the bishop had selected his burial place while living.⁹⁸ In the most recent discussion of the evidence, Marcel Lelégard argued that Geoffrey’s tomb had been originally placed in the churchyard under the guttering of the east end. During the extension of the east end between 1220 and 1235, Geoffrey’s tomb was enveloped by the new construction and brought inside the cathedral. In support of this argument, Lelégard cited the ordinary of Bishop Louis d’Erquery (1348-1371) which stated that ‘the tomb of Bishop Geoffrey’ should be censed after the great altar, the

⁹³ *DS*, col. 224.

⁹⁴ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 145; Lelégard, ‘La cathédrale et la tombe de Geoffroi’, p. 298.

⁹⁵ Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques*, p. 129; Lecanu, *Histoire du diocèse*, i, p. 186; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 121-22; Le Patourel, ‘Geoffrey of Montbray’, p. 158; Musset, ‘Un grand prélat’, p. 15; Chibnall, ‘Geoffroi de Montbray’, p. 291.

⁹⁶ Fontanel, no. 359, p. 539: ‘le lieu ou sont les reliques au costé senestre du grand autel, auquel lieu reverend pere en Dieu monsieur Geoffroy, par la permission divine evesque de Coustances, fondateur de lad. Maistrise d’enffans, a esleu sa sepulture’.

⁹⁷ Fontanel, p. 560; also, Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 202. Cf. Fontanel, no. 359, p. 538.

⁹⁸ My thanks to Peter Edbury for discussing this passage with me. For Geoffrey Herbert’s burial in the cathedral, Toustain de Billy, ii, p. 387.



Fig. 22: Coutances cathedral viewed from the southeast.

body of the Lord and the altar of Saint Lô'. Lelégard used this description to place Geoffrey's tomb between the great altar and the altar of Saint Lô.⁹⁹

As the nineteenth-century historiography on the diocese suggests, Geoffrey occupies a pre-eminent place in its history as the bishop who revitalised the church of Coutances. Geoffrey's reforms touched all of the principal facets of ecclesiastical life in the diocese, but the most enduring aspect of his legacy was the establishment of the foundations of episcopal power. The restoration of episcopal power was physically represented in the Romanesque

⁹⁹ Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 1301, fol. 3r: 'i[n]ce[n]sare maius altare deinde corp[orum] D[o]m[ini] et altare sa[n]cti Laudi postea ep[iscopu]s incenset tumba[m] Gaufridi ep[iscop]i'; Lelégard, 'La cathédrale et la tombe', pp. 298-300. For Louis d'Équerry, Toustain de Billy, ii, pp. 150-62.

cathedral he completed, which was not rebuilt until the episcopate of Hugh de Morville (1208-1238), with the subsequent addition of chapels on the north side of the nave in 1270 and on the south side during the episcopate of Robert d'Harcourt (1291-1315).¹⁰⁰ Since the remains of an ancient temple were found underneath the cathedral in the nineteenth century, it is likely that Geoffrey's edifice was built on a site that had been continually associated with sacred authority since the earliest period of the city's history.¹⁰¹ Its position on this site meant that the cathedral dominated the surrounding land. Even today, as one approaches the city from the southeast, the Gothic cathedral dominates the skyline as a striking symbol of the power of Coutances' medieval bishops (Fig. 22). Geoffrey was also responsible for the development of Coutances, Saint-Lô and Valognes, as well as the episcopal manor at Saint-Ébremond-de-Bonfossé, as centres of episcopal power in the diocese. The first three of these sites were the seats of episcopal officials in the seventeenth century, and it is noteworthy that the commissioners who compiled the inventory of the episcopal 'mensa' in 1440 operated at these four locations.¹⁰²

However, the confusion over the location of Geoffrey's tomb is indicative of the way that Geoffrey seems to have been forgotten at Coutances. According to a document from the archives ('tabulario') cited in the *Gallia Christiana*, Bishop Ralph, Geoffrey's successor, and the canons decreed at the start of his episcopate that Geoffrey would be honoured in the cathedral and throughout the diocese on 3 February each year.¹⁰³ Although Lecanu claimed that it was customary on this day for each canon to give his share of the canons' income to the lepers and a loaf of bread together with his share of the revenue of Winterborne Stickland

¹⁰⁰ Baylé, 'Coutances: cathédrale Notre-Dame', pp. 161-63.

¹⁰¹ Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰² Bibliothèque municipale de Caen, coll. Mancel, ms. 410, cited at *La mense épiscopale*, p. xi.

