

# The Making of Henry of Oxford: Englishmen in a Norman World\*

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## SUMMARY

*This paper examines the family and territorial background of Henry of Oxford, 'Oxford's greatest burgess', and attempts thereby to account for his power in 1150. The picture thus obtained of Henry's career may be seen as illustrating how the Anglo-Saxon nobility recovered some of their former influence in the Norman period.*

The Englishman Henry of Oxford has been perceived by local historians, with justifiable pride, as one of Oxford's greatest burgesses. In fact, the career of Henry of Oxford, who achieved the position of sheriff of Berkshire as the appointment of the future Henry II, has more than local significance since it illustrates the way in which the native English recovered some influence in national affairs. My aim here is to examine the elements that went into the making of Henry's successful attempt to create landed wealth and political influence for himself and his sons. In order to do this it has been necessary to build up a complex picture of familial and tenurial relationships, drawn from disparate sources. These details both give an account of the background to Henry of Oxford's career, and allow hypotheses to be formed to account for his undoubted success. Since the questions raised by Henry's career cannot be straightforwardly answered, it is necessary to approach the problem from a number of angles, the details of which have been grouped together in separate sections; the concluding section draws the various threads together and attempts to account for the whole.

## HENRY OF OXFORD'S CONNEXION WITH WALLINGFORD

In 1150 or 1151, Matilda and Henry duke of Normandy issued a charter addressed to William Boterel, Constable of Wallingford, and Ansfrid fitz Ruald *dapifer*, and to all their barons etc. of Wallingford, commanding that the canons of St. Nicholas in the castle should agree to accept one of their number, Benedict, as the dean of a canonry which Benedict is to build on land being provided by the grantors for the souls of Brien fitzCount and his wife, to which canonry the canons of St. Nicholas are to remove. It is then further precepted that William Boterel, Ansfrid fitz Ruald, and Henry of Oxford in

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*cuus manu modo uilla est* should invest master Benedict with the land described and order the bishop of Salisbury to install him in the benefice.<sup>1</sup>

This charter thus provides us with the names of the three leading men of the honour of Wallingford in 1150 and probably until 1154, this being the time, to judge by the prompt rewards to all three recorded in the Pipe Rolls for 2–5 Henry II, when Wallingford was crucial to the eventual success of the Angevin cause in which it played a key role. Henry of Oxford, whom the charter names as holding the town of Wallingford in 1150, was a burgher of Wallingford according to the *Testa de Neville*,<sup>2</sup> and probably acquired his power in the town partly by recommending himself to Brien fitzCount, from whom his only known holdings in the honour of Wallingford before 1154 derived, and partly by his own audacity. Of these three men Henry of Oxford is the best evidenced by extant charters, yet he is the most difficult to account for, since his origin cannot be described with certainty.

It appears from the *Testa de Neville's* account of the borough of Wallingford in 1212 that Henry of Oxford bought several parcels of land there from one Randulf or Radulf Grossus or le Grand, including one that Randulf held from Battle Abbey. In 1086 Battle Abbey held the Berkshire manor of Brightwalton, which included five sites in Wallingford,<sup>3</sup> and it may be one of these that Randulf Grossus afterwards held. By the time this holding descended to Henry's grand-daughter, it no longer paid service to the abbey. Henry obtained a further parcel of land from Randulf by mortgage, in addition to a tenement mortgaged to him by one Edmund fitz Osmund. While Henry's arrangements with Ralph Grossus may have been perfectly gentlemanly, the *Testa de Neville* testified that he acquired other parcels of land by more questionable means.<sup>4</sup> These included a messuage he had in ward from Ivo, *portarius* of Brien fitzCount, who wrongfully took it (*occupauit*) from Osmund fitz Swetman, burgher, which Henry in turn retained at the insistence of Brien fitzCount. Rather more interestingly, Henry seized another parcel of land which apparently belonged to the king himself, *super plateam regis*, an action that will have endeared him to Brien fitzCount and to the Empress. This was the land of which a portion was held in 1212 by Adam of Montsorel, or more probably of Montsoreau (in Anjou), from Walter Foliot, the second husband of Henry's grand-daughter Matilda, daughter of William of Ibsstone. A second parcel of land occupied in defiance of the king (*super regem*), on which Henry built a grange, was held in 1212 by Matilda's son by her first marriage to Hugh fitz Richer of Pangbourne,<sup>5</sup> John fitz Hugh,

<sup>1</sup> RRAN, iii, No. 88. The following abbreviations are used throughout this paper:

RRAN – *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, iii, ed. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (1961);  
 Chron. Mon. Abing. – *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls ser. 2 a–b, 1858), 2 vols.;  
 Osney Cart. – *Osney Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford Hist. Soc. lxxxix–xc, xcvi–xcviii, ci, 1926–36), 6 vols.;  
 Eynsham Cart. – *Eynsham Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford Hist. Soc. xlix, li, 1906–8), 2 vols.;  
 Cart. St. Frids. – *Cartulary of St. Frideswide*, ed. S. Wigram (Oxford Hist. Soc. xxviii, xxxi, 1894–6), 2 vols.;  
 Sandford Cartulary – *Sandford Cartulary*, ed. A.M. Leys (Oxford Record Soc. xxvii and xxix, 1939–41);  
 EYC – *Early Yorkshire Charters* I–III, ed. W. Farrer (1914–16);  
 Mon. Ang. – *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. W. Dugdale; new edition, 6 vols. in 8 (1817–30);  
 Shrewsbury Cartulary – *Shrewsbury Cartulary*, ed. U. Rees, (1975);  
 Red Book – *Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. H. Hall (Rolls Ser. 99 a–c, 1896), 3 vols.  
 Book of Fees – *Book of Fees Commonly Called Testa de Neville*, ed. H.C. Maxwell Lyte (1920).

<sup>2</sup> *Book of Fees*, 114.

<sup>3</sup> *DB Berkshire*, 15.1 (59d) (here and throughout reference is to Domesday Book in the Phillimore Series, general editor John Morris (1976–86), with cross-reference to the 1783 folio edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Fees*, 114–15.

<sup>5</sup> Held in 1086 by 'William' from Miles Crispin (*DB Berkshire* 33.1 (61c)), i.e. William of Suleham, ancestor of the FitzAmaurys of Chesterton.

*familiaris* of King John. The question that emerges from all this is, was Henry of Oxford a hard-headed bully who tried to make his fortune out of war, or was he an acquisitive younger member of a respectable family? But it is not an easy question to answer.

#### HENRY II'S CHARTER (a): HENRY OF OXFORD'S ENGLISH BACKGROUND

Early in his reign Henry II issued a charter confirming the lands Henry of Oxford then held.<sup>6</sup> These included the lands of his grandfather Godwin, his father Eilwi, his uncles Robert and William *Pictauensis* and his relative Roger fitz Wigar; land in Walton given to him by Geoffrey de Clinton with land granted hereditarily to him *pro uadio suo* concerning Iffley and Cowley; the manor of Waddesdon (Bucks.), given to Henry of Oxford by the Empress and himself; and the gifts of Brien fitz Count of a mill in Shillingford and a meadow in Clapcote, this last being confirmed on condition that the king does not require its return at any stage. The reason for this stipulation was that the meadows pertaining to the Liberty of Clapcote were used to reward the servants of Wallingford Castle, the servants and the meadows (some of which lay on the E. side, beside the river) being part of the castle's defences. In 1212 this small parcel, held for a quarter of a fee, was still in Henry's family, being then held by Walter Foliot, his grand-daughter's husband.<sup>7</sup>

In this charter Henry II was ostensibly obliging enough to provide the historian with a fair account of Henry of Oxford's family, but this is far from being the case. Godwin and Eilwi are extremely common names. A further problem lies in the fact that the name Eilwi or Ailwi, given in Domesday Book as Aluui, is easily confused with the name Alwin, representing Ælfwine or Æthelwine. The grandfather and father of Henry of Oxford could be any of innumerable Godwins, Ailwis or Alwins found in Oxfordshire and Berkshire in 1086. The name of Alwin occurs several times in a list of burghers holding houses in Oxford, where we might expect to find Henry's father, and it is perhaps significant that the names of Godwin and Alwin end a list, beginning with the king, of men holding sites in the borough of Wallingford valued at 2d. These holdings were small, as might be expected for men whose normal base was Oxford, but they provided a basis for Henry of Oxford's Wallingford operations in the war of Stephen's reign. Roger fitz Wigar, Henry's *cognatus*, may have been the son of that Wigar who held two hides in Benham from the king in 1086.<sup>8</sup> Henry II's confirmation charter for Henry of Oxford implies that he was the heir of his uncle William *Pictauensis*, but this may not be so; in the exchequer roll of 3 John William *Pictauensis*, or le Peytevin, father and son, appear holding land in Aylesbury (Bucks.), as did their descendants.<sup>9</sup> Henry of Oxford acquired land in Buckinghamshire before and after 1155, including the king's gift of Waddesdon in the honour of Wallingford, held in demesne by Miles Crispin in 1086. Nor was this casting the net of an 'of Oxford' family too far, since the Buckinghamshire border is only a few miles distant from Oxford.

