

# The Earldom



# THE FORMATION OF THE HONOR OF CHESTER, 1066-1100

by C. P. Lewis

The earls of Chester from 1070 to 1232 were guaranteed a prominent place in English history by their landed estates, which placed them among the leading aristocracy of the realm whatever roles they chose to play, whether as faithful or rebellious subjects of their lord the king, or as peaceable friends or ruthless enemies of their neighbours the Welsh.<sup>1</sup> The heart of the earldom was the city of Chester, which gave the earls the dignity of their title and contained the abbey of St. Werburgh, their first monastic foundation in England and usual place of burial.<sup>2</sup> Chester was commercially important and close to the plunder and recruiting grounds of north Wales.<sup>3</sup> The city and county were also the core of the honor of Chester, the earls' largest and most enduring possession in England. Although Ranulf II (1129-53) and Ranulf III (1181-1232) held other honors which supplemented or even supplanted it as a source of wealth and power,<sup>4</sup> it was Chester that gave the earls their long-term significance over a century and a half of English politics. The honor extended far beyond the boundaries of the county. The Cheshire component has been well served by local historians of the North-West, but the earls owed at least as much of their importance to the submerged portion of the honorial iceberg which forms the subject of this paper.

## I

The earldom and honor of Chester are best regarded as separate entities which became welded together through dynastic and political chance. It is therefore essential to trace separately Chester's later peculiarities from the two sources, earldom and honor. The earls' exclusive control of Cheshire, apart from the lands

<sup>1</sup> B. M. C. Husain, *Cheshire Under the Norman Earls* (Chester, 1973), pp. 83-97, is a brief and popular introduction. Detailed studies outside this volume include J. W. Alexander, *Ranulf of Chester: A Relic of the Conquest* (Athens, Georgia, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> G. E. C[okayne] and others, *The Complete Peerage* (new edn., 12 vols., London, 1910-59), III, pp. 164-70.

<sup>3</sup> *The Victoria History of the County of Chester*, V (forthcoming). All vols. in the ser. are henceforth cited as *V.C.H.*

<sup>4</sup> W. Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees* (3 vols., Manchester, 1923-5), II, pp. 7-8 (henceforth cited as *H.K.F.*); B. E. Harris, 'Ranulph III, Earl of Chester', *J.C.A.S.*, LVIII (1975), pp. 99-114; for Ran. II, see Judith Green's article below.

of the Church, differentiated Chester from most other earldoms and honors, but was not sufficient in itself to make it a palatine earldom, a status which matured only after the kings of England annexed it in 1241.<sup>5</sup> Any discussion of the nature of the early earldom founders on the lack of data: there is simply no knowing whether Earl Hugh had exceptional powers beyond those of other Anglo-Norman earls and magnates, but it does not seem very likely. More progress can be made with the early history of the honor, though the task is made difficult by the shortage of evidence bearing directly on its formative years. There are only two surviving comital charters before 1086, only five (two of them spurious) before the death of Earl Hugh in 1101, and only nine more before 1129.<sup>6</sup> The absence of charters makes the Domesday evidence vital to understanding how the earls' lands took shape. Although the honor continued to grow through further royal grants,<sup>7</sup> and to evolve through further subinfeudation,<sup>8</sup> Domesday Book forms the best vantage point for its early history. By focusing attention on the sources of the honor and the tenurial arrangements made by Earl Hugh, some new light can be thrown on the character of the earldom long before it became a palatinate.

If the early earldom was not palatine, neither was it simply a frontier jurisdiction on the model of the Norman counties.<sup>9</sup> Its context is William I's change of policy towards the English earldoms between 1068 and 1070 and the successive appointments to Chester of Gerbod the Fleming and Hugh of Avranches.<sup>10</sup> The circumstances of Gerbod's presence in the North-West are obscure. He was a member of the noble family which owned Oosterzele and Scheldewindeke, south of Ghent and east of the Schelde in the imperial part of the county of Flanders, and held the advocacy of the abbey of Saint-Bertin at Saint-Omer in the western part of the county.<sup>11</sup> Advocates of Saint-Bertin are likely to have been men of substance: it was an important monastery at some considerable distance from Gerbod's patrimony. Gerbod was a younger son but survived his brother Arnold and apparently inherited his share of the family's allod, having given his own to Saint-Bertin.<sup>12</sup> The later owners of the allod were perhaps his sons.<sup>13</sup> The advocacy

<sup>5</sup> G. Barraclough, 'The Earldom and County Palatine of Chester', *T.H.S.L.C.*, CIII (1951), pp. 25-38; J. W. Alexander, 'New Evidence on the Palatinate of Chester', *E.H.R.*, LXXXV (1970), pp. 715-29. The myth of the early Norman palatinate has tenacious roots in the authority of J. H. Round (opinion quoted in *Complete Peerage*, III, p. 164) and F. M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166* (London, 1932), pp. 226-8, but it is nevertheless a myth.

<sup>6</sup> *C.E.C.*, pp. 1-26

<sup>7</sup> *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Details are traceable in Ormerod; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 1-293; *Early Yorkshire Charters*, ed. W. Farrer (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1914-16), II, pp. 193-255 [these vols., and the continuation by C. T. Clay (Yorks. Archaeol. Soc. Rec. Ser., Extra Ser., 9 vols., 1935-65) are henceforth cited as *E.Y.C.*].

<sup>9</sup> As asserted in D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), pp. 295-6.

<sup>10</sup> C. P. Lewis, 'The Early Earls of Norman England', *Proc. of the Battle Conf. on Anglo-Norman Studies* (henceforth *A.N.S.*), XIII (1991), pp. 205-21.

<sup>11</sup> E. Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility Before 1300* (4 vols., Kortrijk, 1975-6), II (2), p. 1024, citing charters printed in *Les chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le grand cartulaire de Dom Dewitte*, ed. D. Haigneré and O. Bled (4 vols., Saint-Omer, 1886-99), I; the case for the identity is set out in *E.Y.C.*, VIII, pp. 45-6.

<sup>12</sup> *Chartes de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Haigneré and Bled, I, nos. 75, 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* no. 85; Warlop, *Flemish Nobility*, II (2), p. 1024.



seems to have passed via Gerbod's sister Gundrada and her Norman husband William I of Warenne to the latter's sons, who were advocates in the 1090s.<sup>14</sup>

Gerbod's adventures in England were brief and poorly recorded.<sup>15</sup> William I gave him Chester, where he was attacked by English and Welsh rebels, became anxious about his lands in Flanders, and successfully sought permission to leave. No more than that is known, though his departure can be dated by inference, since the unrest in Cheshire clearly happened before the king campaigned there and built Chester castle in early 1070, and Gerbod's unease about Flanders must have been due to the death of Count Baldwin in July 1070 and the civil war which followed, culminating in the battle of Cassel in February 1071. He probably left England in late 1070. Gerbod's fate in Flanders is uncertain. Orderic Vitalis thought that he fell into the hands of his enemies and was imprisoned; the 'Hyde' chronicler believed that he met his death. Both opinions date from fifty years or more after the event and either or neither might be true.<sup>16</sup>

What did William I give Gerbod in England? Orderic believed that he held *Cestram et comitatum eius*, which might mean the county, or the earldom, or both; the 'Hyde' chronicler saw him as *Comes Cistrensis*, which sounds more definite; but both were looking into the early years of the Conquest through a glass which distorted Gerbod's image into that of a twelfth-century earl. The words they chose to describe him are no guide to what he most probably was: a regional military leader who gave up his command before it was secure enough to be transformed into a great landed estate. The fact that he was named nowhere in Domesday Book strongly suggests that he was not endowed with lands outside Cheshire. That is in contrast with his brother Frederic, whose East Anglian fief passed on his

<sup>14</sup> Advocates Reynold and William, named in 1091 and 1096 (*Chartes de Saint-Bertin*, ed. Haingeré and Bled, I, nos. 87, 94), were evidently the sons of William I of Warenne: *E.Y.C.*, VIII, pp. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> A. J. Farrington, 'A Note on Gherbod the Fleming, Earl of Chester', *J.C.A.S.*, LI (1964), pp. 21-2, discusses the evidence.

<sup>16</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford, 1969-80, henceforth O.V.), II, pp. 260-3; *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, ed. E. Edwards, Rolls Ser. (London, 1866), p. 296. If either was accurate, the Gerbod in question could not be (as suggested by Warlop, *Flemish Nobility*, II (2), p. 1024) the Gerbod who accidentally killed his lord, young Count Arnulf, at Cassel, travelled in penance to Rome, and ended as a monk of Cluny: *La chronique de Saint-Hubert dite Cantatorium*, ed. K. Hanquet (Brussels, 1906), pp. 65-7. The circumstances otherwise fit well, because Gerbod of Chester clearly did return to Flanders in order to fight in the civil war and because his family showed an unparalleled interest in Cluny when his sister Gundrada and her husband established the first English Cluniac priory at Lewes: B. J. Golding, 'The Coming of the Cluniacs', *A.N.S.*, III (1980), pp. 65-77 at 65, 71-2. Saint-Hubert's Gerbod is unlikely to be legendary, as Hanquet asserted. I am tempted to explain Orderic's and Hyde's statements as guesswork based on ignorance. Orderic is certainly vague but 'Hyde' was written by someone closely connected with Lewes priory who ought to have known what had happened to Gerbod. For Orderic's Cheshire sources see C. P. Lewis, *The Welsh Borders, 1042-1087: A Regional History of the Norman Conquest* (in preparation), cap. 2; 'Hyde' is to appear in a new edn. by Dr. E. M. C. van Houts; in the meantime see C. P. Lewis, 'The Earldom of Surrey and the Date of Domesday Book', *Historical Research*, LXIII (1990), pp. 329-36 at 330-4.

death, allegedly at the hands of the rebel Hereward about 1070, to his sister Gundrada and her husband William of Warenne.<sup>17</sup>

Hugh of Avranches, Gerbod's successor at Chester, is one of the more vivid personalities of the Norman Conquest. Orderic's description of his character was intended to evoke fear and disgust, and still succeeds in doing so even nine centuries after his death.<sup>18</sup> Hugh was from a prominent family in western Normandy, the son of Richard Goz, viscount of Avranches.<sup>19</sup> He came to England and became earl of Chester in his father's lifetime, succeeding as viscount probably c. 1080.<sup>20</sup> The monks of Whitby (Yorks.) later claimed that he arrived with their founder William of Percy in 1067,<sup>21</sup> but that may be an invention to support the charter which they concocted in his name supposedly giving them the churches of Whitby and Flamborough.<sup>22</sup> There is in reality no reason to think that Percy was originally Hugh's man or came to England in his company.<sup>23</sup>

The close parallel between the earldoms of Chester and Shrewsbury suggests that Hugh became earl not long after Chester castle was built in 1070.<sup>24</sup> It is possible that he was transferred there from another military command, since we know from Orderic that he had earlier given up Tutbury castle into the control of Henry of Ferrers.<sup>25</sup> Domesday Book has no sign that Hugh had ever held

<sup>17</sup> *E.Y.C.*, VIII, pp. 44-5; *Gesta Herwardi incliti exulis et militis*, in *Lestorie des Engles solum la Translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. T. D. Hardy and C. T. Martin, Rolls Ser. (2 vols., London, 1888-9), I, p. 369.

<sup>18</sup> *O.V.*, II, pp. 260-3; III, pp. 216-17 are the main passages on his character; cf. IV, pp. 284-5.

<sup>19</sup> *Complete Peerage*, III, pp. 164-5, is untrustworthy in several points of detail. In particular, Hugh was not the son of a half-sister of Wm. I called Emma (there being no such woman), as demonstrated in *ibid.* XII (1), Appendix K, pp. 32-3, and restated by C. W. Hollister, 'The Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief', *Domesday Studies*, ed. J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 219-48 at 236. In returning to the old view of Dugdale and Planché, E. Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (London, 1988), p. 202, produces no new evidence. For the family estates see L. Musset, 'Les origines et le patrimoine de l'abbaye de Saint-Sever', *La Normandie bénédictine au temps de Guillaume le Conquérant*, ed. J. Daoust (Lille, 1969), pp. 357-67, esp. 364-5.