¹⁰³ *GC*, xi, col. 873: 'In hujus episcopatus initio decretum est canonicorum constitutione et ejusdem episcopi solennis in ecclesia Constantiensi et in ejus diœcesi perenniter celebretur III nonas Februarii'.

to the poor, his source is unclear, and there is no evidence of the observance of this day in the extant calendars from the cathedral or Saint-Lô de Rouen.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Toustain de Billy, citing a now lost obituary, stated that the ‘public commemoration’ of Geoffrey was celebrated on 12 July.¹⁰⁵ Richard Allen has argued that Toustain de Billy confused the date of Geoffrey’s death with the date of the dedication of the new cathedral in the thirteenth century, a logical suggestion since the commemoration of this ceremony on 12 July is found in a mid-fifteenth-century breviary from Coutances.¹⁰⁶ However, without examining the obituary used by Toustain de Billy, which is impossible since it is now lost, his suggestion cannot be rejected. Rather, it should be interpreted as evidence of the way Geoffrey’s memory faded at Coutances.

One possible explanation may be that the feast day on 3 February was subsumed under the feast of the Virgin’s Purification, which was evidently an important date in the cathedral’s liturgical calendar. Evidence from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reveals that the general chapter of the Purification was held on 3 February.¹⁰⁷ Given the presentation of Geoffrey in the ‘De statu’ as the restorer of the cathedral chapter and the decision taken by Bishop Ralph and the canons after Geoffrey’s death to remember him on 3 February, it is tempting to postulate that the date of the general chapter of the Purification may have been chosen in part because of its connection to Geoffrey’s memory.

¹⁰⁴ Lecanu, *Histoire des évêques*, p. 133; Saint-Lô: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 94, f. 3v; Coutances: Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 350, f. 183v.

¹⁰⁵ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 145: ‘Commemoratio Gauffridi episcopi communis’.

¹⁰⁶ Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 202. For the identification of 12 July as the date of the new cathedral’s dedication, Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms. 350, fol. 186r; for references to it in other breviaries, Allen, ‘Norman Episcopate’, p. 202, n. 199; Pigeon, *Histoire de la cathédrale*, p. 185.

¹⁰⁷ Gosset, ‘Les chanoines du chapitre’, pp. 21-22.

Another explanation may be found in the impact on the church's history of Bishop Algar (c.1132-1151), who is remembered in modern historiography as 'the artisan of the Gregorian reform in the Cotentin'.¹⁰⁸ The authors of the *Gallia Christiana* erroneously identified Algar as the prior of Durham before his promotion to the bishopric of Coutances, but Prior Algar died in c.1137.¹⁰⁹ He was almost certainly English for he is identified as a 'clericus' at Bodmin in Cornwall in 1113 in Hermann of Laon's 'De miraculis S. Mariae Laudunensis'. According to Hermann, Algar had spent time at Laon and therefore must have known some of the canons who arrived at Bodmin in that year on a fund-raising mission with their Marian relics.¹¹⁰ He is identified as the 'procurator' at Bodmin in the life of Guy of Merton who installed Augustinian canons there with the assistance William Warelwast, bishop of Exeter, between 1120 and 1125.¹¹¹ It may have been in recognition of his role in establishing the Augustinian community that Algar was promoted to the bishopric of Coutances. Henry I's restoration of the church of Saint Mary at Aurigny to the church of Coutances in 1134 suggests that Algar owed his promotion to royal favour.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ GC, xi, cols. 874-75; Fontanel, p. 57: 'l'artisan de la Réforme grégorienne dans le Cotentin'.

¹⁰⁹ GC, xi, col. 874, followed by Jacqueline at 'Le chapitre de la cathédrale', p. 202; Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, p. 172, n. 129.

¹¹⁰ Hermann monachi, 'De miraculis S. Mariae Laudunensis', *PL*, 156, cols. 961-1018, at col. 983: 'quidam clericus nomine Agardus, qui jam diu Lauduni manserat'. For the date, J.S.P. Tatlock, 'The English Journey of the Laon Canons', *Speculum* 8 (1933), pp. 454-65, at p. 455.

¹¹¹ Marvin L. Colker, 'The Life of Guy of Merton by Rainald of Merton', *Mediaeval Studies* 31 (1969), pp. 250-61, at p. 259: 'Magister enim Algarus, nunc Constantiensis ecclesie presul, tunc autem illius loci procurator, tum per se tum per Exoniensem episcopum eundem uenerabilem uirum (Guy of Merton) ad prioratum prefate ecclesie [...] impetrauit'; Karen Jankulak, *The Medieval Cult of St Petroc* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 137.