<sup>6</sup> *Cartae Antiquae Rolls 1-10*, ed. L. Lansdon (Pipe Roll Soc. n.s. xvii, 1939) No. 141.

<sup>7</sup> *Book of Fees*, 119.

<sup>8</sup> *DB Berkshire* 65.11 (63d); *Chron. Mon. Abing.* ii, 145 mentions Hugh fitz Wigar of Benham.

<sup>9</sup> *Rot. Canc. 3 John*, 343; cf. *Rot. Litt. Claus. 14 John*, 121 and *Cal. Inq. P.M.* ii, No. 614; *V.C.H. Bucks.* iii, 12 identifies their holdings as Castle Fee, Aylesbury.

## HENRY II'S CHARTER (b): THE POITEVIN CONNEXION

It is extremely likely that Henry's uncle William *Pictaviensis*, and probably Robert also, were brothers of his mother rather than of his father, William's otherwise puzzling soubriquet thus leading us to suppose that Henry's father Eilwi married the daughter and sister of men from Poitou. The *Testa de Neville* describes Matilda of Ibstone as *heres* of William fitz Henry of Oxford, providing one of the many examples in such documents where the translation 'an heir' is more accurate than 'the heir': it refers merely to the descent of a marriage-portion in a woman's new family, for Matilda had a brother, William's actual heir Robert, who also bore a French soubriquet, and this 'Robert of Torigny' may again take us back to Henry's uncles.<sup>10</sup>

'Torigny', 'Torigné' and 'Thorigny' are not uncommon French place-names, being found in Normandy, Brittany, Anjou and Poitou. Thorigny in Poitou lies a few miles S.E. of La Roche-sur-Yon, in the *vicomté* of Thouars. In 1066 one Peter augmented an earlier gift of his brother Beraud to the abbey of St-Maixent of moities in Marçay and Vouillé, witnessed by one Radulf Gross.<sup>11</sup> Ralph Grossus witnessed a charter, dated 1075, by which one Renaud Bernier gave his allod of Tremont to St-Maixent;<sup>12</sup> in 1070 a charter for the same abbey by Aleard of Melle and his sons was witnessed by Thibaud and Ralph Grossus.<sup>13</sup> None of this enables us to identify the family from which Henry of Oxford's uncles derived, but we may make the following observations. Henry's uncle William *Pictaviensis*, or 'the Poitevin', was probably named from his home in Poitou rather than having otherwise acquired his soubriquet; this will also have applied to Robert if, as is probable, Robert was his brother, since it explains the otherwise strange soubriquet of Henry's grandson Robert of Torigny, which will thus refer to Thorigny in the vast Poitevin *vicomté* of Thouars; in the vicinity of Thorigny we have found a Ralph Grossus who may have been connected with Ralph Grossus of Wallingford, with whom Henry of Oxford had so many property connexions. We find William the Poitevin, or Peytevin, as one of the witnesses to a grant made in 1149 by John of St. John to Oseney Abbey of his portion of the castle chapel of St. George, to which other witnesses included three members of the Talemasche family, apparently afterwards related to Henry's great-grandson John fitz Hugh.<sup>14</sup> An Eynsham charter given by John of St. John in 1150 was witnessed by Henry of Oxford himself.<sup>15</sup> These attestations imply a tenurial connexion between Henry of Oxford's family and the St. Johns, which may itself take us back to the d'Oillys, since John of St. John, who died about 1153, held, like his brother Thomas before him, the lands once held by Roger d'Ivry, the sworn brother and frequent co-tenant of Robert I d'Oilly.

## HENRY II'S CHARTER (c): THE DESCENT OF HENRY OF OXFORD'S PROPERTY

Henry's English ancestors having failed us for the moment, we may turn instead to the manors named by Henry II as being held by or connected with Henry of Oxford.

<sup>10</sup> *Book of Fees*, 115, 117.

<sup>11</sup> *Chartes et Documents pour Servir à l'Histoire de l'Abbaye de St-Maixent*, ed. A. Richard (Poitiers, 1886), No. 118.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* No. 122.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* No. 126; see G. Beech, 'The Participation of Aquitanians in the Conquest of England 1066-1100', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ix (1987), 1-24, which looks closely at the involvement of Aimery, *vicomte* of Thouars, in the Conquest.

<sup>14</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 28-9.

<sup>15</sup> *Eynsham Cart.* i, 130-31.

Waddesdon is soon disposed of as the king's gift which, like many such gifts, was re-granted elsewhere after Henry of Oxford's death, while the Clapcote and Shillingford properties were acquired in the service of Brien fitzCount. An interesting and detailed account of Henry's property in Oxford was published in 1978 by John Blair (*Oxoniensia*, xliii, 48–99) so we may be brief on this point. Henry held land bordering Cornmarket, Oxford, as well as a large estate in east Oxford. On Henry's death his son William succeeded to his manor of Ibstone (Bucks.), acquired from a reluctant Robert II d'Oilly,<sup>16</sup> and to his Wallingford properties. His second son John, later bishop of Norwich, inherited the church of St. Peter-in-the-East with the manor of Holywell. These were also held or acquired from the d'Oillys, since in 1086 Holywell was held by the church of St. Peter from Robert d'Oilly, who held the benefice of St. Peter's, with forty-two houses within and without the walls of Oxford, from the king.<sup>17</sup> This latter holding may be the clue to a writ of the Empress, dated 1142 at Oxford, addressed to Robert d'Oilly of Oxford and Henry of St. Peter. Although the St. John family had tenants in the Cotentin named St. Peter from St. Peter Montviron, they are not easily discerned in Oxford at this date, and the addressee of the Empress's charter is perhaps Henry of Oxford himself.

Much of Henry's property was acquired by his son-in-law Geoffrey fitz Durand, a prosperous burgess evidenced in Oxford from 1165 until his retirement as a canon of Oseney in 1185–7, when his wife Matilda became a nun of Godstow. Geoffrey had two sons, Peter and William, both associated with him in charters; William witnesses two Oseney charters in company with his father, appearing on each occasion as *Gaufrido filio Durandi*, *Willelmo filio suo*.<sup>18</sup> I believe that this misled Blair into supposing one William de Brugges to be the son of Geoffrey when he was in fact his nephew. Blair notes that William de Brugges's name appears in lists before that of Peter fitz Geoffrey, suggesting that William de Brugges was the more important of the two; yet it was Peter fitz Geoffrey who succeeded to his father's property in c. 1185–7, as well as that of his uncle John bishop of Norwich, who named him as his heir about the same time. A charter of William fitz Henry, confirming grants of his brother the bishop to Oseney, refers in the witness-list to William de Brugges and Peter fitz Geoffrey as *nepotibus meis*;<sup>19</sup> but another charter by which he confirmed and made gifts to the Temple at Sandford names only Peter fitz Geoffrey, whose name occurs after and separately from that of William de Brugges, as his nephew.<sup>20</sup> A charter of John fitz Hugh, William fitz Henry's grandson, granting land in Catte Street and all his land in Cowley to Sandford Temple, further granted land between the Thames and the Cherwell (at the bottom of Magdalen Bridge) in association with *avunculus meus Willelmus de Brugges*.<sup>21</sup> John fitz Hugh's charter, therefore, makes it clear that William fitz Geoffrey was distinct from and cousin to

<sup>16</sup> *Oxford Charters*, ed. H. Salter (1929), No. 42. One other gift by himself to Henry of Oxford confirmed by Henry II was that of 'Kingsmill'; an entry for the year 1200 in *Curia Regis Roll*, i, 255 shows that this mill was disputed between William fitz Henry and the widow of Geoffrey *Flecharius*, revealing that this too passed to William of Ibstone; *Pipe Roll I John*, 219, further reveals that the mill was Kingsmill in Headington; *RRAN*, iii, No. 588 shows that 'the mill at Headington known as Kingsmill' had been given to Missenden Abbey in pure alms by King Stephen.

<sup>17</sup> *DB Oxfordshire*, 28.8;28 (158b); *Oxford Charters* op. cit. note 16, No. 73 shows that Henry d'Oilly confirmed the church of St. Peter to Bishop John for his life only, with reversion to Oseney Abbey.