<sup>20</sup> J. le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), p. 335 n. 4, is now corrected by E. M. C. van Houts, 'The Ship List of William the Conqueror', *A.N.S.*, X (1987), pp. 159-83 at 167 and n. 40.

<sup>21</sup> W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (new edn. by J. Caley and others, 6 vols., London, 1817-30) I, p. 409, accepted by D. C. Douglas, 'The Companions of the Conqueror', *History*, XXVIII (1943), pp. 129-47 at 146 n. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *C.E.C.*, no. 5; *E.Y.C.*, II, pp. 193-4 remains the best discussion of its authenticity. Whitby was actually Percy's gift, though the monks' fiction was necessary because he held it as Hugh's tenant.

<sup>23</sup> The main evidence for this must be his place of origin in Normandy. L. C. Loyd, *The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families*, Harleian Soc., CIII (1951), p. 77, accepts the reasoning given in *Complete Peerage*, X, p. 435 note b, for Percy-en-Auge; *Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris: XXX, *Yorkshire*, ed. M. L. Faull and M. Stinson (2 vols., Chichester, 1986), II, Appendix 3, note 13W1, is therefore wrong in suggesting Percy in the Cotentin, nearer Hugh's lands (but still not known to have been on his fief). Wm. called Hugh his lord in his own charter to Whitby, but that was because he held Whitby from the earl: *Cartularium Abbathiae de Whiteby*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, Surtees Soc., 2 vols., LXIX (1879) and LXXII (1881), I, no. 27 (pp. 31-3).

<sup>24</sup> Lewis, 'Early Earls' pp. 217-19.

<sup>25</sup> *O.V.*, II, pp. 264-5.

Tutbury or any part of its castlery,<sup>26</sup> but that does not make Orderic's story untrue. The castle was probably built and given to Hugh during the initial Norman penetration of the Midlands in 1068.<sup>27</sup>

Hugh of Chester and Roger of Shrewsbury were the only regional military commanders appointed in Mercia between 1068 and 1070 to be made earls. It is doubtful if the king had a single straightforward motive. Both men were from important vicecomital families in Normandy. They were appointed at a time when the Anglo-Saxon earldom of Mercia was being broken up, and in fact the Mercian earl's lands and men throughout Cheshire and Shropshire were placed under their lordship. Both commands were on the Welsh border, where a consolidated fief improved security. In each case the earldom went with a grant of all or virtually all the estates within the county not owned by an English bishop or a foreign monastery. It is difficult to say which if any was the deciding factor.<sup>28</sup>

## II

By 1086 the honor of Chester extended into no fewer than twenty of the thirty-four English counties, a geographical range rivalled only by the king and his half-brothers Odo of Bayeux and Robert, count of Mortain. Earl Hugh owned manors in six northern counties (Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire, also in Rutland) and both East Anglian ones (Norfolk and Suffolk), in six of the seven counties of Wessex (Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, and Devon), and in six south Midland counties (Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Huntingdonshire).<sup>29</sup> The gaps were in the South-East, Cornwall, and the west and south-east Midlands.

The weight of Earl Hugh's landed wealth was not distributed evenly. Table 1 shows for each county the tax assessment and annual values for King Edward's day (T.R.E.) and 1086. The three sets of figures are needed in order to take account of regional differences in prosperity and tax liability, especially the devastating effects on incomes from Yorkshire manors of the Norman military campaigns of 1069-70. They suggest some general conclusions about the early

<sup>26</sup> GDB 248b1 Toteberie and following entries; 274a1-276a1. For the system of reference to Domesday Book see below, note 29.

<sup>27</sup> The matter is usefully discussed by P. E. Golob, 'The Ferrers Earls of Derby: a Study of the Honour of Tutbury (1066-1279)' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge Univ., 1984), pp. 42-57.

<sup>28</sup> See further, C. P. Lewis, *Welsh Borders* cap. 9.

<sup>29</sup> References to Domesday Book are henceforth in one of two forms. Entries for the honor of Chester, and entries cited in order to give a complete list of an individual's holdings, are referred to by their county and the number assigned in *Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris (34 vols., Chichester, 1975-86). The Chester entries outside Cheshire are listed below (Appendix 1). Where necessary, other entries are cited more fully as GDB (for Great Domesday Book), LDB (Little Domesday Book), or EDB (Exon Domesday Book), followed by the folio number, a or b for the recto or verso, the column number if appropriate, and the line number or Domesday place-name.

TABLE 1

## Assessment and value of the honor of Chester, 1066-86

<i>Region</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Fiscal assessment T.R.E. to nearest hide or carucate</i>	<i>Percentage of total assessment of honor</i>	<i>Approximate value in shillings T.R.E.</i>	<i>Percentage of total value of honor T.R.E.</i>	<i>Approximate value in shillings in 1086</i>	<i>Percentage of total value of honor in 1086</i>
North-west	Cheshire	525	35.6%	5314	22.4%	4534	25.5%
	Shropshire					40	0.2%
	<b>North-west region</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>35.6%</b>	<b>5314</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>4574</b>	<b>25.7%</b>
North	Derbyshire	14	0.9%	80	0.3%	60	0.3%
	Leicestershire	122	8.3%	800	3.4%	800	4.5%
	Lincolnshire	276	18.7%	4620	19.5%	3565	20.0%
	Nottinghamshire	3	0.2%	95	0.4%	73	0.4%
	Yorkshire	177	12.0%	5200	21.9%	210	1.2%
	<b>North region</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>10795</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>4708</b>	<b>26.4%</b>
East Anglia	Norfolk	18	1.2%	480	2.0%	660	3.7%
	Suffolk	60	4.1%	1580	6.7%	2117	11.9%
	<b>East Anglia region</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>2060</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>2777</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
Wessex	Berkshire	47	3.2%	538	2.3%	570	3.2%
	Devon	2	0.1%	53	0.2%	60	0.3%
	Dorset	36	2.4%	635	2.7%	680	3.8%
	Hampshire	4	0.3%	100	0.4%	60	0.3%
	Somerset	8	0.5%	210	0.9%	205	1.2%
	Wiltshire	13	0.9%	280	1.2%	320	1.8%
	<b>Wessex region</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>1816</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>1895</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
Midlands	Buckinghamshire	34	2.3%	680	2.9%	580	3.3%
	Gloucestershire	28	1.9%	1260	5.3%	980	5.5%
	Huntingdonshire	8	0.5%	160	0.7%	180	1.0%
	Northamptonshire	25	1.7%	668	2.8%	678	3.8%
	Oxfordshire	77	5.2%	920	3.9%	1400	7.9%
	Warwickshire	2	0.1%	20	0.1%	30	0.2%
	<b>Midlands region</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>3708</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>3848</b>	<b>21.6%</b>
<b>Total for England</b>		<b>1476</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23693</b>	<b>100.1%</b>	<b>17802</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

geography of the honor. Cheshire was the most important single county, but alone it accounted for only about a third of the value of Hugh's lands and there were no contiguous holdings in neighbouring counties. Hugh's urban holdings, poorly recorded in Domesday Book, reinforced Cheshire's significance. Much of Chester's wealth went by one route or another to bolster the earl's power, whereas his houses in other towns (Wallingford, Buckingham, Oxford, Northampton, Leicester, Derby, and Lincoln are those recorded in Domesday) were relatively few.<sup>30</sup> By 1086, Cheshire had also become the base for extensive conquests in north Wales. After Cheshire, the next most important counties were Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, each almost as valuable as Cheshire T.R.E., though Yorkshire was much reduced by 1086. Of all the others, only Suffolk, Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire contributed more than one twentieth of the total value. Chester in 1086 was thus essentially a northern honor with extremely scattered and not especially valuable outliers over much of the Midlands and South. That was the honor as created by William the Conqueror. To it his son William Rufus added substantial grants from the royal demesne, amounting to thirty or more manors in Staffordshire, south Derbyshire, south Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire.<sup>31</sup> The most notable individual acquisitions were Leek and Coventry, at opposite ends of the area, but most of the rest were clustered in the Trent basin, centring on Repton. Reckoning from their values in 1086, they represented an increment to the honor of 2,471 shillings, or some 14 per cent, tilting its balance further towards the North. Cheshire itself was a little less dominant at Earl Hugh's death in 1101 than it had been in 1086, though it was now buttressed by holdings in neighbouring Staffordshire.

### III

William I made the honor of Chester by reshuffling the landed estates of dozens of pre-Conquest owners. How far the pattern which resulted was achieved at Hugh's petition, how far at the king's insistence, and how far by chance is impossible to say, though a detailed examination of the earl's predecessors (antecessors in Domesday's own terminology) is capable of showing how it was done. The exercise in identifying Hugh's Saxon antecessors which follows is highly relevant to the later history of the earldom in the fundamental sense that the decisions taken by William the Conqueror about which manors to give Hugh determined the main outlines of the honor. It also has interest as a case study of the effects of the Conquest on the patterns of landownership in England.

Cheshire lies outside this discussion, as it was given to Earl Hugh as a single block of territory, excepting only the manors belonging to the bishop of Lichfield-Chester, which were not particularly numerous. The lands of Earl Edwin of

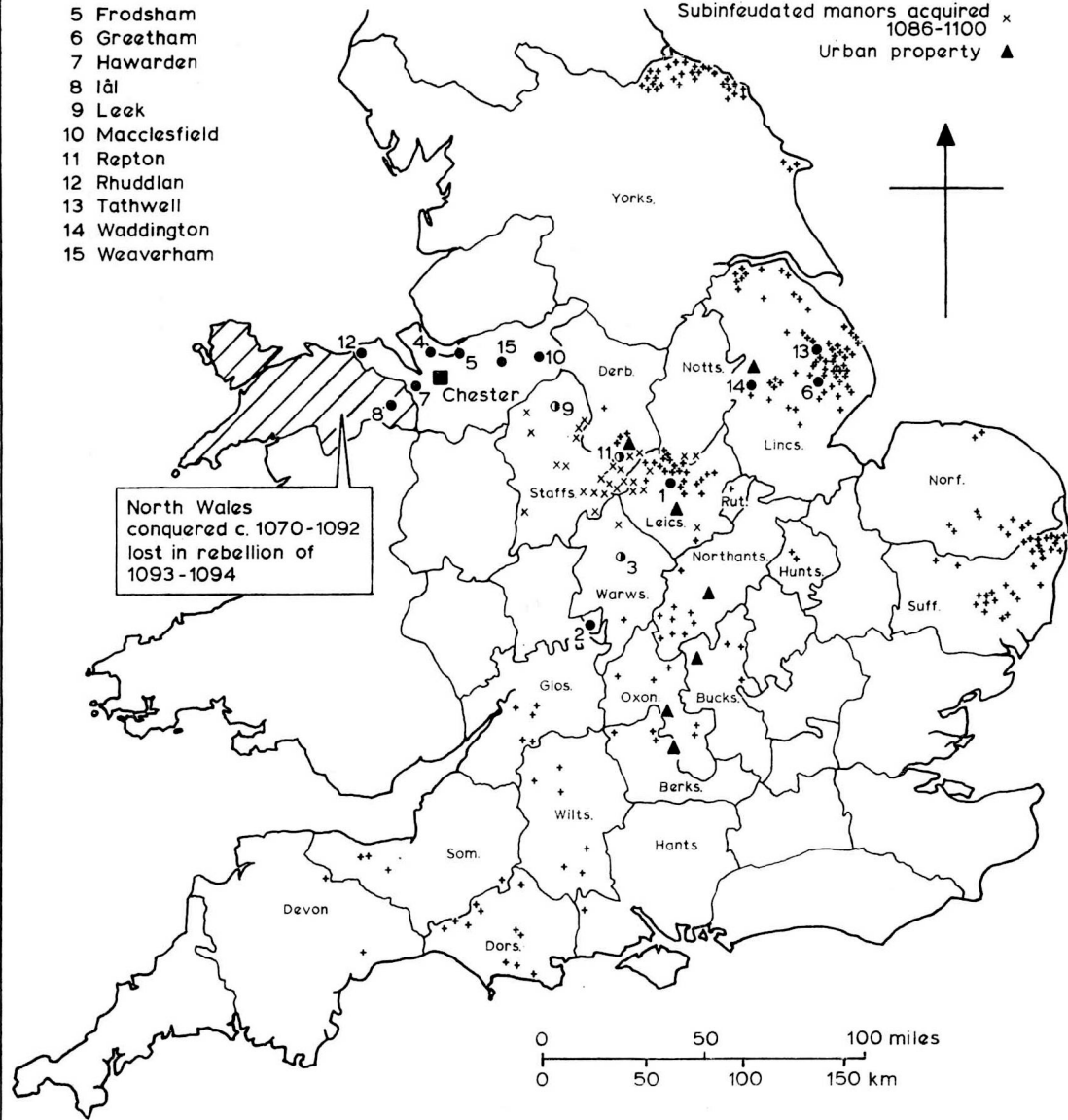
<sup>30</sup> GDB 56a2, last line, and 56b1, line 26 from end; 143a1, lines 17-18; 154a1, lines 35-6; 219a1, line 16; 230a1, lines 15-16; 280a2, line 14 from end; 336a1, lines 12-11 from end. A total of 26 properties.