¹¹² Fontanel, no. 289.

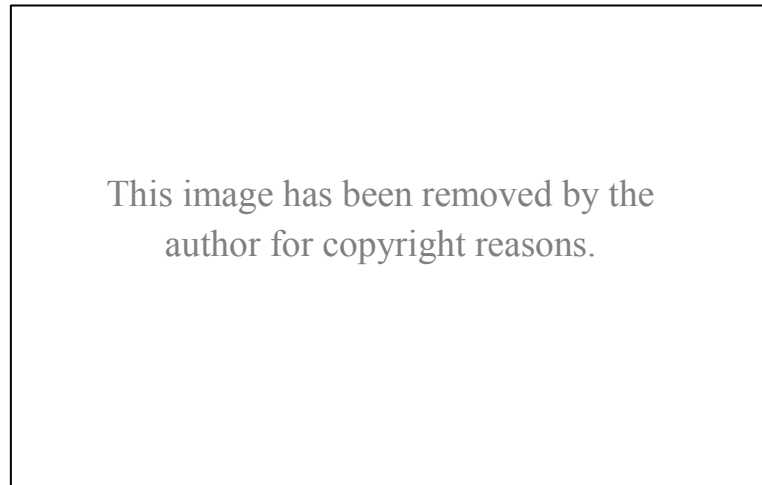


Fig. 23- Tomb in the chapel of Saint Mathurin and Saint Eloi attributed to Algar (from <http://cathedralecoutances.free.fr>)

Algar's most significant achievement as bishop of Coutances was the introduction of Augustinian canons at Saint-Lô de Rouen and the church of Saint-Lô in the town of the same name for which he received papal consent in 1132.¹¹³ He also supported William Paynel's foundation of the abbey of Hambye, but he did not act as an advisor to the Empress Matilda in the re-foundation of Notre-Dame-du-Vœu at Cherbourg as Toustain de Billy suggested, for this role was performed by his successor, Richard de Bohun.¹¹⁴ As noted above, one of the responses of the canons to the replacement of the secular canons at Saint-Lô de Rouen and the church of Saint-Lô was to revise the ducal confirmation charter of 1056 by emphasising Duke William's role in the church's restoration at the expense of Geoffrey's.¹¹⁵ The fading of Geoffrey's memory at Coutances may have been the long-term result of this action. Algar's posthumous reputation endured. His death in 1151 was recorded by Robert de Torigni in his chronicle and his epitaph was written by Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ GC, xi, 'Instrumenta', col. 238.

¹¹⁴ GC, xi, 'Instrumenta', cols. 241-42; Toustain de Billy, i, p. 187, cf. *Calendar of Documents preserved in France, Vol. I A.D. 918-1206*, ed. J. Horace Round (London, 1899), no. 933.

¹¹⁵ See above, pp. 102-3.

¹¹⁶ Robert de Torigni, i, p. 257, 'Decessit etiam Algarus, episcopus Constantiensis, vir admodum religiosus'; GC, xi, col. 875.

According to Toustain de Billy, his renown in the diocese was so great that he was commemorated at the abbey of Blanchelande and the Hôtel-Dieu at Coutances, which were established many years after Algar's death.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, a tomb in the chapel of Saint Mathurin and Saint Eloi in the north ambulatory of the cathedral is traditionally identified as Algar's (Fig. 23). If this identification is correct, it is significant that Algar's tomb survives to this day whereas uncertainty surrounds the location of Geoffrey's.

Conclusion

The period in Geoffrey's career following the Conqueror's death was dominated by the struggle for power between Curthose, Rufus and Henry. Geoffrey initially supported Curthose in an attempt to preserve the union of England and Normandy under one man. However, following the failure of the 1088 rebellion, Geoffrey sought a reconciliation with Rufus in order to safeguard the succession of his lands to his nephew, Robert de Montbray. The oath Geoffrey swore to Rufus should have formed the basis of a co-operative relationship with the new king, just as his simoniacal promotion to the episcopate had provided the foundation of Geoffrey's relationship with the Conqueror. But Geoffrey's absence from Rufus' charters suggests that he was unable to gain the king's favour. Although Geoffrey had initially supported Curthose, the failure of the rebellion and Geoffrey's subsequent reconciliation with Rufus undermined his relationship with the duke. Despite losing the status that came with his closeness to the Conqueror, Geoffrey successfully navigated the political complexities of the period. He passed on his English lands to his nephew on his deathbed, and although he may have been struggling to defend his position in the Cotentin against Henry in 1093, he upheld his position and protected the church of Coutances from Henry in 1091 by exploiting the rivalries between the Conqueror's sons. An important

¹¹⁷ Toustain de Billy, i, p. 203.

marker of his success is that he died at Coutances having overseen the second restoration of the cathedral following the earthquake of 1091. It was a fitting end to a career which had been built upon Geoffrey's diocesan achievements.