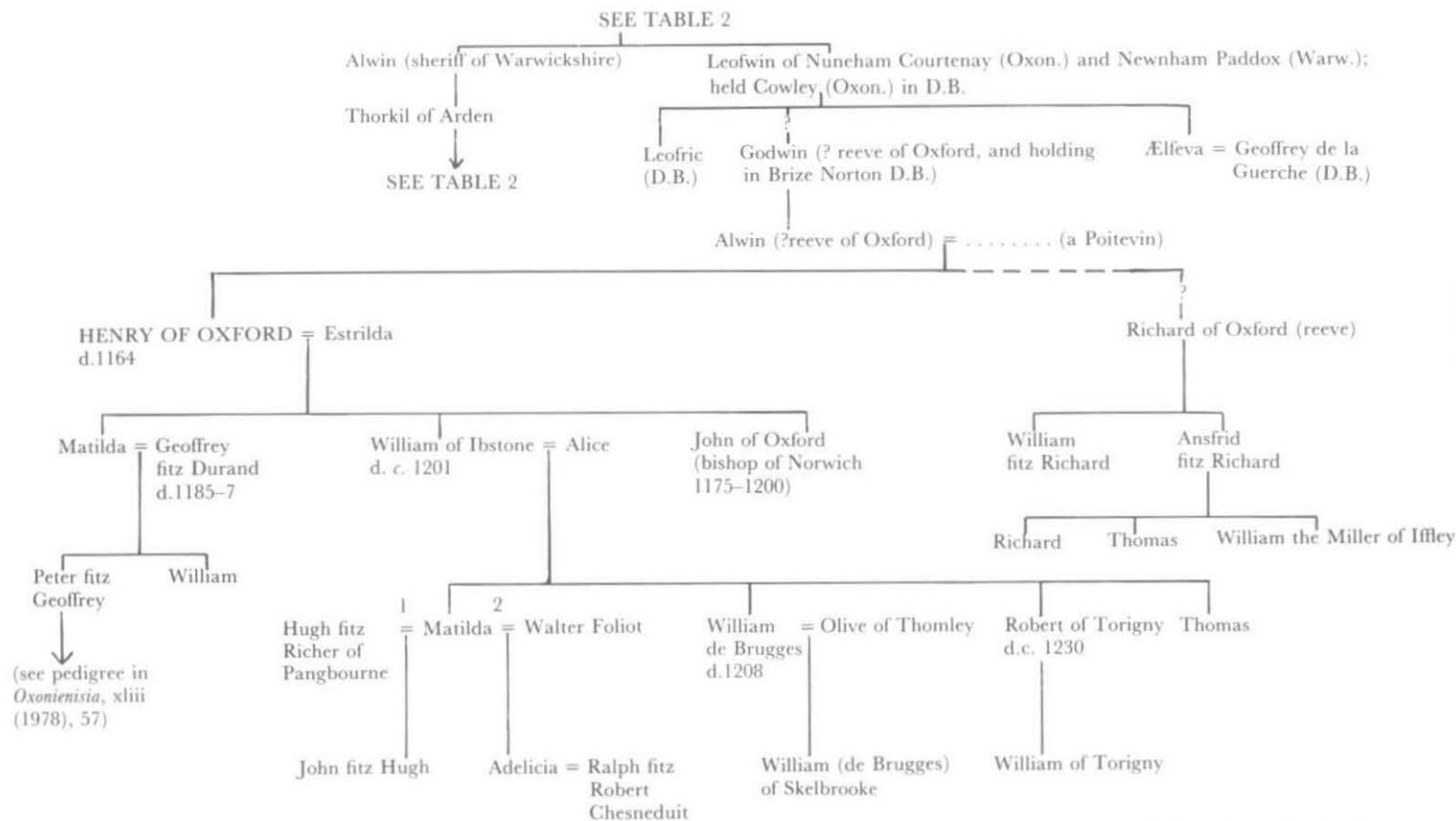
<sup>18</sup> *Oseney Cart.* ii, 551, and vi, 32.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* ii, 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Sandford Cartulary*, No. 140.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* No. 138.

TABLE 1: THE FAMILY OF HENRY OF OXFORD



D.B. = Domesday Book

William de Brugges, neatly solving the problem with respect to Peter fitz Geoffrey.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, the latter William acquired his name to distinguish him from his cousin. William de Brugges issued and attested charters from c. 1170–95, and he may be identified with the William de Brugges who died in 8 John leaving debts in Oxfordshire, as well as in Shropshire, for which his widow Olive was distrained.<sup>23</sup>

William's wife can be identified as Olive of Thomley. Thomley was held in the late 12th century by members of the Yorkshire family of Haget who had acquired by marriage the lands of Hervey, a tenant of the Bishop of Bayeux in 1086<sup>24</sup> (and probably also to be identified with the Hervey who held Ibstone in 1086). Olive also held land in Skelbrooke, Yorks. In 1086 Skelbrooke was held by Hervey from Ilbert de Lacy. A Thomas de Scalebroc witnessed William fitz Henry's charter for Oseney c. 1195.<sup>25</sup> Olive's brother was Peter fitz Oliver of Scalebroc, or of Haseley, another part of the Haget family's Oxfordshire holdings.<sup>26</sup> William de Brugges's successors were frequently associated in charters with this family, also known as 'of Britwell'. Another of the Bishop of Bayeux's tenants in Domesday Book was Ilbert de Lacy. Ilbert was a tenant-in-chief in Yorkshire, where several manors were held from him by William *Pictaviensis* and his brother Roger *Pictaviensis*.<sup>27</sup> Ilbert's brother Roger de Lacy was a tenant-in-chief in both Herefordshire and Shropshire in 1086. In Shropshire he was also a tenant of Earl Roger; from the earl he held two manors, Moreton Say and *Lai*, that were held from him in turn by 'William'; in *Lai* his predecessor was Eluui.<sup>28</sup> Many of Roger de Lacy's Shropshire manors had been held before 1066 by one Siward, who was also Roger's tenant in a number of manors in 1086.<sup>29</sup> This Siward can be easily identified from a number of sources, including the Shrewsbury Cartulary and Orderic Vitalis. He was Siward Grossus, or *diues*, son of Æthelgar, and grandson of Eadric Streona (earl of Mercia, died 1017) and Eadgyth, daughter of King Æthelred. He had a brother and a son called Aldred, as well as a son Edward.<sup>30</sup> He probably also had a son Siward, father of Richard, to judge from the fact that Hugh fitz Richard fitz Siward was a benefactor of Shrewsbury Abbey from 1212 to 1228. The abbey had been founded in 1086 by Earl Roger on the site of an earlier church built by Siward. It was endowed with lands earlier held by Siward, including the manor of Morville. One of the members of Morville was later known as of Bridgenorth, Brugg' in Latin. In 1236 the heir of William de Brugg' in Shropshire was his brother Richard.<sup>31</sup> In c. 1212–28 Hugh fitz Richard fitz Siward confirmed to Shrewsbury Abbey the 10 acres in the abbey Foregate that William de Brugg' had held from him hereditarily.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The appearance only of William de Brugges as witness to Henry d'Oilly's confirmation of Ibstone to William fitz Henry (*Oxford Charters* op. cit. note 16, No. 43) underlines this point.

<sup>23</sup> *Rot. Litt. Claus.* 9 John, 101 bis.

<sup>24</sup> See *EYC* iii, 229–31; Farrer's account is defective in several particulars.

<sup>25</sup> *Oseney Cart.* ii, 23.

<sup>26</sup> *Rot. de Oblat.*, 248; and see n. 24 above.

<sup>27</sup> *DB Yorkshire*, 9W37 (315d); 9W99 (317c); *EYC* iii, 235–43.

<sup>28</sup> *DB Shropshire*, 4.8.1–2 (256b).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 4.8.9 (256c); 7.3–4 (259c); 7.5–6 (260d).

<sup>30</sup> See Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (1969–80), ii, 194–5; *Shrewsbury Cartulary*, 1–33 passim; *Placita Anglo-Normannorum*, ed. M.M. Bigelow (1879), 18.

<sup>31</sup> *Cal. Inq. P.M.* i, No. 54.

<sup>32</sup> *Shrewsbury Cartulary*, Nos. 242–3.



In 1086 Siward also held Neen Sollers (Salop.) from Osbern fitz Richard.<sup>33</sup> He was associated with Osbern fitz Richard and Thorkil of Warwick in a charter of 1077, recording Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester's claim to land in Worcestershire against the abbey of Evesham.<sup>34</sup> It is perhaps significant that Turkdean and Little Rissington, the two Gloucestershire manors given by Henry II to William de Brugges's father William fitz Henry, had been held by 'Siward' before 1066. In 1086 they were held by Robert d'Oilly and subsequently passed to the honour of Wallingford.<sup>35</sup> It seems likely that Siward's wife was related to Osbern fitz Richard (whose own wife was a grand-daughter of Earl Algar of Mercia) and that Henry of Oxford's wife Estrilda was a daughter of Siward. This would be an example, paralleled elsewhere, of the attempt by men of English extraction to recreate the fiefs held by their ancestors before 1066. By 1212–28 Hugh fitz Richard fitz Siward was not a man of much significance, but the family of William de Brugges continued to rise. Sir William de Skelbrook was a knight of the shire of Oxford in 1298.<sup>36</sup>

#### HENRY'S LAND IN COWLEY AND IFFLEY

As we have seen, land in Cowley remained in Henry of Oxford's family. In 1086 part of Cowley was held by one Leofwin, probably to be identified with Leofwin of Nuneham Courtenay; Iffley appears only as one of two manors that had been held by Earl Aubrey of Northumbria, who had been returned to Normandy as one who was 'of little use in difficult circumstances' before the date of the Domesday survey. It seems clear that Henry of Oxford acquired land in Oxford, as well as the one hide in Walton referred to in Henry II's charter, from Geoffrey de Clinton, who in turn acquired land in Cowley and Iffley from Henry of Oxford, whose holding there we shall now consider.