<sup>31</sup> *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 6-7.

# The HONOR of CHESTER, 1066-1100

- 1 Barrow
- 2 Chipping Camden
- 3 Coventry
- 4 Eastham
- 5 Frodsham
- 6 Grætham
- 7 Hawarden
- 8 Iâl
- 9 Læc
- 10 Macclesfield
- 11 Repton
- 12 Rhuddlan
- 13 Tathwell
- 14 Waddington
- 15 Weaverham

- Capital of the honor ■
- Principal demesne manors in 1086 ●
- Principal demesne manors acquired 1086-1100 ●
- Subinfeudated manors in 1086 +
- Subinfeudated manors acquired 1086-1100 x
- Urban property ▲





Mercia, the minster church of St. Werburgh, and all the lesser thegns and freemen were bundled up for Hugh as a neat package defined by the county boundary. The concentration of ownership within the county was, strictly speaking, unique in Domesday England: in each of the closest parallels, Roger of Montgomery's Shropshire and Robert of Mortain's Cornwall, there was a handful of other French lords. The Cheshire part of the honor was thus formed purely on the basis of administrative geography.

Elsewhere it was underlain mainly by pre-Conquest tenure and partly by geographical factors. Identifying the pre-Conquest landowners named in Domesday Book is not an exact science, and much of what follows represents a balance of probabilities. To anticipate the identifications, it is clear that outside Cheshire Earl Hugh owned manors which had belonged to three main types of pre-Conquest landowner. Much the largest contribution was made by estates taken from the Anglo-Saxon magnates: Earls Harold, Tostig, and Siward, Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury, Harold's wife Eadgifu, and King Edward's great-nephew Edgar the Atheling. The manors which William Rufus added after Domesday were also largely aristocratic, having belonged T.R.E. to the family of the earls of Mercia. The second group were substantial king's thegns and officials, men who formed the backbone of English government and possessed numerous manors sometimes spread over several counties and tenanted in part by their own men. Among Earl Hugh's antecessors from this class were the king's chamberlain Hugh, the king's steward Eadnoth, and the housecarl Burgheard of Mendlesham. The third and least important group were the lesser thegns and freemen who were the rank-and-file of the pre-Conquest landowning classes. As the commended men or tenants of magnates and king's thegns, they normally held a manor or two but in East Anglia might have as little as a few acres.

The largest constituent of the honor outside Cheshire was a thick scattering of manors which had belonged to Earl Harold. Those explicitly attributed to him made up 31 per cent of the honor's tax assessment, 30 per cent of the T.R.E. value, and 27 per cent of the 1086 value. That was about as much as the whole of Cheshire. They were mainly substantial manors: Buscot (Berks.), Churchill (Oxon.), Chipping Campden (Glos.), Barrow on Soar (Leics.), Flamborough and Catton (Yorks. E.R.), and Greetham, West Halton, Barnetby le Wold, Tathwell, and Waddington (Lincs.) had each been worth at least £15 a year T.R.E.<sup>32</sup> The only small manors were Ashwell in Rutland, Fulletby in Lincolnshire,<sup>33</sup> and a few in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire which may have been attached to Barrow on Soar.<sup>34</sup> In addition, as we shall see, Harold may have held some manors not

<sup>32</sup> Berks. 18/2; Oxon. 15/4; Glos. 28/4; Leics. 43/1; Yorks. 4/E1-2; Lincs. 13/1, 10, 17, 28, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Lincs. 13/38-9. The Ashwell entry duplicates that at GDB 293b2 Exuuelle; see *V.C.H. Rut.*, I, pp. 129-31. For the sake of simplicity I have treated Ashwell as if it lay in Lincs.

<sup>34</sup> Leics. 43/5-6; Notts. 3/1-3. The Notts. manors are attributed to 'Harold' without specifying that he was the earl, but they lay only just over the county boundary from Barrow. Round drew the same conclusion: *V.C.H. Notts.*, I, pp. 216-17.

entered under his own name in Domesday. His possessions were especially important in determining the strength and distribution of the honor in Lincolnshire and had a marked influence on its shape in Leicestershire and Yorkshire.

Why Hugh received these manors of Harold's and not others is difficult to fathom. All Harold's lands fell into the rightful possession of the Conqueror in 1066, forming his biggest acquisition after King Edward's property. Whereas William normally retained Edward's manors in his own hands, he gave many of Harold's away.<sup>35</sup> Curiously, they were treated differently according to whether they lay in northern or southern England. In the counties south of and including Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire, the king dispersed Harold's manors widely among his barons. In Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Gloucestershire, Earl Hugh was therefore just one among many beneficiaries. The South, as defined in this way, was where the great majority of Harold's lands were located. His less bulky and more scattered possessions in the north Midlands and North (Shropshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Huntingdonshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire) were, in contrast, almost all shared between Earl Hugh and William of Warenne. The difference between North and South probably lay in the chronology of the Norman occupation: the South was under Norman control by the end of 1068, and during that early period the king may have decided to distribute the highly symbolic gifts of manors which had belonged to the defeated usurper as widely as possible, giving many of his barons a personal stake in seeing that no member of Harold's family came back to claim his patrimony. The North did not effectively fall to the Normans until the end of 1071, by which time many of the army of conquest had been rewarded as fully as was necessary and the king was embarking on a new policy of creating larger and more compact fiefs.

After Harold, the next most important contributor to the honor, according to Domesday Book, was Earl Siward, whose lands comprised the three great Yorkshire sokes of Whitby, South Loftus, and Acklam, with Markeaton (Derb.).<sup>36</sup> Siward's property accounted for 9 per cent of the honor's assessment and 18 per cent of its T.R.E. value, falling by 1086 to less than 1 per cent because of the devastation of Yorkshire. Their ownership on the eve of the Conquest is a matter for speculation, since Siward had died as long ago as 1055. His possessions as earl of Northumbria were probably attributed in Domesday to his successor but one, Earl Morcar, while his personal property presumably came T.R.E. to his son Waltheof and afterwards to the latter's widow Judith.<sup>37</sup> Earl Hugh's share of Siward's lands comprised the only manors which Domesday recorded under

<sup>35</sup> This topic is treated systematically in R. H. Davies, 'The Lands and Rights of Harold, Son of Godwine, and their Redistribution by William I: a Study in the Domesday Evidence' (unpubl. M.A. thesis, Univ. Coll. Cardiff, 1967), esp. caps. 11, 14, and Appendices 1 and 2.

<sup>36</sup> Derb. 4/1-2 (the three places in 4/2 being berewicks of 4/1); Yorks. 4/N1-3; GDB 280b1, line 22, for Hugh's jurisdiction over Markeaton.

<sup>37</sup> Explicitly so for property in Huntingdon: GDB 203a1, lines 15-16.



Siward's name, which may in itself be evidence that neither Waltheof nor Morcar acquired them. Another of Siward's manors is known for certain to have passed to Earl Harold.<sup>38</sup> If Harold also had the ones which later went to Hugh, his contribution to the honor of Chester can be inflated to 40 per cent of the assessment, 47 per cent of the T.R.E. value, and 28 per cent of the 1086 value. It would also mean that much the greater part of the honor of Chester in northern England outside Cheshire was derived from Harold.

Earl Hugh's other aristocratic predecessors besides Harold and Siward were less important in the formation of the honor. Edgar the Atheling's only recorded possessions before 1066, Upton and Coppingford (Hunts.), were among them.<sup>39</sup> Harold's brother, Earl Tostig of Northumbria, supplied a single manor, Bow Brickhill in Buckinghamshire.<sup>40</sup> It is not clear who held it after Tostig went into exile in 1065. His Northumbrian lands presumably passed to Morcar, those in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire were kept by King Edward,<sup>41</sup> and his lordship over a Huntingdonshire thegn was transferred to Waltheof.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps Bow Brickhill came to Harold and thence to Earl Hugh. Also in Buckinghamshire, Earl Hugh received a single manor, Mentmore, which had belonged to Harold's first wife Eadgifu.<sup>43</sup> Her substantial estates and good looks, which earned her the alternative names of 'the rich' and 'the beautiful', had brought her to Harold's attention when he was earl over East Anglia between 1046 and 1053.<sup>44</sup> After the Conquest her estates and men were given to Ralph, earl of East Anglia, upon whose rebellion in 1075 those in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex, and Hertfordshire were transferred to the Breton Count Alan. Buckinghamshire was treated differently, the large demesne manor of Mentmore going to Earl Hugh, and three small manors of her men to other newcomers.<sup>45</sup> Whether they were separated from the rest of the estate by the king in 1075, or earlier or later (for instance, through an exchange between Hugh and Earl Ralph or Count Alan) is impossible to say for certain. Earl Hugh further acquired a single fragment, Pyrton (Oxon.), from Archbishop Stigand's

<sup>38</sup> GDB 208a2, lines 8-11; cf. 205b1 Suineshefet.

<sup>39</sup> Hunts. 11/1-2. Domesday ascribed them simply to Edgar, without saying that he was the atheling, but it seems likely on the grounds that we know of no other pre-Conquest landowner of that name ('Edgarus comes' at LDB 3b, line 1 being an error for Earl Aelfgar: *V.C.H. Essex*, I, p. 337). A couple of manors is a plausible endowment for a young prince aged about fourteen in 1066. The atheling's later career (N. Hooper, 'Edgar the Atheling: Anglo-Saxon Prince, Rebel and Crusader', *Anglo-Saxon England*, XIV (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 197-214) is also capable of explaining why he lost them but acquired others before the date of Domesday, since they would have been forfeited when he fled William's court to join the Scots in 1068. Edgar was also lord of 11 free-men at Mundham (Norf.): LDB 259a-b Mundaham.

<sup>40</sup> Bucks. 13/4.

<sup>41</sup> GDB 133a1-2 Begesford; 217b1 Potone (2nd entry); cf. 217b2 Cerlentine.

<sup>42</sup> GDB 208a2, lines 1-3; cf. 206b1 Westone.

<sup>43</sup> Bucks. 13/1; E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England* (1st edn., 6 vols., Oxford, 1867-79), III, pp. 763-5.

<sup>44</sup> A. Williams, 'Land and Power in the Eleventh Century: the Estates of Harold Godwinson', *A.N.S.*, III (1980), pp. 171-87 at 176. Cambs. 1/12; 14/2, 5, 7-9, 11, 13-14, 19-20, 37, 44, 48, 55, 59-61, 74, 78; Suff. 46/4-5; Essex 1/30; 4/16; 5/1; 21/2-3, 11-12; Herts. 4/22; 5/16; 16/2, 7, 9-10; Bucks. 13/1.

<sup>45</sup> GDB 148b1 Hochestone; 152a2 Soleberie; 152a2, lines 31-4.

considerable personal property.<sup>46</sup> Apart from his holdings as archbishop of Canterbury, as bishop of Winchester, and as lessee under a number of monastic houses, Stigand was mainly an East Anglian landowner, though he had as many as seventeen manors elsewhere.<sup>47</sup> They were presumably all confiscated when he was deposed in 1070 or on his death in 1072. The non-East Anglian lands had been redistributed to eleven Normans by 1086, though no obvious pattern can be discerned.