Conclusion



Fig. 24 – Coutances, Rue Geoffrey de Montbray.

Geoffrey's impact on the diocese of Coutances is not reflected in the modern city. Apart from a depiction of him on a modern stained glass window on the south side of the nave and the main road which runs through the city that bears his name after it passes the cathedral and Parvis Notre-Dame (Fig. 24), there is little evidence of his memory at Coutances. Yet through the reforms he initiated, Geoffrey made a significant contribution to the development of the medieval diocese of Coutances. Although it does not stand today, his cathedral, which incorporated one of the largest naves in Normandy, was a grandiose monument to his impact on the diocese. The cathedral chapter, which he reorganised and expanded, owed its existence as an institution to Geoffrey. Archdeacons and elements of diocesan administration

appear for the first time during his episcopate. Furthermore, Geoffrey was instrumental in the development of a vibrant Marian cult in the cathedral. Indeed, the evidence of Geoffrey's patronage of the Virgin's cult, in particular the existence of the 'Miracula' which he had originally commissioned, permits an insight into his piety which is at odds with the image of a 'warrior bishop'. Although there is little evidence of his diocesan activities, a closer study of it, and in particular the letters of Lanfranc, suggests that he was a conscientious and effective diocesan bishop even after 1066 when much of his time was taken up with the king's affairs. Furthermore, the extant fragments of his correspondence with Pope Alexander II and the contrast between his apparent chastity and the family life of some of his canons highlight his sympathy with elements of the eleventh-century reform movement and his flexible approach towards the implementation of these ideals in the diocese. Geoffrey emerges from this study of his career as a diocesan bishop as a more complicated figure than the image of a 'warrior bishop' implies.

As this thesis has demonstrated, Geoffrey's restoration of the church of Coutances enhanced the charismatic element of his lordship. Geoffrey purchased half of the city from the duke and created an episcopal manor on the northern side of the cathedral. In addition to establishing his presence at Coutances, he asserted his authority over locations within the diocese connected to its sacred past. By forging links with his saintly episcopal predecessors through these sites, Geoffrey added to his prestige as bishop. He also invested some of the riches he secured in southern Italy in the development of several episcopal manors, which served as projections of his honour and status.

It has been argued that these acts formed a *Königsnähe* strategy which enabled Geoffrey to join the group of men who were closest to the duke. As such, this thesis has

highlighted the significance of Geoffrey's relationship with the Conqueror over the course of his career. Geoffrey set about enhancing his charisma in order to gain the rewards that accompanied a position close to the duke. This process may have been facilitated by a friendship that developed between Geoffrey and the duke based on their shared goal of the restoration of the church of Coutances. His position amongst those closest to the Conqueror was secured through his participation in the Conquest of England. The rewards Geoffrey received in England after 1066, which undoubtedly made him one of the wealthiest men in the kingdom, derived from and reflected his closeness to the king. Therefore Geoffrey's participation in secular activities after 1066 should be seen as elements of a new strategy, shaped by the circumstances created by the Conquest, intended to maintain his prominent position amongst the king's followers. As a member of this select group of magnates, Geoffrey was expected to take part in activities appropriate to his status. Therefore it is unlikely that the apparent contradiction between his prominence in secular affairs after 1066 and his episcopal office would have been recognised by Geoffrey.

By focusing on Geoffrey's relationship with the Conqueror, this thesis has demonstrated that the charismatic elements of lordship – honour, reputation, prestige – were just as important to bishops as they were to secular lords. Although he was a bishop and he operated before the Conquest at least in an ecclesiastical context, Geoffrey sought the rewards that came with closeness to the duke by employing a *Königsnähe* strategy focused on the enhancement of his charisma. A similar strategy was employed after 1066 in order to maintain his close relationship with the duke. As a bishop who had been drawn from the aristocracy, Geoffrey shared the same mentality as the secular lords with whom he mixed. Therefore in order to gain an understanding of how Geoffrey was perceived by his

contemporaries, his activities within and beyond the borders of his diocese need to be set in the broader context of the aristocratic culture in which he lived.

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