Henry granted his hide in Walton, shortly after Henry II's confirmation, to Eynsham, where the monks regularly prayed for him as one of their great benefactors. A charter of John fitz Hugh of c. 1215 for the Temple at Sandford referring to his mill (i.e. Temple's Mill below Magdalen Bridge), which they had held from Osbert of Cowley and his heirs, was witnessed by, among others, Richard fitz Nigel; he or a namesake had married Lucy of Tinchebrai and held land in Tackley and Blethingdon before 1152, and he himself somehow succeeded to the land of Juliana of St. Remigio, holding her manor of Iffley from c. 1190–1220.<sup>37</sup> Osbert of Cowley may have been a connexion of Osbert of Arden, son or grandson of Thorkil of Arden, to whom we shall return. Juliana of St. Remigio was one of many who made gifts to Geoffrey I de Clinton's foundation Kenilworth Priory (c. 1122), to which she gave land in Mollington and the church of Iffley. Geoffrey's daughter Lescelina, wife of Norman de Verdun, gave the church of Hethe and a yardland in Cowley.<sup>38</sup> Although the chronology of these gifts is obscure it seems clear that Geoffrey de Clinton already had interests in Cowley and Iffley by 1155, just as Henry of Oxford's family continued to have interests there after that date.

<sup>33</sup> *DB Shropshire* 5.8 (260a).

<sup>34</sup> *Mon. Ang.* i, 595.

<sup>35</sup> *DB Gloucestershire*, 48.1–2 (168c).

<sup>36</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls, Edward I 1292–1301*, 600, 612.

<sup>37</sup> *Sandford Cartulary*, No. 136.

<sup>38</sup> Mollington: see below; part of Mollington passed to Ralph fitz Amaury of Chesterton who married the heiress Yvice; see *Mon. Ang.* vi, 223; Hethe was the property of Geoffrey de Clinton's wife.



The way that Geoffrey de Clinton endowed his foundation at Kenilworth is notoriously high-handed. The Kenilworth cartulary contains a series of gifts by Geoffrey's tenants and those from whom he held land, as well as gifts made by Geoffrey from lands he had first purchased from them; and it appears that many of their gifts were made in acquiescence to a superior will, rather than from a voluntary surge of magnanimity towards Kenilworth itself. Hugh fitz Richard, for example, from whom Geoffrey held land in Warwickshire, was somehow obliged to make a gift to Kenilworth which he might well have preferred to make either to his own foundation of Wroxhall (1142) or to St. Mary Monmouth, whose prior Robert was his stepson.<sup>39</sup> It is perhaps significant that many of the grants were made by members of the Arden family, and indeed many of the de Clintons' charters were witnessed by the Ardens.

#### THE ARDEN FAMILY

The Ardens were an important family, predominantly of Warwickshire. They descended from Thorkil of Arden who held a large fief in Warwickshire from the king in 1086; this was given by William II to the earl of Warwick, from whom the Ardens continued to hold land for the next two hundred years. Thorkil himself was the son of Alwin the Sheriff, sheriff of Warwickshire before and after 1066, but dead by 1086; in the Warwickshire Domesday we find two of Thorkil's brothers, Godmund and Ketelbearne.<sup>40</sup> Thorkil was twice married, and his sons Siward (by his first wife) and Osbert (by his second wife Leveruna) founded the two main branches of the Arden family.

In the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Domesday we find an Alwin of Nuneham Courtenay, in Headington hundred, with a brother Leofwin of Nuneham who apparently held four manors from the king and was possibly the Leofwin who held half a hide in Aylesbury hundred (Bucks.) from the king.<sup>41</sup> In Warwickshire we find that Leofwin holds 1½ hides in Flecknoe from the king, which he had bought from his brother Alwin.<sup>42</sup> Now Warwickshire is where we find Alwin the Sheriff, and also a Leofwin of Nuneham, whose mother had held Mollington (partly and later wholly in Oxfordshire), held in 1086 by Osbern fitz Richard. Further, we find a Breton, Geoffrey de la Guerche, holding twelve manors from the king which had been held by 'Leofwin'; charter evidence informs us that Geoffrey's wife was Ælfeva, an English name suggesting that Geoffrey acquired Leofwin's lands by marriage rather than by confiscation.<sup>43</sup> Geoffrey de la Guerche also held land in Lincolnshire and in Leicestershire, some of which also derived from his marriage since one of his predecessors is 'Leofwin'. In his Lincolnshire fief other predecessors were Leofric Child and Alwin;<sup>44</sup> in his Leicestershire fief an important predecessor was Leofric son of Leofwin, and one of his tenants was 'Alwin', who held one carucate in 'Stonesworth' and another in Swinford, both in Guthlaxton wapentake, from him.<sup>45</sup> Also in Guthlaxton wapentake we find that Thorkil holds half a

<sup>39</sup> See R.W. Southern, 'Henry I', in *Medieval Humanism* (1970), 216–17.

<sup>40</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 17.7 and 17.56 (241a, 241c).

<sup>41</sup> See *DB Buckinghamshire*, 12.25 (146c), B3 (143a), 40.1 (151c), 57 passim (153a–b); see *Ibid.* 57.10 (153b) for Aylesbury hundred.

<sup>42</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 44.11 (244c); cf. *Ibid.* 17.32 (241b) where Alwin, Thorkil's father, held land in Flecknoe, now held by Alric from Thorkil.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 31 (243c–d), and see *Mon. Ang.* vi, 996.

<sup>44</sup> *DB Lincolnshire*, 63 (396b–c), especially 63.1 and 63.15.

<sup>45</sup> *DB Leicestershire*, 29 (253c–d), especially 29.3 and 29.8–9.

carucate in Sharnford from the king, while in Framland wapentake we find that Ketelbern holds one carucate in Holywell from the bishop of Lincoln, in which wapentake Geoffrey de la Guerche held a number of parcels of land previously held by Leofric fitz Leofwin.<sup>46</sup> If we return to Warwickshire, to the fief of William fitz Corbucion, we find successively in the first three manors entered for Ferncombe hundred that 'Geoffrey' held one hide in Mappesborough from William, 'Thorkil' one-and-a-half hides in Exhall, and 'Leofric and Ælfeva' three hides and one virgate in Ardens Grafton (where they were William's predecessors).<sup>47</sup> We surely have here Geoffrey de la Guerche, Thorkil of Arden, and the brother and sister Leofric fitz Leofwin and Ælfeva de la Guerche.

We are urged by the editors of Domesday Book to remember that Geoffrey's Warwickshire fief included Newnham Paddox, to consider that this Leofwin is the one whose mother had held Mollington, and thus to conclude that Leofwin is distinct from Leofwin of Nuneham Courtenay (Oxon.). Yet in Buckinghamshire we have found both an Alwin and a Leofwin of Nuneham; in Warwickshire we have an Alwin brother of Leofwin, and in Oxfordshire we have a manor, Mollington, once held by 'Leofwin of Nuneham's mother', two manors, Chinnor and Cowley, held by Leofwin, and one manor, Drayton, held by Thorkil of Warwick, i.e. of Arden; furthermore, one of the Warwickshire manors acquired by Geoffrey de la Guerche as a result of his marriage to 'Leofwin of Newnham's' daughter was Hampton-in-Arden, where the Arden family are found for generations afterwards.

It seems to me unreasonable to resist the conclusion that Leofwin of Newnham and of Nuneham were one and the same, and therefore that Alwin the Sheriff of Warwickshire and Alwin of Nuneham are similarly to be identified as the same man. Despite the appellation 'of Nuneham (Courtenay)' the family did not necessarily originate in Oxfordshire, where Mollington (in Banbury hundred) is close to the Warwickshire border, but Nuneham Courtenay (in Headington hundred) is some distance away, since the overwhelming preponderance of their land was in Warwickshire; but they may have acquired land in Oxfordshire through their mother, or other females. The Abingdon Chronicle relates that Leofwin sold 'Nuneham which is across the Thames opposite Abingdon' to the abbey *de suo patrimonio*.<sup>48</sup> Domesday records that the manor of Nuneham Courtenay was held by Richard de Courcy whose predecessor was one Hakon, also the Oxfordshire predecessor of the Countess Judith in Merton and Piddington.<sup>49</sup> Hakon's relationship to Leofwin of Nuneham, feudal or familial, cannot be determined since Domesday does not make any mention of Leofwin's sale to Abingdon Abbey.