#### IV

Among the king's thegns and officials whose lands were swept into the honor of Chester, those of Eadnoth the Staller were the most significant. Eadnoth was an Englishman who was active on behalf of the new regime in Somerset in 1067 and died in William's service in 1068, resisting an attack in the Bristol Channel by Harold's sons and their Irish allies.<sup>48</sup> The name Eadnoth was not especially common among the landholding classes of King Edward's day, and it is virtually certain that the same man stands behind all the references to Earl Hugh's predecessor in Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, and Berkshire,<sup>49</sup> whether they were specified as *dapifer* (the steward) or *stalre* (the staller) or not.<sup>50</sup> In Wiltshire and Dorset there were other manors belonging to an Eadnoth which did not pass to the earl. There is no way of telling if this was the same man.<sup>51</sup>

Identifying Eadnoth is complicated by the apparent existence of a man called Alnoth in virtually the same region and circumstances. An Alnoth the Staller owned a Somerset manor which was given to Osbern Giffard, the Norman who perhaps succeeded the staller at Ugford;<sup>52</sup> Earl Hugh had a predecessor named as Alnoth in Gloucestershire, Somerset, Devon, and Dorset,<sup>53</sup> a set of counties which overlaps with Eadnoth the Staller's radius; Eadnoth's and Alnoth's adjacent manors of Aller and Sampford Brett (Som.) were both given to Earl Hugh;<sup>54</sup> and the name of the T.R.E. owner of Hugh's manor of Stowford (Devon) was changed from Alnoth in the Exeter Domesday to Eadnoth in the Exchequer text.<sup>55</sup> It is not surprising that some historians have identified all these 'Alnoths' as

<sup>46</sup> Oxon. 15/2.

<sup>47</sup> *V.C.H. Norfolk*, II, pp. 13-14; Kent 5/138; Dors. 28/2; Herts. 23/3; 42A/1; 43/1; Oxon. 15/2; Glos. 2/1-3, 5, 9; 56/2; Cambs. 28/2; Beds. 39/1; 51/1-3.

<sup>48</sup> *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. J. Earle and C. Plummer (2 vols., Oxford, 1892-9), I, p. 203; *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, I, ed. H. W. C. Davis and R. J. Whitwell (Oxford, 1913), no. 7; J. H. Round, 'The Officers of Edward the Confessor', *E.H.R.*, XIX (1904), pp. 90-2.

<sup>49</sup> Berks. 18/1; Wilts. 22/1-5; Dors. 27/3-4, 6; Som. 18/1, 3-4.

<sup>50</sup> GDB 58b1 Sipene.

<sup>51</sup> Wilts. 37/16; 48/12; Dors. 37/6. See Appendix 2.

<sup>52</sup> GDB 98a1 Canole.

<sup>53</sup> Som. 18/2; Devon 14/1, 3-4; Dors. 27/1-2, 8-11; Glos. 28/5, 7 (duplicate entries).

<sup>54</sup> Som. 18/2-3.

<sup>55</sup> EDB 286a; GDB 104b1 Staford. I regard this as a case where the GDB scribe corrected a mistake, but the complex relationship of the two MSS. is such that it could equally well be the result of his carelessness.

Eadnoth the Staller.<sup>56</sup> This is superficially attractive as a way round a complicated problem, but raises difficulties of its own which make a different solution preferable. The names Alnoth and Eadnoth were not the same and not particularly liable to be confused by the Domesday officials. Both names occur in Somerset without any reason for different spellings if they were the same man. The formal possibility that Domesday *Ednod* and *Alnod* were variants of the name Ealdnoth can be dismissed,<sup>57</sup> since Eadnoth the Staller's name is known for certain in its proper Old English form from the charter and chronicle references in 1067-8. If, on the other hand, there was not one man but two, we have two south-western thegns, whose names both ended in the element -noth, who were both stallers, both predecessors of Earl Hugh, and holding adjacent manors in Somerset. Both men had connections with Earl Harold, Eadnoth as tenant of Drayton (Berks.),<sup>58</sup> and Alnoth as recipient of Ilsington (Dors.).<sup>59</sup> Alnoth survived the Conquest as Eadnoth did, adding a manor to his possessions after 1066.<sup>60</sup> We are left with the tantalizing but quite unprovable possibility that Eadnoth and Alnoth were brothers. Together they contributed 4 per cent of the assessment of the honor of Chester, 5 per cent of its 1066 value, and 7 per cent of its 1086 value. More significantly, it was their estates which brought about much of its spread into Wessex, accounting for most of its members in Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, and Devon. The same point would be valid if 'Alnoth' were the same man as Eadnoth.

The next biggest king's thegn whose lands fell to Earl Hugh was Burgheard, a housecarl whom Domesday called Burgheard of Shenley and Burgheard of Mendlesham, references to his principal manors in Buckinghamshire and Suffolk. Together with smaller properties in Norfolk and Essex, Burgheard owned eleven manors assessed at nearly thirty hides and worth almost £50, rather more than half of which was in Suffolk.<sup>61</sup> He also had numerous East Anglian freemen commended to him.<sup>62</sup> Much but not all of this came to Earl Hugh, but not until the mid 1070s at the earliest. The largest manor, Mendlesham, passed first to Earl Ralph of East Anglia,<sup>63</sup> probably until the failure of his revolt in 1075. He gave his vassal Walter of Dol at least some of Burgheard's lands,<sup>64</sup> and quite possibly all of them. After 1075, Hugh received the Norfolk and Buckinghamshire manors,

<sup>56</sup> Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, IV, pp. 757-60; Round in *V.C.H. Berks.*, I, p. 295 and elsewhere; Darlington in *V.C.H. Wilts.*, II, p. 98; Williams in *V.C.H. Dors.*, III, p. 32. See appendix 2.

<sup>57</sup> J. McN. Dodgson, 'Some Domesday Personal Names, Mainly Post-Conquest', *Nomina*, IX (1985), pp. 41-51 at 44; *Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris: IX, *Devon*, ed. C. and F. Thorn, II, Exon. note 14/3. Cf., however, a Lincs. example where one man was called both *Ednod* and *Alnod*: GDB 370b2 Burtone; 376a2, lines 2-4; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'On the Identification of Domesday Tenants in Lincolnshire', *Nomina*, IX (1985), pp. 31-40 at 32.

<sup>58</sup> Berks. 18/1.

<sup>59</sup> Dors. 27/2.

<sup>60</sup> Dors. 27/11.

<sup>61</sup> Suff. 1/76; 4/12, 24, 30-1, 35, 38; 14/146; Bucks. 13/2-3; Norf. 6/6; Essex 32/3.

<sup>62</sup> Suff. 1/77, 83-4, 86, 95; 4/26, 28-9, 33, 35, 38; 6/215; 7/42-3; 14/152; 31/21-4, 26-30, 32-3, 36; and his man in Buckingham: GDB 143a1, lines 17-18.

<sup>63</sup> LDB 285b Mendlesham.

<sup>64</sup> LDB 371a Stoches says that Wal. held it as part of Mendlesham; Suff. 31/34; Norf. 6/6.

together with a house in Buckingham, and in Suffolk all apart from Mendlesham, which the king retained. Many of Burgheard's men in East Anglia fell under Hugh's lordship, though some were assigned to other Normans.

Another well-placed predecessor of Earl Hugh was King Edward's principal chamberlain Hugh or Hugolin, evidently a Frenchman like many of the Confessor's innermost circle of servants and advisers. He appears to have been murdered shortly after the king's death while demonstrating his loyalty.<sup>65</sup> He was a household official with few landed possessions. One of his three manors passed after the Conquest to the royal priest Albert the Lotharingian,<sup>66</sup> and the others, Tackley (Oxon.) and Pillerton Priors (Warws.), to Earl Hugh.<sup>67</sup>

## V

The remaining king's thegns and lesser landowners whose lands contributed to the honor of Chester are best taken region-by-region, beginning with East Anglia, where Earl Hugh succeeded a handful of king's thegns and many small freemen, only some of whom were named individually in Domesday. Most of the freemen were tied to Earl Hugh's thegnly antecessors, probably numbering seventy-three commended to Burgheard,<sup>68</sup> forty-two to Athelstan,<sup>69</sup> twenty-nine to Aelfric,<sup>70</sup> and fifteen to Aelmar.<sup>71</sup> These figures include a few where the lord's name is not spelt out for certain.<sup>72</sup> The freemen had over fourteen carucates of land in Suffolk as against nearly thirty-seven carucates held directly by those four thegns or by two others, Skuli and Askill the priest, who did not have commended men.<sup>73</sup> In Norfolk, commended freemen were not mentioned, and Hugh simply succeeded Burgheard and six other thegns (besides a freeman of King Edward): the king's men Anund, Asgot, and Haghni, and Archbishop Stigand's men Aelfgar, Aelfric, and Osmund.<sup>74</sup> The name Aelfric is too common to decide whether the Norfolk and Suffolk thegns were the same man. In Suffolk, Earl Hugh also acquired lordship over some freemen who had been commended to other lords, principally the king,<sup>75</sup> Earl Gyrth,<sup>76</sup> and Gyrth's man Wulfsige.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>65</sup> F. Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066* (2nd edn., London, 1979), pp. 120 n. 3, 122-4; F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), pp. 165-6.

<sup>66</sup> GDB 63a1 Dideorde.

<sup>67</sup> Oxon. 15/3; Warws. 13/1.

<sup>68</sup> Suff. 4/26, 28-9, 33, 35, 38-9.

<sup>69</sup> Suff. 4/2-9, 18.

<sup>70</sup> Suff. 4/19.

<sup>71</sup> Suff. 4/42.

<sup>72</sup> I have assumed that men commended to the earl's (unnamed) antecessor were commended to the antecessor last mentioned in the text.

<sup>73</sup> Burgheard: Suff. 4/12, 24, 30-1, 35, 38; Athelstan: 4/1; Aelfric: 4/11, 13, 19; Aelmar: 4/42; Skuli: 4/10; Askill: 4/14.

<sup>74</sup> Norf. 6/1-7.

<sup>75</sup> Suff. 4/25.

<sup>76</sup> Suff. 4/20, 34-5, 37, 40-1.

<sup>77</sup> Suff. 4/21-3; also Ely abbey: 4/3; Ulf the priest: 4/13; Harold: 4/16; 'Countess' Eadgifu: 4/17; Thorthr: 4/36; not stated: 4/27, 32.

This makes a bewildering patchwork of antecessors in East Anglia, particularly as it seems that Earl Hugh never succeeded to all the manors and commended men of any individual Saxon landowner. Some caution is necessary because of the impossibility of disentangling men with common names. Nevertheless, those of Hugh's antecessors with uncommon names can be identified with enough certainty for it to be clear that their estates normally ended up in 1086 divided among a number of tenants-in-chief, or at least split between Hugh and the king.<sup>78</sup> The fragmentation of pre-Conquest holdings is unlike the pattern in many other parts of the country and best explained by what probably happened to them between 1066 and 1075.

The Conqueror's original lieutenant in East Anglia was Ralph the Staller, a prominent figure at Edward the Confessor's court whom William made earl. His son, another Ralph, succeeded him in the late 1060s. The younger Ralph was lord of Gael in Brittany, it is thought by inheritance from his mother, and he settled East Anglia with his Breton followers, men like Walter of Dol, Wihenoc, Eudes fitz Clamahoc, and Lisois of Moutiers. Earl Ralph allotted them property in East Anglia without regard to pre-Conquest arrangements, as other major tenants-in-chief did for their followers elsewhere in the country.<sup>79</sup> Ralph rebelled unsuccessfully against King William in 1075 and was dispossessed of his lands in England. His Bretons fell with him, and all four of those mentioned above had disappeared from the scene by 1086. Each had been succeeded by a single tenant-in-chief: Walter of Dol by Earl Hugh,<sup>80</sup> Wihenoc by Reynold fitz Ives,<sup>81</sup> Eudes by Ralph of Beaufour,<sup>82</sup> and Lisois by Eudes the Steward.<sup>83</sup> So it looks as if in the wake of the 1075 rebellion, the king redistributed the forfeited estates of Earl Ralph's men one-by-one without going back to the pre-Conquest pattern of ownership. That explains the geography of the honor of Chester in Norfolk and Suffolk.

In Wessex its shape was mainly determined by the location of manors belonging to Eadnoth and Alnoth, though Earl Harold's manor of Buscot was easily the largest single estate. A few, mostly small, manors belonging to lesser thegns were added, notably in Dorset. At Mayne, Earl Hugh was given a two-hide manor belonging to one Eadric in addition to Eadnoth's three-hide manor, perhaps showing that Eadric was a tenant of Eadnoth.<sup>84</sup> There could also be tenurial

<sup>78</sup> Anund: Norf. 6/1; 8/16, 46; 10/20, 33; 34/2; 35/10; Haghni: Norf. 1/81-4, 86-7, 182; 6/2; 9/2; 12/42; Munulf: Suff. 4/15, 42; 26/5; Osmund: Norf. 1/72; 6/7; 8/18, 31, 91-3; Skuli: Norf. 19/1; 21/21; 24/5-6; 29/2-3; 66/100, 106; Suff. 4/10.

<sup>79</sup> J. F. A. Mason, 'Aspects of Subinfeudation on Some Domesday Secular Fiefs' (unpubl. D.Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1952), esp. p. 383.

<sup>80</sup> Norf. 6/1, 5-6; Suff. 4/15; cf. Suff. 16/34; 31-4. Other refs. to Wal at Suff. 6/212, 215; 14/146.

<sup>81</sup> Norf. 1/61; 8/29; 21/1, 5, 7-8, 13-15, 32, 35; 66/36, 44, 49-50, 52. 8/29 shows that Wihenoc's immediate successor was Reynold's father Ives. The ambiguous wording of 9/233 and the Ely Inquest entry corresponding to 15/14 should clearly not be interpreted to mean that Wihenoc was still claiming the one and holding the other in 1086.

<sup>82</sup> Norf. 1/11, 218; 20/1, 7, 18 (IE entry only), 31-2; 22/11; 66/90. 1/7 may be another reference to him. 22/11 seems to indicate that he died in the revolt of 1075.

<sup>83</sup> Norf. 24/1-4, 6; 66/100; Suff. 28/2; Essex 25/2, 5; Beds. 21/13; Cambs. 25/9.

<sup>84</sup> Dors. 27/4-5.



connections between the three unnamed thegns at Trill and Eadnoth's manor of Clifton Maybank,<sup>85</sup> and between the two unnamed thegns at Warmwell and the adjoining manor of Mayne.<sup>86</sup> None of these five unnamed thegns held more than about one hide of land. In Wiltshire the only supplement to Eadnoth's lands was a single manor belonging to Godric at Fisherton Anger.<sup>87</sup> There were many Godrics in the county in 1066,<sup>88</sup> and it is not obvious why Earl Hugh should have succeeded this one a few miles down the Nadder valley from Eadnoth's manor of Burcombe. In Devon, Norman's half hide of land at Anstey came to Earl Hugh with the larger manor at the same place belonging to Alnoth.<sup>89</sup>

The largest addition to Eadnoth's and Alnoth's estates in Wessex was the Hampshire manor of Bickton, Earl Hugh's only possession in the county.<sup>90</sup> It belonged T.R.E. to a Ketil who may or may not have been the same as any of the other nine occurrences of the name in the county.<sup>91</sup> Probably at least some represented Earl Hugh's predecessor, since the name Ketil was Scandinavian and rarely found in southern England.<sup>92</sup> The fact that there were more Ketils in Hampshire than in any other non-Danish county suggests that they do not all represent different people. One of the Ketils held land at Shide on the Isle of Wight, where an Eadnoth had two manors. Both men held Shide in parage.<sup>93</sup> If that means that they were kinsmen, and if Ketil of Shide was the same as Ketil of Bickton, and if Eadnoth was Eadnoth the Staller, it would explain why Bickton went to Earl Hugh. This is more than usually speculative. None of the manors at Shide came to Earl Hugh, but that need not invalidate the argument, because the descent of lands on Wight after 1066 did not follow the normal southern pattern of grouping by antecessor.

The honor of Chester in the south Midland counties of Gloucester, Oxford, Buckingham, Warwick, Northampton, and Huntingdon was mainly composed of estates once belonging to Earls Harold and Tostig, Archbishop Stigand, Hugh the Chamberlain, Eadgifu, Edgar, and Burgheard. These counties also included three places for which Domesday named no T.R.E. owner, Bisley (Glos.) and South Weston and Ardley (Oxon.). All three were large and valuable manors likely to have belonged to a magnate. Bisley, the capital manor of a hundred of the same name,<sup>94</sup> perhaps belonged to King Edward (though Earl Hugh did not receive any other royal manors) or more likely to Earl Harold. The Oxfordshire manors

<sup>85</sup> Dors. 27/6; cf. *V.C.H. Dors.*, III, p. 41, for the earlier connection of the two estates.

<sup>86</sup> Dors. 27/7.

<sup>87</sup> Wilts. 22/6.

<sup>88</sup> Wilts. 1/21; 2/7; 22/6; 24/11; 26/16; 27/22; 28/5; 37/15; 39/1-2; 41/9; 66/2; 67/98; 68/18.

<sup>89</sup> Devon 14/1-2.

<sup>90</sup> Hants 22/1.

<sup>91</sup> Hants 6/6; 21/4; 34/1; NF9/2, 42; S/2; IOW1/10; IOW6/1, 3, 14.

<sup>92</sup> O. von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book* (Uppsala, 1937), pp. 304-5.

<sup>93</sup> Hants IOW1/10; IOW7/21; IOW8/6; for parage see *V.C.H. Hants*, I, pp. 441-2; *V.C.H. Dors.*, III, pp. 34-5.

<sup>94</sup> Glos. 28/1.

offer no clue at all about their pre-Conquest ownership.<sup>95</sup> In Gloucestershire, Earl Hugh received three small manors besides Bisley and the two which had belonged to Harold and Alnoth. The hide at Througham, belonging to Leofnoth, was adjacent to and perhaps a dependency of Bisley.<sup>96</sup> Leofwine's hide at Weston Birt was associated with Alnoth's three-hide manor there and was perhaps given with it.<sup>97</sup> Earl Hugh had also acquired, though illegally, one hide of Archbishop Thomas of York's manor of Standish, which in any case properly belonged to St. Peter's abbey in Gloucester.<sup>98</sup>

In Northamptonshire the honor was based entirely on the lands of the king's thegn Eskil and his men.<sup>99</sup> Eskil had no other manors in the county, but the name occurs elsewhere in the south-east Midlands as that of the important landowner Eskil of Ware in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.<sup>100</sup> It is impossible to know whether or not they were identical.

In the North, the honor was made up in the main of large manors which had belonged to Earls Harold and Siward. Their tenants in the sokelands of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire went unmentioned in Domesday, though in Leicestershire some of the thegns who held part of the soke of Barrow on Soar were noticed.<sup>101</sup> Nottinghamshire has the familiar pattern of small estates held by thegns added to a larger manor belonging to a more significant figure, in this case Leofwine's and Richard's holdings at Kingston on Soar to Earl Harold's manors of Sutton and Bonnington.<sup>102</sup>

In Lincolnshire the bulk of Hugh's lands came from Earl Harold, but they were supplemented from two sources. The more important was about half the estate of the king's thegn Lambakarl, the rest of which was held in 1086 by the archbishop of York, perhaps an indication that Lambakarl formerly held partly as his tenant.<sup>103</sup> The other source was a man called Godric — probably one of several Lincolnshire thegns of that name — who held eight manors which came to Earl Hugh.<sup>104</sup> At two of them, Godric held in conjunction with his brother Eadric and a third person, named as *Allef* at Maidenwell and *Elveva* at the adjoining Haugham.<sup>105</sup> *Elveva* represents the woman's name Aelfgifu. *Allef* has been thought to be the Norse masculine name Aleifr, which is not otherwise

<sup>95</sup> Oxon. 15/1, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Glos. 28/2.

<sup>97</sup> Glos. 28/5-7.

<sup>98</sup> GDB 164b1 Stanedis.

<sup>99</sup> Northants. 22/1-9.

<sup>100</sup> *V.C.H. Herts.*, I, pp. 283-4.

<sup>101</sup> Leics. 43/2 (5 unnamed thegns at Loughborough).

<sup>102</sup> Notts. 3/4.

<sup>103</sup> Lincs. 2/11-15; 13/22-3, 26-7, 31-2. Bullington, which went to Earl Hugh, virtually adjoined Lissington and its members, which went to the archbishop, while Hugh's other acquisitions were no more than 12 miles away. It is hardly likely that there would be two men with the same unusual name in the same part of one county when there were no others holding land anywhere else in the country: von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, p. 308.

<sup>104</sup> Lincs. 13/21, 24-5, 30, 33, 41-5.

<sup>105</sup> Lincs. 13/33, 44.

recorded in Domesday,<sup>106</sup> but it is much more likely to be a verbal confusion of Aelfgifu. This is a case where a purely onomastic explanation of what Domesday says is not satisfactory. Aelfgifu, named first at both Maidenwell and Haugham, may have been the widowed mother of Godric and Eadric. Maidenwell and Haugham (but none of Godric's other estates) were successfully claimed from Earl Hugh by the king's officials, but without any reference to Aelfgifu's interest.<sup>107</sup>

The way in which the honor of Chester was assembled is thus on the whole clear, though rather complicated. Its chronology lies beyond any definite solution. In some cases, a date can be put to the moment at which Earl Hugh's predecessor was dead or dispossessed, but that does not establish the date at which the earl received it, and in any case is not possible throughout the honor. Earl Harold's manors were nominally in the Conqueror's hands by the end of 1066, though he may not have been in a position to allow any Norman to take their revenues until 1068 in the case of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, 1069 for Lincolnshire, and 1070 for Yorkshire. Eadnoth the Staller's lands and probably Edgar's were available from 1068, Archbishop Stigand's from 1070 or 1072, and Hugh the Chamberlain's perhaps as early as 1066. The East Anglian manors, together with Burgheard's property elsewhere and probably Eadgifu's Buckinghamshire manor, went first to Earl Ralph and his men, and so could not have been given to Earl Hugh before 1075. These are the only fixed points. We do not know when Alnoth the Staller, Eskil, Lambakarl, and the others died or were expropriated. Chester fits into a wider pattern. The largest of the honors that had emerged by 1086 had all been assembled slowly by piecemeal additions as land became available for redistribution. Domesday Book itself did not mark the end of the process. The Conqueror's sons had a reserve of land in their own hands, out of which it was possible to augment Earl Hugh's holdings to a significant degree.

## VI

The arrangements which Earl Hugh made on the honor of Chester can be considered under three headings: grants to religious houses, management of his demesne farms, and subinfeudation. Hugh's benefactions to the Church were mainly directed to the two monasteries under his direct patronage. First in his affections was the abbey which he had founded at Saint-Sever in Normandy about 1070.<sup>108</sup> He probably gave all its English possessions shortly afterwards.<sup>109</sup> Saint-

<sup>106</sup> von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, p. 143.

<sup>107</sup> GDB 375a1. An obscure family history must lie behind the facts. One possibility is that the Conqueror gave Earl Hugh the lands which Godric held alone but not those which he shared with other family members, and that Hugh occupied the others illegally.

<sup>108</sup> For the date see Hollister, 'Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief', p. 244, citing unpublished work by Cassandra Potts; this is to be preferred to the range 1066-70 or slightly earlier suggested by Musset, 'Origines de Saint-Sever', p. 360.

<sup>109</sup> Possessions confirmed by papal bull 1158 and charter of Earl Hugh II c. 1170: *Papsturkunden in Frankreich, neue Folge, II, Normandie*, ed. J. Ramackers, *Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse*, 3rd ser., XXI (Göttingen, 1937), no. 99 (pp. 186-90); *C.E.C.*, no. 181.



Sever's two manors, Haugham (Lincs.) and Henstridge (Som.), were recorded as held of the earl in 1086,<sup>110</sup> but its churches and tithes were not mentioned.