#### THE MANORS OF COWLEY

Three separate manors of Cowley descended from the parcels found in Domesday Book. The first was Church Cowley, held in 1086 by Roger (d'Ivry) of the Bishop of Bayeux and afterwards given to Osney Abbey. The second was Temple Cowley, held by Roger of the count of Boulogne, which passed to Stephen's queen Matilda who gave it to the Temple at Cowley. This manor also included the one-and-a-half hides held in 1086 by

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 42.10 (236d), 3.16 (230b), and 29.3 (235b).

<sup>47</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 28.11–13 (243b); William fitz Corbucion was sheriff of Warwicks. in 1086.

<sup>48</sup> *Chron. Mon. Abing.* ii, 12; cf. Ibid. 8 for sale of Hill and Chesterton (Warwicks) to Abingdon by Thorkil.

<sup>49</sup> *DB Oxfordshire*, 32.1 (159a) and 53 (160b).

Toli from Miles Crispin. in 1166 and later by the Chauseys, tenants of the honour of Wallingford with a *caput* at Mapledurham, and in the late 12th century by the Chissebeches, the first of whom, Geoffrey, acquired the land through his wife Alice. In 1197 the land was disputed by William of Cowley, probably a son of Osbert of Cowley, his sister Alice, Henry of Kersington (i.e. Garsington) and Geoffrey Chissebeche. Henry of Kersington prevailed; his wife Denise Talemache was Alice of Cowley's daughter. From Denise the land somehow passed to John fitz Hugh, lord of Tidmarsh in the honour of Wallingford and great-grandson of Henry of Oxford, who sold it c. 1202 to John Marshal of Ireland, a relative of the earl of Pembroke.<sup>50</sup>

The third manor of Cowley, a part of Cowley with messuages in Hockmore Street, formed a part of Iffley manor and parish; the Kersingtons were the main tenants under Iffley manor in the late 12th century. This must have been Leofwin's portion in 1086, which included two Cowley mills and two fisheries, and was probably the manor held by Henry of Oxford, so that 'Cowley and Iffley' in Henry II's confirmation charter for Henry of Oxford refers mainly to Iffley. It later passed to Donnington Hospital.<sup>51</sup> This must be the land at issue in respect of the exchange with Geoffrey de Clinton the younger for a hide at Walton. Since John fitz Hugh and other members of Henry of Oxford's family have been found granting land in Cowley, it is likely that Henry did not relinquish the whole of his interests in the third manor of Cowley to Geoffrey de Clinton, and quite probable that he or his descendants afterwards acquired an interest in the second manor. Henry's descendants are also (naturally on this assumption) found in Iffley, yet the disposal of the manor does seem to have been de Clinton's. Clinton may have enfeoffed the St. Remigios, who certainly held Iffley in 1177 (Robert) and may have done in 1156 (Richard); Robert's daughter Juliana gave its church to Kenilworth, a gift confirmed by Henry de Clinton. She was somehow succeeded in Iffley by Richard fitz Nigel who held it from c. 1190 to 1220; she herself may have been dead in 1190 and was certainly dead in 1194. Thomas de Verdon, great-grandson of the first Geoffrey de Clinton, claimed to be Juliana's heir in France upon her death, though the relationship remains obscure. The Verdons and Clintons were related by the marriage of Geoffrey de Clinton's daughter Lescelina, and it is likely that a descendant of the marriage not only brought the St. Remigios into the Verdon family in Normandy (where they held land in association with the St. Johns, among others) but simultaneously introduced them to the de Clintons in Oxfordshire, with whom their tie was close enough to warrant the grant to them of Iffley, whether that was acquired outright by exchange or augmented in de Clinton's deal with Henry of Oxford.<sup>52</sup>

It is possible that Henry of Oxford did not hold the whole of Iffley manor in c. 1155, but it is most probable from the foregoing that his exchange with Geoffrey de Clinton was in parity with the one hide in Walton we know he received and whatever the remainder might have been when the transaction was completed. On balance it seems that de Clinton acquired a dominant portion of Iffley from Henry of Oxford which placed the manor at his disposal, but that Henry himself both retained an interest there

<sup>50</sup> The parties to this dispute were closely related. Henry of Kersington, son of William of Kersington, otherwise William of Cowley, was apparently a first cousin of Denise Talemache, his second wife. Henry was thus opposing Alice, his aunt and mother-in-law, Geoffrey Chissebeche, her second husband, and William of Cowley, her brother and his own father. The relationship to John fitz Hugh of Denise, as well as Osbert of Cowley, who is mentioned in his charters, remains obscure.

<sup>51</sup> See *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 79-81.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 191-92.

and further acquired an interest in the first and second manors of Cowley. The de Clinton lands in Warwickshire marched closely with those of the Ardens (Geoffrey de Clinton held the manor of Packington from Godmund brother of Thorkil, for instance) who frequently witness their charters; the Leofwin who held Henry of Oxford's Cowley manor in 1086 is likely to have been an Arden, i.e. the brother of Alwin the Sheriff.

#### HENRY OF OXFORD AND THE D'OILLYS

Robert d'Oilly held several manors from Thorkil of Arden in the Warwickshire Domesday and we have seen that Henry of Oxford acquired at least two manors formerly belonging to the d'Oillys: Holywell with the advowson of St. Peter-in-the-East, and Ibstone (Bucks.). The earliest reference to Henry of Oxford that can perhaps be discerned is the charter of the Empress Matilda dated at Oxford in 1142, addressed to *Roberto d'Oilly et uiccomiti et prepositis et Henrico de S. Petro*.<sup>53</sup> This charter must have been issued shortly before the death of Robert d'Oilly, who had only joined the Empress's allegiance in 1141. If Henry of Oxford had been associated with Robert d'Oilly since 1135 his allegiance to Matilda may have been formed at the same date, but it is possible that the association of his family with the St. Johns was predominant, in which case his allegiance to the Empress will go back to 1139; Henry of Oxford himself is found as a witness to a charter of John of St. John in 1150, the year after his uncle (or cousin) William Peytevin is found making such an attestation.<sup>54</sup> I suspect that the *prepositi* also addressed by Matilda in 1142 included Richard of Oxford, who was quite probably a brother of Henry of Oxford, though there is no direct charter evidence of this. But his son Ansfrid was given land in Chesterton in the honour of Wallingford by Robert fitz Amaury, a landholder there who may be safely presumed to have supported the Angevins. A charter of Henry d'Oilly concerning Ibstone brings Henry of Oxford's dealings with the d'Oillys and the de Clintons together when he says that if Geoffrey de Clinton settles with him to have it, he will grant Henry of Oxford ten librates of land in Kidlington or in Weston if his warranty for Ibstone should fail; in the same charter he grants to Henry of Oxford the land in Oxford that Richard Grand held from Roger d'Oilly.<sup>55</sup>

#### SUGGESTED ORIGINS OF HENRY'S INFLUENCE: (a) THE ARDEN FAMILY

It appears that Henry of Oxford acquired property and influence from both the d'Oillys and the de Clintons, the details of which are sometimes obscure and sometimes suggestive of coercion. He further bought land from Ralph Grossus and took advantage

<sup>53</sup> *RRAN*, iii, No. 647.

<sup>54</sup> *Eynsham Cart.* i, 130-1.