Hugh's monastic project in England was the conversion of the minster church of St. Werburgh in Chester into a Benedictine abbey,<sup>111</sup> put into effect in 1092-3 but perhaps planned earlier. The fact that Saint-Sever was given nothing in Cheshire hints that Hugh was deliberately keeping potential gifts for other purposes. The spur to action was Bishop Peter of Lichfield's decision to relocate his see in Chester about 1075,<sup>112</sup> which brought an unwelcome ecclesiastical rival into the heart of the earldom. Hugh countered by out-endowing the new cathedral church. The abbey of St. Werburgh was not just Earl Hugh's personal monastery but a religious house for all his men in Cheshire. The abbey's early benefactors included not only almost all the main honorial barons but also some of the earl's sergeants and one or two of the barons' own men. Its foundation thus emphasizes the ties which bound Earl Hugh to his men and all of them to the land in which they had settled. The honorial community which Hugh created found in the abbey a focal point for its loyalty to him and an expression of its cohesion as a group.<sup>113</sup>

Earl Hugh and his men also gave land, churches, and tithes to the abbey of Saint-Evroul, which was attracting gifts from many quarters.<sup>114</sup> With his barons' consent, Hugh further sold the manor of Shippon (Berks.) back to the abbot of Abingdon. Shippon was within a mile of the abbey gates and had been held by Eadnoth the Staller, though it was rightfully part of Abingdon's home manor of Barton.<sup>115</sup>

Of all the counties where Earl Hugh owned land in 1086, he retained manors under his own direct control, as demesne, only in Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Gloucestershire. The pattern of subinfeudations makes the honor even more obviously northern in character than when all its members are taken into account. All Hugh's manors in Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, and Norfolk had been subinfeudated by 1086. The same was practically true in Devon and Suffolk. Although Domesday did not name an undertenant on any of the four Devon manors, the two in Budleigh hundred can be shown to have been held by a man named Richard.<sup>116</sup> On the other two the earl was himself responsible for a small

<sup>110</sup> Som. 18/4; Lincs. 13/44.

<sup>111</sup> *The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester*, ed. J. Tait, Chetham Soc. new ser., LXXIX, LXXXII (2 vols., Manchester, 1920-3), I, pp. xv-xxviii; *V.C.H. Ches.*, III, pp. 132-3.

<sup>112</sup> F. Barlow, *The English Church, 1066-1154* (London, 1979), p. 48.

<sup>113</sup> *Chartulary of Chester*, I, no. 3; *C.E.C.*, no. 3; below, for the honorial barons. See further, Lewis, *Welsh Borders*, cap. 6, where a contrast is drawn with Shrewsbury abbey.

<sup>114</sup> *C.E.C.*, nos. 1, 11. It is very curious indeed that the grants to Saint-Evroul, confirmed by William I in 1081 in a charter recorded by Orderic (*O.V.*, III, pp. 232-41), do not appear as the church's property in Domesday Book.

<sup>115</sup> *C.E.C.*, no. 2 (i.e. *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Ser. (2 vols., London, 1858), II, pp. 19-20, 285); and GDB 58b1 Sipene tell complementary but slightly different stories; *V.C.H. Berks.*, I, p. 295.

<sup>116</sup> Devon 14/1-4; *Domesday Book*, ed. Morris; *Devon*, note 14/3-4.

fraction of the geld, implying the existence of a demesne farm.<sup>117</sup> Since there were no demesne ploughteams, Hugh may have been managing the pasture and woodland through a bailiff or reeve. In Suffolk a number of small freehold estates seem also to have paid their rents directly to the earl's officers, as they were apparently not assigned to any of his undertenants.<sup>118</sup> The larger manors of Framsdon and Cretingham, which look at first sight as if they were in demesne,<sup>119</sup> were probably both held by Hugh fitz Norman, whose descendants were their lords.<sup>120</sup>

Earl Hugh's demesne manors outside Cheshire in 1086 therefore comprised Chipping Campden (Glos.), Barrow on Soar (Leics.), Markeaton (Derb.), South Loftus (Yorks.), and Greetham, Tathwell, and Waddington (Lincs.).<sup>121</sup> All seven had once been Harold's or Siward's. The Leicestershire, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire properties were extensive sokes with numerous peasant tenants scattered over a wide area, while Chipping Campden was hardly less significant as an estate. South Loftus was shortly granted out,<sup>122</sup> probably as soon as its recovery from the harrying of the North was complete, and Markeaton passed to Jocelin Tuschet, who held its berewicks in 1086, but the others were clearly intended to be the permanent demesne estates of the honor outside Cheshire. They were kept in demesne until the partition of the honor among Ranulf III's coheirs in 1232, though their berewicks and sokelands were gradually confirmed in the possession of Norman or English undertenants.<sup>123</sup>

Of Rufus's additions, Leek in Staffordshire, Repton in Derbyshire, and Coventry in Warwickshire were, at least initially, kept in demesne.<sup>124</sup> They were selected as being important places in themselves and because they contributed to a deliberately planned chain of demesne manors linking Earl Hugh's main stronghold at Chester with other great cities to the east and south. By 1100 the links had all been forged. A day's ride connected Chester with Macclesfield, Macclesfield with Leek, Leek with Repton, and so east by similar stages to Barrow on Soar, Waddington (only six miles from Lincoln), and Greetham, or south to Coventry, Chipping Campden, and Gloucester. Only Barrow and Waddington were as much as forty miles apart, the other pairs of places no more than thirty-two. That was a hard day's journey (but possible) for laden carts, easy for a messenger. The rural demesne manors were carefully situated to facilitate communications across the Midlands from Chester to Lincoln by way of the Trent valley, Lincoln to Gloucester down the Foss Way, and Gloucester to Chester.

In 1086 the six active demesne manors outside Cheshire contained 34½ of the earl's 56½ ploughteams in England. Five of the home farms were large in absolute

<sup>117</sup> Hugh had half a virgate in demesne out of one hide: EDB 286a.

<sup>118</sup> Suff. 4/7-8, 10-11, 16-17, 34.

<sup>119</sup> Suff. 4/1-3 may have been included under the statement of Hugh fitz Norman's tenure which covers 4/4-6; 4/18 has no statement of tenure.

<sup>120</sup> *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 236-7.

<sup>121</sup> Glos. 28/4; Leics. 43/1; Derb. 4/1; Yorks. 4/N2; Lincs. 13/1-9, 28-9, 34-7.

<sup>122</sup> *E.Y.C.*, II, p. 196, n. 2.

<sup>123</sup> *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 11, 28-9, 53-6, 82-4, 182-4, 198-200, and *passim*.

<sup>124</sup> Their history can be traced in *C.E.C.*

terms and when measured against the peasant sector by comparing the number of ploughteams at work.<sup>125</sup> Chipping Campden had 6 demesne teams as compared with 21 peasant teams, Barrow on Soar and berewicks 9:26½, Greetham 4:8, Tathwell 6:3, Waddington 6:13½, and Markeaton 2:5. In addition, there was a demesne team at one of the sokelands of Greetham,<sup>126</sup> but otherwise the Lincolnshire sokes were entirely tilled by peasant ploughs, numbering 164½. The figures can be compared with Cheshire. The county included thirty-eight demesne manors, besides the adjacent Welsh district of Iâl. Nineteen were waste or in the forest of Delamere,<sup>127</sup> and another five had no demesne teams.<sup>128</sup> None in Cheshire proper had more than two teams on the home farm,<sup>129</sup> though Rhuddlan and Iâl each had three.<sup>130</sup> On Earl Hugh's manors in the North-West there were thus 22½ demesne and 45½ peasant teams, as against 34 and 250 over the rest of the country, including the sokelands. Demesne ploughing was therefore proportionately more important in Cheshire, but in absolute terms less important than on the outlying estates. Cheshire could never compete in economic terms with the rich soils of Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire. In profitability, the demesne manors of the North-West were worth about £43 a year, those elsewhere about £142, of which Lincolnshire accounted for £100.

The subinfeudations made by Earl Hugh within Cheshire have been exhaustively discussed in print,<sup>131</sup> and there is little point in going over the same ground again, but Cheshire needs to be viewed in the context of the remainder of the honor in order to understand the earl's policy. Earl Hugh's undertenants formed two groups who would have been recognized in the late eleventh century as different qualities of men. On the one hand there was a small number of important barons, some of them among the leading Norman magnates in England, with fiefs outside Cheshire. On the other there were Earl Hugh's own men, ranging in importance from the leading four or five honorial barons to Englishmen who had survived the Conquest with a manor or two.

Subinfeudation to other tenants-in-chief was not especially significant, though it absorbed 12 per cent of the value of the honor in 1086. Two held large fiefs. Roger Bigod, sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk and an important landholder in East Anglia,<sup>132</sup> had one manor in Norfolk and four in Suffolk, worth almost £51.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Cf. S. P. J. Harvey, 'Domesday England', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, II: 1042-1350*, ed. H. E. Hallam (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 45-136 at 45, 85-121.

<sup>126</sup> Dalby: Lincs. 13/5.

<sup>127</sup> Ches. 1/2, 9-12, 16-20, 27-33, 35; FD1/2.

<sup>128</sup> Ches. 1/5, 7, 21, 24, 26.

<sup>129</sup> One at each of Elton, Eaton by Chester, Lea, Coddington, Macclesfield, and Upton by Chester (Ches. 1/4, 13-15, 25, 34); two at Weaverham, Frodsham, Eastham, Mickle Trafford, and Hawarden (Ches. 1/1, 8, 22-3; FD1/1).

<sup>130</sup> Ches. FT1/1; Salop. 4.2/1.

<sup>131</sup> *The Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, ed. J. Tait, Chetham Soc. new ser., LXXV (Manchester, 1916); *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 303-15.

<sup>132</sup> *V.C.H. Norf.*, II, p. 19; *V.C.H. Suff.*, I, pp. 396-7; *Complete Peerage*, IX, pp. 575-9; S. A. J. Atkin, 'The Bigod Family: An Investigation into Their Lands and Activities, 1066-1306' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Reading Univ., 1979), pp. 1-59, 108-16.

<sup>133</sup> Norf. 6/6; Suff. 4/9, 12, 15, 42 (4/12 is included on the grounds that it was a berewick of 4/42).

Bigod's origins in Normandy were lowly and his rise in Anglo-Norman England gradual, owing much at first to the patronage of his Norman lord, Bishop Odo of Bayeux. His connection with Earl Hugh is puzzling. One of the Bigod holdings of the bishop of Bayeux in Normandy was at Les Loges, which together with Bigod's unusual name implies some link with Earl Hugh's man Bigot of Loges.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps they were kinsmen who attached themselves to different Norman magnates in order to make their way to England.<sup>135</sup> One of Roger Bigod's own men, Robert of Courson, also took a manor under the earl of Chester in Suffolk.<sup>136</sup>

The other large fief was William of Percy's, comprising the soke of Whitby (Yorks. N.R.) and the substantial manor of Catton (Yorks. E.R.).<sup>137</sup> Percy was a major landowner in his own right in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire,<sup>138</sup> not beholden to Earl Hugh for his place in Anglo-Norman society. Why and when he sought these lands from the earl are questions which may have a bearing on the re-foundation of Whitby abbey. The inspiration behind the monastic settlement was one of Percy's knights,<sup>139</sup> and Percy as tenant-in-chief held Hackness, where the monks were temporarily settled in the late 1080s.<sup>140</sup> Percy interested himself closely in the success of the new abbey<sup>141</sup> and perhaps asked Hugh to be enfeoffed with Whitby in order that he might supervise its establishment.

The other great tenants-in-chief who became Earl Hugh's men did so for more tangible reasons. The influential Oxfordshire magnate, sheriff, and royal factotum Robert of Oilly, never slow to gather in an undertenancy, took on two of the earl's Oxfordshire manors;<sup>142</sup> Roger of Bully added a single Leicestershire manor to the five which he held in chief in an area neighbouring his dominating influence over Nottinghamshire;<sup>143</sup> Erneis of Burun rounded off his middling-sized honor with a couple of carucates at Riby in Lincolnshire;<sup>144</sup> the Edward who was enfeoffed

<sup>134</sup> Loyd, *Origins of Anglo-Norman Families*, pp. vii, 14-15.

<sup>135</sup> A brother of Roger Bigod is known to have come to England in company other than Bishop Odo's: LDB 180a, lines 11-12.

<sup>136</sup> Suff. 4/14; LDB 175b Kerkebei, Framingaham, Wisinlingaham; 181b Hadestuna; 187a Wicmera; 331a-b Bringas; 331b Brantuna, Ulkesala; 333b Hadestuna; 187a Redesham, Scadena; 449a Wiseta. Cf. A. Gransden, 'Baldwin, Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, 1065-1097', *A.N.S.*, IV (1981), pp. 65-76 at 67-8. Earl Hugh gave the church of Courson (Calvados, arr. Vire, cant. Saint-Sever-Calvados) to Saint-Sever (*C.E.C.*, no. 181).