<sup>55</sup> *Oxford Charters* op. cit. note 16, No. 42. Between 1182 and 1196, one Ralph Grand of Oxford issued a number of charters for Eynsham Abbey. One of them, which gives his parents as Richard Grand and Elviva of Oxford, made a grant of the revenue once held of him by Nicholas de Baillio, witnessed by, among others, Hugh of St. Peter; a further charter was witnessed by Ansfrid fitz Richard of Oxford (*Eynsham Cart.* i, 127-129; see *Oxford Charters*, No. 42, where Henry d'Oilly gives Henry of Oxford the land that Richard Grand held from Roger d'Oilly). The likelihood is that in the parents of Richard Grand we have a descendant of Hugh Grand of Stoke in 1086 and a daughter of Henry of Oxford. The Grand family held land from the Talesmasche, themselves tenants of the St. Johns in Oxfordshire and in the Cotentin. The Talesmasche were lords of Stoke Talmage, and it may be to Stoke Talmage that the name of Hugh Grand of Stoke refers.

of his position in Wallingford during the civil war to take over the lands of others, including the king.<sup>56</sup> We must conclude that Henry of Oxford was the equal of Geoffrey de Clinton I in his hard-headed acquisitiveness, if not in the extent of his actual acquisitions. Henry II, however, confirmed to Henry of Oxford not only the gifts of himself and others, but also the lands of members of Henry of Oxford's family, so that he cannot therefore have been an entirely self-made man but rather one who will have started with at least a modest competence behind him. In view of the fact that Henry of Oxford was able to exchange land in 'Cowley and Iffley' with Geoffrey de Clinton II it is possible that this formed part of his inheritance. This manor was held in 1086 by one Leofwin who is likely to have been Leofwin of Nuneham Courtenay, whom we have identified with Leofwin of Arden, brother of Alwin (i.e. Æthelwin) the Sheriff of Warwickshire. Given the albeit ill-defined connexion of the Ardens with Henry of Oxford's business associates and members of his family, it is at least possible that Henry himself descended from a junior member of the Arden family, possibly via a marriage of a daughter of Leofwin with his grandfather Godwin. Such a daughter's marriage-portion was obviously much smaller than the one that Ælfeva took to Geoffrey de la Guerche, but the marriage of Godwin's son Alwin to a Frenchwoman may have been one of the benefits of the Arden marriage. Geoffrey de la Guerche was the younger son of Sylvester, bishop of Rennes, and brother of William, seigneur of la Guerche; la Guerche, in eastern Brittany, bordered Anjou.<sup>57</sup> Geoffrey remained loyal to William II, crossing with him to Normandy in 1091. But, for some reason, he returned home to la Guerche, where he apparently died in 1093, leaving a son Hervey. His considerable estates were given first to Robert de Stuteville and then to Nigel d'Albini, whose son Roger de Mowbray made gifts of the churches of Smite and Hampton-in-Arden to Kenilworth. Domesday Book in fact provides us with putative candidates for such a marriage when we find that Leofgeat and Godwin held half a hide in Willoughby (Warwicks.) from Thorkil, as they had done before the Conquest; the female-male order may suggest a subordination of Godwin's holding *vis-à-vis* that of Leofgeat. Alternatively, Leofgeat may here be a male name, indicating perhaps the holding of two brothers.<sup>58</sup>

In Thorkil's Warwickshire fief we find that Edwin the Sheriff was Thorkil's predecessor in Marston,<sup>59</sup> that in eleven further manors his predecessor was Edwin,<sup>60</sup> and that in Radford Semele one Ermenfrid holds five hides which Edwin held in the time of King Edward and which Ermenfrid had bought from Ketelbern, Thorkil's brother, holding it as the king's writ testifies.<sup>61</sup> In some cases we can probably identify 'Edwin' with Earl Edwin (died 1071), son of Earl Algar of Mercia. 'Edwin' was Thorkil's predecessor in Ladbroke, for example. In 998 Ladbroke and Radbourne had been granted to Leofwin *dux*, together with the manor of Southam. In 1086 Thorkil held Radbourne and most of Ladbroke, while Southam was the possession of Coventry

<sup>56</sup> Ralph Grossus may have been a relative of Alicia Grossus, daughter of Rainer, whose land was given by John and William fitz Henry to Robert of Wheatfield c. 1188-92, and who herself may have been William's wife Alice, dead before 1190 (*Oseney Cart.* ii, 21, 23). Since the Grand family were tenants of the Talesmasche family, it is possible that a Grand-Talesmasche-Ibstone alliance may be behind John fitz Hugh's succession to Denise Talesmasche of Garsington.

<sup>57</sup> See J.-P. Brunterch, 'Puissance Temporelle et Pouvoir Diocésain des Evêques de Nantes entre 936 et 1049', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, lxi (1984), 60-70.

<sup>58</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 17.40 (241b), 16.30 (240b), 28.11 (243b); at 17.31 (241b) Godwin holds one hide in Hodwell from Thorkil.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 17.10 (241a).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 17.18-26 (241a-b); 17.28-9 (241b).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 17.56 (241c).

church; the church of Coventry had been founded by Earl Leofric of Mercia (died 1057).<sup>62</sup> In the half-hundred of Bensington (Oxon.) Miles Crispin held six manors in demesne, his predecessors including Thorkil, Leofric and Alwin, and Edwin.<sup>63</sup> In Lewknor and Headington hundreds Leofwin holds in Chinnor and Cowley from the king and in Bampton hundred Godwin holds two-and-a-half virgates in Brize Norton, another hide of which Theoderic the Goldsmith held from the King;<sup>64</sup> Theoderic was perhaps the progenitor of the family later related to Ansfrid fitz Richard's family. Interestingly, in Buckinghamshire we find that in Ashendon hundred Edwin, a thegn of King Edward, was the Bishop of Coutances's predecessor in Oving,<sup>65</sup> while in Marston, Waddesdon hundred, the Bishop's predecessor was Leofric (?Earl) Edwin's man.<sup>66</sup> This last was probably North Marston, a portion of which, held in 1086 by Robert d'Oilly from the Bishop of Bayeux, was afterwards held by Wigan Brito of Wallingford, brother-in-law of Henry d'Oilly and associate of Henry of Oxford and the knights of Wallingford. In Northamptonshire we find Geoffrey de la Guerche holding two manors in the first of which Leofric is named as his predecessor.<sup>67</sup> Entered in the same county are several Oxfordshire holdings of the Bishop of Coutances, including the manor of Glympton, and one-and-a-half hides in Worton, held before the Conquest by Leofgeat.<sup>68</sup> Thorkil was the Countess Judith's predecessor in four Northamptonshire manors, Godwin in one, her tenants including Leofric (also her predecessor) and 'Ketelbert', probably Thorkil's brother Ketelbern.<sup>69</sup>

It has been said of Thorkil of Arden that his Warwickshire fief shows him to have grown fat on the lands of dispossessed fellow-Englishmen, yet this is not an entirely fair assumption. It can be demonstrated that throughout the 12th century many of a baron's mesne tenants were his relatives, and there is no reason why this should not also be true of an Englishman in Domesday Book. In only four places is Alwin the Sheriff, Thorkil's father, explicitly named as Thorkil's predecessor, yet in one further case 'Alwin', possibly his father, was his predecessor in Little Lawford, where Thorkil's tenant Leofeva may have been the widow or the daughter of this Alwin.<sup>70</sup> In Fenny Compton Thorkil's predecessors are given as Ordric, Alwin and Wulfsi.<sup>71</sup> Ordric and Wulfsi are mentioned several times as predecessors of Thorkil, and it is at least possible that they were related to him. In Newton, in Brinklow hundred, Aldith holds one hide from Thorkil that had been held by Godiva before her.<sup>72</sup> Here we have descent from a grandmother, Godiva, wife of Earl Leofric of Mercia, to grand-daughter, Aldith, wife firstly of Gruffydd ap Llywelyn of Deheubarth and secondly of Harold II. Aldith's daughter Nesta by her first marriage became the wife of Osbern fitz Richard Scrope, lord of Richard's Castle, and her descendant, Lucy de Say, became the wife of Thomas de Arden at the end of the 12th century. In his Warwickshire fief Osbern fitz Richard is twice recorded as holding manors formerly held by Earl Algar, Aldith's father, one of

<sup>62</sup> Bodleian MS Eng. Hist. a. 2. No. VI.

<sup>63</sup> *DB Oxfordshire*, 35.6 (159b), 35.9 (159b), 35.10 (159c).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 58.24-5 (160d); 58.26 (160d); 58.17 (160d).

<sup>65</sup> *DB Buckinghamshire*, 5.3 (145b).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 5.4 (145b).

<sup>67</sup> *DB Northamptonshire*, 47.1 (277c).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 4.33; 35 (221a).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 56.7-8 (288b), 56.24 (228c), 56.49 (229a); 56.23 (228c); 56.35 (228d); 56.31 (228c).