<sup>137</sup> Yorks. 4/N1; 4/E2; for the identification of the Wm. of the latter with Percy see *E.Y.C.*, II, pp. 196, 250.

<sup>138</sup> GDB 46b1 Ambledune; 291b1; 297a1, last 13 lines; 304b1 Welleton, Lont/Persene; 321b1-323a2; 332a1 Cuningestone; 344a1 Stou; 353b2-354a2; 357b2 Toresuuc; 359a2 Reresbi; 375a1; 375a2-b1; 375b1; 376a1; 373a1; 373a2; 373b1; 374a1; 374a2; *E.Y.C.*, XI, pp. 11-19, 334-5, 351-2.

<sup>139</sup> D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1949), p. 166; *E.Y.C.*, XI, p. 93, and sources cited there.

<sup>140</sup> GDB 323a1 Hagenesse.

<sup>141</sup> Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 168.

<sup>142</sup> Oxon. 15/1, 5; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, pp. 382-3; *H.K.F.*, II, p. 244; Mason, 'Subinfeudation on Domesday Fiefs', pp. 475-6; J. A. Green, 'The Sheriffs of William the Conqueror', *A.N.S.*, V (1982), pp. 129-45 at 137, 140.

<sup>143</sup> Leics. 43/8; *V.C.H. Notts.*, I, pp. 223-7 and map after p. 246; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 75-6. Bully's own Leics. manors are at GDB 234b1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Lincs. 13/19, where Erneis was perversely described as a 'man of the earl'; *V.C.H. Yorks.*, II, pp. 179-81 for the identification.

with Hartham in Wiltshire was the sheriff of the county, Edward of Salisbury.<sup>145</sup> Finally, Jocelin the Breton, tenant-in-chief of eight manors in three counties, was Hugh's man at Slapton (Northants.),<sup>146</sup> which adjoined his own manor of Grove. As a Breton, he might himself have been a neighbour of Hugh's family lands in the Avranchin, though he is unlikely to have come to England with Earl Hugh as he was not enfeoffed in Cheshire and gave nothing to Chester abbey.

Among the barons of the first rank, Earl Hugh had enfeoffed substantially fewer tenants-in-chief than Odo of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain, or Earl Roger, though his position was not exceptional; Count Alan had about the same number of tenants-in-chief on his honor, again with Roger Bigod as the most important, whilst the other great magnates had given lands only to local tenants-in-chief like Jocelin.<sup>147</sup>

Most of Earl Hugh's enfeoffments were in favour of his own men, and they were carefully planned to create an honorial baronage of a dozen or more barons with interests divided between Cheshire and the rest of the honor, or rather with a stake in Cheshire and the border backed by rich manors in more prosperous parts of the country. This is especially true of the four or five leading barons. Robert fitz Hugh of Malpas had three large manors outside Cheshire, in Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Leicestershire, the last with some small outliers in Nottinghamshire.<sup>148</sup> His men Fulk of Baiunvilla and Humphrey of the Cotentin were given lands in Huntingdonshire by Earl Hugh.<sup>149</sup> Robert of Rhuddlan was enfeoffed with virtually all the Northamptonshire part of the honor, and probably with a manor in each of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire.<sup>150</sup> William Malbanc, lord of Nantwich, had thirteen manors in Dorset and Wiltshire and one in Buckinghamshire,<sup>151</sup> and William fitz Nigel of Halton one in Oxfordshire and two in Lincolnshire.<sup>152</sup> Malbanc was perhaps the unidentified William who held three Somerset manors, which would have complemented his West Country interests,<sup>153</sup> and on similar grounds fitz Nigel may have been the William at Drayton in Berkshire.<sup>154</sup> Very likely one or the other possessed Bungay in Suffolk.<sup>155</sup>

The arrangements reveal a clear pattern of thought in Earl Hugh's mind. Each

<sup>145</sup> Wilts. 22/3; proved by the fact that Edw. of Salisbury held another hide at Hartham: GDB 69b2 Hertham. Not so identified in *V.C.H. Wilts.*, II, p. 70.

<sup>146</sup> Northants. 22/9; *H.K.F.*, II, p. 216. His tenancies-in-chief are at GDB 152a2; 170a2; 217a1.

<sup>147</sup> Mason, 'Subinfeudation on Domesday Fiefs', pp. 464-72.

<sup>148</sup> Berks. 18/2; Oxon. 15/3; Leics. 43/6; Notts. 3/1-3; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 22-5, 45-6, 79-80, 242-4; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 308-9.

<sup>149</sup> Hunts. 11/1-2; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 26-8.

<sup>150</sup> Bucks. 13/1; Glos. 28/1-2; Northants. 22/1-8; *H.K.F.*, II, 13-15, 51-2, 211-15, 219-25; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 307-8. The Bucks. and Glos. manors clearly belonged to an important Rob. and if it had been fitz Hugh there ought to have been some trace of his successors in the descent of the manor.

<sup>151</sup> Wilts. 22/1, 5; Dors. 27/2-11; Bucks. 13/4; *H.K.F.*, II, 16-18, 284-8; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 309.

<sup>152</sup> Oxon. 15/2; Lincs. 13/10-20; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 193-5, 201-3, 250-4; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 309-10.

<sup>153</sup> Som. 18/1-3; *H.K.F.*, II, p. 287 asserts the identity without explanation.

<sup>154</sup> Berks. 18/1; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 21-2 does not suggest an identity.

<sup>155</sup> Suff. 4/19; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 233-5 suggested Wm. of Warenne, and Mason, 'Subinfeudation on Domesday Fiefs', p. 529, Wm. fitz Nigel, both without evidence.



of the four leading barons had a largely compact holding in Cheshire complemented by manors in one or more other counties worth up to six times as much. In all each had more than £70's worth of land, with three of them in the range £70-£80 and William fitz Nigel a little over £90.<sup>156</sup> Outside Cheshire their lands were kept apart from one another and not individually concentrated in a single area. A smaller fief was formed on similar principles for Hugh fitz Norman, baron of Mold, who had manors in Yorkshire and Suffolk worth about £40 a year,<sup>157</sup> and perhaps a further £8's worth at Shenley (Bucks.).<sup>158</sup>

The second rank of Earl Hugh's men comprised eleven individuals, Baudry of Lindsey,<sup>159</sup> Bigot of Loges,<sup>160</sup> Gilbert of Venables,<sup>161</sup> Hamon of Mascy,<sup>162</sup> Hugh fitz Osbern,<sup>163</sup> Jocelin Tuschet,<sup>164</sup> Osbern fitz Tezzon,<sup>165</sup> Ranulph of Mesnilwarin,<sup>166</sup> Richard and Walter of Vernon,<sup>167</sup> and Warin fitz Burnwin.<sup>168</sup> Hugh Mascy of Bickton (Hants) might be the same man as Hamon of Mascy, with an abbreviated or badly written forename wrongly extended at some stage during the Domesday survey, since the manor descended with Hamon's Wiltshire manors.<sup>169</sup> If not, he was a close relative. Earl Hugh ensured that the whole group had much in common. Their lands were all worth between £10 and £20 a year. Only the East Anglian tenant Warin fitz Burnwin had nothing in Cheshire. Of the others only Bigot, Gilbert, and Richard of Vernon had more valuable lands within Cheshire than outside. Only Jocelin Tuschet had property in more than one county beyond Cheshire. Only Walter of Vernon held lands from another lord, in the form of a small tenancy-in-chief.<sup>170</sup>

The third rank, men given less than £10's worth of land, had property either within Cheshire or elsewhere, never both. The dividing line presumably reflects the minimum size for a widely dispersed estate to remain viable. The ones outside

<sup>156</sup> The identifications suggested in the preceding paragraph would push the Wms. somewhat higher.

<sup>157</sup> Yorks. 4/N3; 4/E1; Suff. 4/1-6, 35-41; *H.K.F.*, II, 236-7; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 312.

<sup>158</sup> Bucks. 13/2-3; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 15-16. There is no positive evidence for the identification beyond the fact that it is consistent with the pattern of the earl's other leading men.

<sup>159</sup> Lincs. 13/22-3, 31-2, 39-40; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 117-27, showing that 4/76 was also his; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 315.

<sup>160</sup> Suff. 4/13; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 238-40; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 313.

<sup>161</sup> Dors. 27/1; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 286-7; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 310-11. The identification of 'Gilbert' of Dors. with Gilbert of Venables alias Gilbert the huntsman of Ches. is suggested by the fairly uncommon forename.

<sup>162</sup> Wilts. 22/2, 4, 6; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 288-91; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 312.

<sup>163</sup> Lincs. 13/41-3; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 127-9; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 313-14.

<sup>164</sup> Derb. 4/2; Lincs. 13/38; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 28-32, 254-5; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 314.

<sup>165</sup> Lincs. 13/24-5, 33, 45; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 175-8; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 313.

<sup>166</sup> Norf. 6/2-3; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 227-9; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 314.

<sup>167</sup> Ric.: Norf. 6/1; *H.K.F.*, II, p. 232; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 311; Wal.: Oxon. 15/4; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 248-50; *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, p. 311.

<sup>168</sup> Norf. 6/4-5, 7; Suff. 4/20-9; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 229-32.

<sup>169</sup> Hants 22/1; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 288-93.

<sup>170</sup> GDB 151a1.

Cheshire included Brisard, Colswein, and Roscelin in Lincolnshire;<sup>171</sup> Godric, Hugh, Leofwine, Ralph, probably two Rogers, and four unnamed knights in Leicestershire;<sup>172</sup> Richard in Devon;<sup>173</sup> and Waleran in Warwickshire.<sup>174</sup> The two unnamed men in Gloucestershire perhaps belong here too.<sup>175</sup> Within Cheshire, the more important among the third rank were Richard the Butler, Ilbert of Roullours, Nigel of Burcy, Hugh of Mara, Ralph the Huntsman, and Robert the Cook. At the very bottom of the scale as landholders, William, Ralph, and Azelin shared the sokeland of Barnetby le Wold (Lincs.),<sup>176</sup> there were two Nottinghamshire sokemen not worth naming,<sup>177</sup> and the earl's goldsmith Nicholas possessed a few acres in Suffolk.<sup>178</sup> They stand alongside the bottom rank in Cheshire, which comprised minor household officials like Herbert the Jerkin-maker, and Englishmen such as Dunning and Gamel.<sup>179</sup>

## VII

The honor of Chester was formed for two connected reasons: to secure the northern end of the Welsh border and to endow the young and capable heir to one of the more important Norman viscounties. Both objectives demanded that Hugh receive a great deal besides Cheshire itself, which, even with its capital city, was one of the poorest English counties. William I therefore supplemented Cheshire with a large share of Earl Harold's property in northern England and a small but still significant part of his lands in the South. He also gave fragments of other aristocratic estates, the scattered holdings of a fairly small number of king's thegns, and some individual manors which perhaps had tenurial connections with the magnates or king's thegns. After 1075 it was possible to add Walter of Dol's fief in East Anglia. William II found it necessary to give more land nearer Cheshire. It was hardly possible to create an honor of the size of Hugh's in any other way. Smaller fiefs could be made by putting a Norman in the place of one or more of the greater king's thegns, and when that happened the geography of the Norman fief simply followed that of the Anglo-Saxon estate. With Hugh, the king could

<sup>171</sup> Lincs 13/30, 26-7, 21; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 127-9, 95-6; Colswein was probably not the substantial tenant-in-chief Colswein of Lincoln as he was called 'the earl's man' and his manor of Bullington did not descend in the early 12th century with Colswein of Lincoln's honor: I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies: A Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086-1327* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1963), p. 109; *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, ed. C. W. Foster and T. Longley, Lincoln Rec. Soc., XIX (1924), pp. 237-60.

<sup>172</sup> Leics. 43/1-5, 7; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 55-62, 75-8.

<sup>173</sup> *Domesday Book*, ed. Morris: *Devon*, note 14/3-4.

<sup>174</sup> Warws. 13/1; *H.K.F.*, II, p. 279.

<sup>175</sup> Glos. 28/7; *H.K.F.*, II, pp. 54-5 shows that the later tenants were the descendants of Hugh fitz Norman.