<sup>70</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 17.47 (241c).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 17.59 (241c).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 17.42 (241b).



them being Aston Cantlow,<sup>73</sup> afterwards associated with the Ardens, and of course he holds Mollington, where his predecessor was Leofwin of Nuneham's mother.<sup>74</sup> Earl Edwin was Thorkil's predecessor in his manor of Myton, held from him by the count of Meulan (from whom it passed to his brother Earl Henry of Warwick).<sup>75</sup> Another manor of Myton was held by the count from the king, his predecessor being Edwin's father Earl Algar;<sup>76</sup> a further hide in Myton, once of Earl Edwin, was held by St. Mary's church at Warwick from Thorkil.<sup>77</sup> His predecessors also included Edwin the Sheriff, who may have been a relative and successor of his father Alwin the Sheriff. Of the eleven unidentified Edwins who were predecessors of Thorkil a number were probably either Edwin the Sheriff or Earl Edwin; the sheriff of Warwickshire in 1086 was William fitz Corbucion. The lands of Coventry church in Warwickshire included the manor of Binley, once held by Aldith wife of Gryffydd and purchased by the church from Osbern fitz Richard.<sup>78</sup> Its manor of Clifton, a gift of Alwin the Sheriff, had been lost to earl Aubrey de Coucy who had forfeited his lands before 1086;<sup>79</sup> in Warwickshire his fief was in the charge of Geoffrey de la Guerche, son-in-law of Leofwin of Nuneham.<sup>80</sup>

It may seem an unnecessary complication to bring the family of the earls of Mercia into the discussion, but we can do so on the authority of the Rous Roll, written in English before 1482, and surviving also in a Latin version that may be slightly earlier than the English.<sup>81</sup> John Rous compiled his Roll from various documents then at Warwick, though the evidence for much of what he relates does not survive. Rous traced the predecessors of Alwin the Sheriff back for several generations, describing Wigod, Alwin and Thorkil as 'earl', i.e. sheriff, of Warwick, indicating an hereditary shrievalty (compare the remarkable regularity of the designation *prepositus* in the case of members of Henry of Oxford's family circle). All that need concern us is Rous's statement that Alwin's predecessor was one Wigod, who married a sister of Earl Leofric of Mercia, husband of Lady Godiva and father of Earl Algar; in the 19th century Drummond provided her with the name Ermenild. Rous claims that in a charter for Evesham abbey, not now extant, Wigod described his heirs as Alwin, nephew of Earl Leofric through his sister, and Thorkil. By this charter Wigod restored to Evesham the manors of Wixford and Grafton, originally the gift of (his grandfather) Ufa the Reeve but taken away from Evesham by (his father) Wulfgeat. Much of this account can be corroborated from surviving documents. Domesday Book records that Evesham church held Wixford in 1086, once the property of Wigod.<sup>82</sup> Earl Leofric, son of Earl Leofwin, can be shown from

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 37.1 (244a).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 37.9 (244a).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 17.60 (241d).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 16.1 (239d).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 17.63 (241d).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 6.5 (238d).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 14.2 (239c).

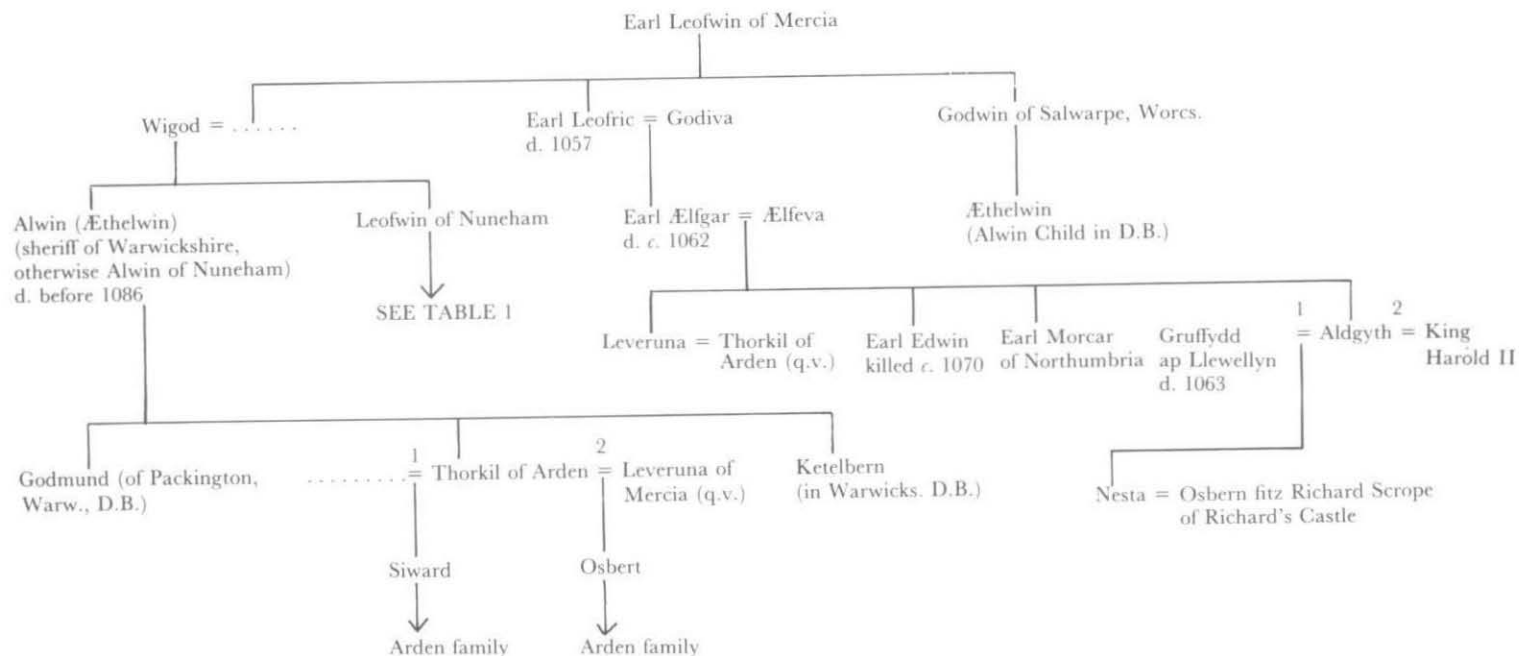
<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 14.6 (239c).

<sup>81</sup> I am indebted to Mr. J.A. Cooke of Goring for drawing my attention to this source, on which he has provided me with much illuminating information.

<sup>82</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 11.1 (239b). Rous states, correctly, that Wixford and Grafton were given to Evesham by Ufa the Reeve of Warwick (*Cartularium Saxonicum*, ed. W. de G. Birch (1885-93), iii, No. 1092); Evesham subsequently lost the manors to Ufa's son Wulfgeat and had to buy them back from Wulfgeat's heir Wigod, a thegn of King Edward: see *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, ed. W.D. Macray (Rolls Ser. 1863), 74, 79. Some of the information given here is a conflation of the Rous Roll and other papers of Rous used by W. Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), i, 134-6; Dugdale in turn was used by H. Drummond, *History of British Families* (1846).



TABLE 2: THE ORIGINS OF THE ARDEN FAMILY, BASED ON THE ROUS ROLL



D.B. = Domesday Book

Evesham and Worcester charters to have had brothers Norman, Edwin, and Godwin of Salwarpe; Godwin was father of Æthelwin, called Alwin Child in Domesday Book. Rous further asserts that Thorkil's second wife Leveruna was a daughter of Earl Algar and Ælfeva, sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar and of Aldith, and second cousin of Thorkil himself. The fact that Rous's assertion that Thorkil's first wife was the widow of Arnulf count of Perche and mother of his daughter Margaret, wife of Earl Henry of Warwick, is not accepted by historians does not detract from the inherent, but unprovable, probability of his statement in the second case; it certainly accounts for the nomenclature of Thorkil's family and predecessors around 1086, and the disposition of their holdings. This account provides us with the identity of Leofwin of Nuneham's mother, and also of Alwin the Sheriff's; she was the daughter and sister respectively of Earls Leofwin and Leofric of Mercia, and the great-great-aunt of the wife of Osbern fitz Richard, who held her one-time manor of Mollington (Warwicks.) in 1086.

This conclusion differs from that recently published by Ann Williams, who has suggested that the father of Leofwin and Alwin was one Bricwin (Beorhtwine).<sup>83</sup> She bases this on two references in the Warwickshire Domesday. In the second of these Bricwin is found with Alnoth and Thori as the predecessors of one hide in Chesterton pledged by Thorkil of Arden to Abingdon Abbey.<sup>84</sup> The first occurrence of Bricwin is entered under the holding of the bishop of Worcester (Wulfstan) in Alveston, which was the subject of a celebrated lawsuit.<sup>85</sup> It was claimed that before 1066 Bricwin held 7½ hides in Alveston. This was testified by his sons Leofwin and Edmer and four others, who did not know whether he had held the land from the church or from Earl Leofric, whom he served. They themselves had held it freely from Earl Leofric, whom he served. Williams ingeniously recreates the family of Bricwin, giving him as sons Alwin the Sheriff, Leofwin, Æthelmar, Alsige, Ælfric, Ordric and Eadmer. Men of these names are found as tenants of Thorkil of Warwick, though presumably the tenant called Alwin was other than his father, who was dead by 1086. It is indeed likely that Thorkil's tenants were related to him, especially since many had held the land they held from him before 1066. I should prefer to see Ælmer (like Earl Edwin, Thorkil's predecessor in Ladbroke) and Ermenfrid as Thorkil's uncles, but let us examine the sons of Bricwin more closely.