<sup>176</sup> Lincs. 13/20.

<sup>177</sup> Notts. 3/4.

<sup>178</sup> Norf. 66/98.

<sup>179</sup> *V.C.H. Ches.*, I, pp. 314-15; table in C. P. Lewis, 'An Introduction to the Cheshire Domesday', *The Cheshire Domesday*, ed. A. Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1991), p. 18.

exercise more discretion about where lands were given, suggesting that its dispersal over so large an area was at least partly deliberate. The intention was clearly to strengthen Hugh, rather than the reverse.

Hugh's main interests in life, if we are to believe Orderic, were hunting and the slaughter of Welshmen. Both tended to make Cheshire the focus of his activities in England, but his sources of income and knightly manpower, given the geography of the honor, lay elsewhere. The earl's policies of enfeoffment harnessed the resources of the honor to his needs in Cheshire, and gave all his men the opportunity of sharing the glory of the new Chester abbey.

It would be misleading to make the later history of the honor and earldom simply a consequence of the first three decades under the lordship of Hugh of Avranches. It is equally true, however, that Hugh's orderly and even skilful arrangement of the resources which William I and William II placed at his disposal had lasting effects throughout the life of the Anglo-Norman earldom. As in so many other ways, the short period after 1066 in which the Normans settled the land had a decisive impact in reshaping the facts of English political life for centuries to come.

Dr. David Crouch made many helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, for which I am most grateful. The map was drawn by Peter Robinson.



## APPENDIX 1

Concordance of Domesday entries for Earl Hugh's manors outside Cheshire  
(counties arranged alphabetically)

Berkshire			
18/1	60a2	Draitune	Drayton
2		Boroardescote	Buscot
Buckinghamshire			
13/1	146b2	Mentemore	Mentmore
2		Senelai	Shenley Church End
3	147a1	Senelai	Shenley Church End
4		Brichella	Bow Brickhill
Derbyshire			
4/1	273b1	Marchetone	Markeaton
2		Chenivetun	Kniveton
		Macheuorde	Mackworth
		Adelardestreu	Allestree
Devon			
14/1	104b1	Anestinge	Anstey
2		Anestige	Anstey
3		Staford	Stowford (in Colaton Raleigh)
4		Landeshers	(unidentified)
Dorset			
27/1	80a1	Fifhide	Fivehead Magdalen
2		Elsangtone	Ilsington
3		Tincladene	Tinleton
4		Maine	Mayne
5		Maine	Mayne
6		Clistone	Clifton Maybank
	80a2	Trelle	Trill
7		Warmemoille	Warmwell
8		Tingeham	Tyneham
9		Pedret	South Perrott
10		Catesclive	Catsley
11		Bureuunistoch	Burstock
Gloucestershire			
28/1	166b1	Biselege	Bisley
2		Troham	Througham
4		Campedene	Chipping Campden
5-6		Westone	Weston Birt
Hampshire			
22/1	44b2	Bichetone	Bickton
Huntingdonshire			
11/1	205b1	Opetune	Upton
2		Copemaneforde	Coppingford

## Leicestershire

43/1	237a1	Barhou	Barrow on Soar
2		Lucteburne	Loughborough
3		Burtone	Burton on the Wolds
4		Burtone	Burton on the Wolds
5		Tedingesworde	Theddingworth
6		Cogeworde	Kegworth
		Avederne	Hathern
		Dexleia	Dishley
7		Bortone	Burton on the Wolds
8		(illegible)	Wimeswold

## Lincolnshire

13/1-9	349a1	Grandham	Greetham and soke
10-16	349a2	Haltone	West Halton and soke
17-20		Bernodebi	Barnetby le Wold and soke
21		Fugelestou	Fulstow
22-3	349b1	Hamingebi	Hemingby and soke
24-5		Staintune	Stainton and berewick
26-7		Bolintone	Bullington and berewicks
28-9		Tadewelle	Tathwell and soke
30		Rocheland	Ruckland
31-2		Farforde	Farforth and soke
33		Welle	Maidenwell
34-7	349b2	Wadintune	Waddington and berewicks and soke
38		Exewelle	Ashwell
39-40		Fullobi	Fulletby
41		Ormesbi	South Ormsby
42-3		Chetelesbi	Ketsby and soke
44		Hecham	Haugham
45		Neuberie	Newball

## Norfolk

6/1	152a	Scerepham	Shropham
		Snetretuna	Snetterton
2		Wabrunna	Weybourne
3		Kellinga	Kelling
4	152b	Hedenaham	Hedenham
5		Sithinga	Seething
		Wdetuna	Woodton
6		Fundehala	Fundenhall
	153a	Eilanda	Nayland
7		Kerkebey	Kirby Cane
		Ravincham	Raveningham

## Northamptonshire

22/1	224b2	Bifelde	Byfield
2		Botendone	Boddington
3		Trapeford	Trafford
4		Merestone	Marston St. Lawrence
5		Rodestone	Radstone

6		Mideltone	Middleton Cheney
7		Blaculueslea	Blakesley
8		Givertost	Yelvertoft
9		Slaptone	Slapton
Nottinghamshire			
3/1	282b1	Sudtone	Sutton (in Sutton Bonnington)
2		Normanton	Normanton on Soar
3		Bonnitone	Bonnington
4		Chinestan	Kingston on Soar
Oxfordshire			
15/1	157a2	Westone	South Weston
2		Peritone	Pyrton
3		Tachelie	Tackley
4		Cercelle	Churchill
5		Ardulueslie	Ardley
Shropshire			
4.2/1	254a2	Gal	Iâl
Somerset			
18/1	91b2	Tedintone	Tetton
2		Sanford	Sampford Brett
3		Alre	Aller (in Sampford Brett)
4		Hengesterich	Henstridge
Suffolk			
4/1	298b	Framesdena	Framsden
2-3		Manuuc	(unidentified)
4-5		Winestuna	Winston
6		Torp	Thorpe (in Ashfield)
		Asfelda	Ashfield
7	299a	Torp	Thorpe (in Ashfield)
8		Helmingheham	Helmingham
9		Perreham	Parham
10		Bernham	Barnham
11		Watesfelda	Wattisfield
12		Saxteda	Saxtead
13		Healesuurda	Halesworth
14	299b	Uggiceheala	Uggeshall
15		Mildeltuna	Middleton
16		Grundesburh	Grundisburgh
17		Burh	Burgh (near Woodbridge)
18		Gretingaham	Cretingham
19		Bunghea	Bungay
20	300a	Ilcheteleshala	Ilketshall
21		Metingaham	Mettingham
22		Ilcheteshala	Ilketshall
23	301a	Ilcheteshala	Ilketshall
		Metingaham	Mettingham
		Scipmedu	Shipmeadow

24		Ilcheteshala	Ilketshall
25		Bongeia	Bungay
26		Elcheteshala	Ilketshall
27		Scipmedu	Shipmeadow
28		Ilcheteshala	Ilketshall
29		Ringesfelda	Ringsfield
30		Soterlega	Sotterley
31	301b	Croscroft	(unidentified)
32		Ilcheteshala	Ilketshall
33		Hetheburgafella	(unidentified)
34		Werlingaham	Worlingham
35		Kessingalanda	Kessingland
36	302a	Rodenhala	(unidentified)
37		Gisleham	Gisleham
38		Karleton	Carlton Colville
39		Barneby	Barnby
40		Ryscemara	Rushmere (near Lowestoft)
41	302b	Pagefella	Pakefield
42		Framelingham	Framlingham
Warwickshire			
13/1	239a2	Pilardetune	Pillerton Priors
Wiltshire			
22/1	68b2	Retmore	Roughmore
2		Wiflesforde	Wilsford (near Amesbury)
3		Heortham	Hartham
4		Bredecumbe	Burcombe
5	69a1	Cadeham	Cadenham
6		Fiscartone	Fisherton Anger
Yorkshire			
4/N1	305a1	Witebi	Whitby and soke
2		Loctushum	South Loftus and soke
3		Aclum	Acklam and soke
E1		Flaneburg	Flamborough and soke
2		Cattune	Catton

## APPENDIX 2

## IDENTIFYING EADNOTH THE STALLER

The name Eadnoth occurs numerous times in Domesday Book where the manors in question did not pass to Earl Hugh, and it is extremely difficult to decide whether any of those occurrences should be identified as the staller. We should look most closely at two references in Wessex. An Eadnoth held Ugford in Wilts. (GDB 72b2 Ogeford), which was immediately adjacent to Burcombe, a manor of Eadnoth the Staller and Earl Hugh. Eadnoth of Ugford was a powerful man, able to recover the manor after Earl Godwine of Wessex (d. 1053) had taken it from the church of St. Mary of Wilton. Perhaps he was the church's tenant, recovering it on his own behalf, or a royal official seeing that justice was done. Either might fit the staller's description. On the other hand, if the lord of Ugford was Eadnoth the Staller, it is difficult to see why the manor was given to Osbern Giffard rather than Earl Hugh. At Whitchurch (Hants 3/5), an Eadnoth had the lease of a valuable manor under the bishop of Winchester. Both the location of the estate and the social status of the tenant invite the possibility that this too was Eadnoth the Staller.

There were certainly other Eadnoths elsewhere in the country, including a man with seven manors along the Suffolk-Essex border (Essex 20/28, 70; 33/15; 41/10; Suff. 7/85; 16/37; 36/10), individuals in Lincs. (68/1) and Sussex (9/110), a Hampshire thegn who died not long after King Edward and whose land was redeemed from the Normans by a kinsman (GDB 50a1 Sudberie; also in Hants 45/8; NF9/30; IOW7/21; IOW8/6), and perhaps as many as six small landholders in Devon (2/10; 3/36; 16/8; 23/7) and Cornwall (5/18; 5.6/4). It seems unlikely that any of these was the staller, as the properties involved are small and scattered.

The question whether Eadnoth and Alnoth were the same man or not is, if anything, an even greater problem. Dr. Ann Williams has tried hard to make me see the sense of identifying them. As I remain obstinately unconvinced, thanks and apologies are due to her in equal measure. She drew my attention to the person or persons called Harding son of Eadnoth and Harding son of Alnoth. Freeman (*Norman Conquest*, IV, pp. 757-60) thought it likely that Eadnoth the Staller's son Harding was identical with the Harding son of Alnoth who was a king's thegn holding six manors in south Somerset in 1086 (GDB 98b2-99a). Against that view, I would point out that Harding son of Alnoth's lands passed to the Meriet family (Round, *V.C.H. Som.*, I, p. 417) and not to Harding son of Eadnoth's descendants the FitzHardings of Berkeley. On the other hand, Harding son of Alnoth had as a tenant a man with the uncommon name Ceolric (EDB 491b), whilst the Harding son of Eadnoth who was active near Exeter at an unknown date had a reeve called Ceolric (D. A. E. Pelteret, *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents* (Woodbridge, 1990), nos. 107, 123; von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, p. 214, for the rarity of Ceolric). Those two Hardings were therefore probably the same man, but it remains to be proven that he was Eadnoth the staller's son.

There were also two Hardings involved with Shaftesbury abbey in the late eleventh century. Harding son of Alnoth gave the abbey 1 hide when his daughter became a nun there (B.L. Harl. MS. 61, f. 54, discussed by K. Cooke, 'Donors and Daughters: Shaftesbury Abbey's Benefactors, Endowments and Nuns, c. 1086-1130', *A.N.S.*, XII (1989), pp. 29-45) and may have been the Somerset king's thegn of the same name discussed in the last paragraph. Shaftesbury's sometime tenant at Beechingstoke, Wilts., Harding son of Alwold (*Ardingus filius Aluoldi*) was active

T.R.E. (B.L. Harl. MS. 61, f. 54; GDB 67b1 Bichenestoch) and hardly likely to have been Eadnoth the Staller's son, who was still alive and apparently in middle life when William of Malmesbury was writing the *Gesta Regum* in 1125 (William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Ser. (2 vols., London, 1887-9), I, p. 313). Finally, it should be pointed out that Harding was not an especially uncommon name. On my reckoning, there may have been seven more landholders called Harding in 1086 besides those discussed here. In short, the Hardings, far from solving the identification of Eadnoth the Staller, add a further layer of doubts and difficulties.