The identification of Bricwin's son Leofwin with Leofwin of Nuneham rests on the fact that Leofwin held part of his manor of Flecknoe from the bishop of Worcester, who in 1086 was unwilling to uphold his claim to it.<sup>86</sup> If we turn to Heming's Cartulary we find that the church of Worcester had been despoiled of many of its manors by the Normans, notably Urse d'Abetôt, the sheriff, as well as Earl William and others. Many of these losses had originally been alienated to his relatives by Bishop Brictheah, a nephew of Wulfstan, archbishop of York and bishop of Worcester. Brictheah gave Alton and Lower Sapey to his brother-in-law; Sapey subsequently passed to his nephew and then to Richard Scrope; Alton was seized by the bishop's brother Æthelric and passed to his son Godric, from whom it was briefly acquired by Ralph of Bernai.<sup>87</sup> Bengeworth was given by the bishop to his *cognatus* Atsera (Azor), the bishop's chamberlain, but he lost it to Urso.<sup>88</sup> Hadzor and Ravenshill he gave to his *cognatus* Bricwin, who lost the latter

<sup>83</sup> A. Williams, 'A Vice-Comital Family in pre-Conquest Warwickshire', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xi (1989), 279-95.

<sup>84</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 17.68 (241d).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 3.3-4 (238c).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 44.12 (244c).

<sup>87</sup> *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis*, ed. T. Hearne (1723), 255.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 269.

manor to Urso. Hadzor, however, was offered to Worcester cathedral priory when he made his grandson Edwin a monk. Bricwin's son Bricmer (the father of Edwin) gave it to the priory, but Earl William took it away and gave it to Gilbert fitz Thorold.<sup>89</sup> Little Witley was held in the time of Prior Alstan by the church, but Bishop Wulfstan gave it to Alwin fitz Bricmer at his request; it was subsequently seized by Urso the Sheriff.<sup>90</sup> At the time of the Domesday survey, Bricmer held Clopton from the church of Worcester, paying customary dues.<sup>91</sup> At Westmancote, Bricwin is recorded as the predecessor who had held from the bishop on terms he could supplicate (*deprecari*).<sup>92</sup> Bredons Norton was held by Leofwin, a rider of the bishop.<sup>93</sup> This is the only appearance of a Leofwin in the Worcestershire survey; he was presumably the Leofwin son of Bricwin recorded under the church of Worcester's land in Warwickshire. Heming also names Earl Edwin, son of Earl Algar, as one of the church of Worcester's despoilers in Warwickshire and in Shropshire.

Earls Edwin and Algar were explicitly named as predecessors of Thorkil in two of his Warwickshire fees, and it was them that Rous claimed on the authority of the now-lost Evesham charter as Alwin the Sheriff's relatives. If one compares the tenants of Thorkil of Arden with those of the bishop of Worcester in 1086 one finds little correspondence. It seems to me that, if Ann Williams has succeeded in finding further brothers of Alwin the Sheriff, she has failed to establish that they were sons of Bricwin. The connexion between the family of Bishop Brictheah (of which Bricwin and his sons Bricmer, Leofwin and Edmer were members) and that of the Arden family lay in the service that members of both families owed to the earls of Mercia. Rous's assertion that Alwin the Sheriff was heir of Wigod and *nepos* of Earl Leofric cannot be verified, but the rest of his account concerning Ufa, Wulfgeat and Wigod can be substantiated from existing documents. Therefore we should not reject Rous's testimony, the more so because a family connexion of the Ardens with the earls of Mercia has many times been suggested by the details given here.

The Ardens were related to the earls of Mercia. The Mercian earls in turn provided the wife of Osbern fitz Richard, himself a tenant and a despoiler of the church of Worcester. Both Osbern fitz Richard and Thorkil of Warwick were associated in a charter of Bishop Wulfstan with Siward *diues* of Shropshire, descendant of an earlier, and infamous, earl of Mercia. It is perhaps through a marriage connexion of Siward and Osbern fitz Richard that we have the most likely link of Henry of Oxford's family with that of the Ardens. In the case of the Ardens we have a clear example of continuity and adaption from the Anglo-Saxon to the Norman period, as Ann Williams has demonstrated. It is now time to examine the case for such continuity and adaption with respect to Henry of Oxford's own ancestors.

#### THE FOREBEARS OF HENRY OF OXFORD

So far we have failed to find convincing candidates for Henry of Oxford's father and grandfather. We have traced the later connexions of Henry's sons and grandsons with

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 267.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 261.

<sup>91</sup> *DB Worcestershire*, 2.10 (172d).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 2.28 (173a).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 2.29 (173b).

Shropshire and Gloucestershire to a thegn prominent before 1066, Siward son of Æthelgar. The connexion of one of these grandsons with Yorkshire, through his marriage to Olive of Thomley-Skelbrook, has linked Henry's family to the tenants of the bishop of Bayeux in 1086; these included Hervey of Champeaux (of Ibstone) and Ilbert de Lacy. A Peitevin family descending from William and Roger Peitevin, tenants of Ilbert and Roger de Lacy in 1086, is evidenced in both Yorkshire and Shropshire during the 12th century. This William Peitevin was almost certainly Henry of Oxford's uncle, whose family is certainly evidenced in Buckinghamshire in the 12th century and beyond. Ilbert de Lacy held the Buckinghamshire manor of Tingewick from the bishop of Bayeux in 1086.<sup>94</sup> Robert d'Oilly and Roger d'Ivry – the predecessor of Thomas and John of St. John – both held land from the bishop in 1086. There is thus a strong connexion between the tenants and predecessors of the bishop of Bayeux in 1086 and the later holdings of Henry of Oxford's family.

If we examine the Anglo-Saxon tenants and predecessors of the bishop in Buckinghamshire in 1086 we find, among others, the names of Godwin, Earl Leofwin's man and Azor son of Toti.<sup>95</sup> Among the Anglo-Saxon tenants and predecessors of the bishop of Coutances (from whom Geoffrey de Clinton's uncle William held the manor of Glympton) were the following: Edeva wife of Wulfward, Edwin, Leofric, Edwin son of Burgred, Burgred and Wulfric.<sup>96</sup> In 1049–52 Tova, widow of Wictric, gave to St. Albans land at Church (i.e. Great) Tew, to be held for her life and that of her son Godwin.<sup>97</sup> The charter was witnessed by Bishop Ulf (of Dorchester), Earl Leofric, the abbots and communities of Abingdon and Eynsham, Wagan and all the *barones* of Earl Leofric, Ægelric of Glympton, Eadric son of Æfic, Brihtwin of Deddington, Leofwin of Barton, Ægelric smyrl, Ælfwin, Alwin of Ingham, Leofric son of Osmund and Leofenot his brother, Burhred, Sæward, Ægelward of *Ortune*, Asser son of Tolri, Godwin *prepositus ciuitatis Oxnafordi*, Wulfwin *prepositus comitis* [i.e. Leofric], and *omnes ciues Oxanfordiensi*. Of these, Leofwin was the predecessor of the bishop of Lisieux in the Oxfordshire manor of Westcot Barton, as well as in Little Tew.<sup>98</sup> Deddington was held by five unnamed thegns before 1066, when it passed to the bishop of Bayeux.<sup>99</sup> Leofwin and Ælfric (*Aluarius*) were the bishop of Bayeux's predecessors in Warwickshire.<sup>100</sup> Among the tenants and predecessors of Thorkil of Warwick were Wulfwin, Bricwin, Godwin and the earls of Mercia. Leofnoth son of Osmund's man Kentish was a predecessor of the count of Mortain in the Buckinghamshire manor of Wavendon; in another part of this manor the count's predecessor was Bricwin.<sup>101</sup> Burgred, Sæward and Ulf son of Burgred were also predecessors of the count.<sup>102</sup> Walter Giffard's predecessors in the Buckinghamshire manor of Maids Moreton included Wulfric, Alric son of Goding's man, Edric, Asgar the Constable's man, and Sæward, Azor son of Toti's man.<sup>103</sup>

In Tova's charter the name of Æthelward of *Ortune* is followed by that of Asser son

<sup>94</sup> *DB Buckinghamshire*, 4.38 (145a).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 4 passim (144a).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 5 passim (145b–d).

<sup>97</sup> *Matthaei Parisiensis Chronicon Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, vi (Roll. Ser. 57f, 1882), 29–30. There is an inferior text in J.M. Kemble (ed.), *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, iv (1846), No. 950.

<sup>98</sup> *DB Oxfordshire*, 8.1–4 (156d).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 7.2 (155d).

<sup>100</sup> *DB Warwickshire*, 4.1;4 (238d).

<sup>101</sup> *DB Buckinghamshire*, 12.36–38 (146d).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 12.11 (146b); 12.29 (146c); 12.31;34 (146d).

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 14.28–9 (147c).

of Tolri, in whom we must surely see Azor fitz Toti. In 1007 King Æthelred sold the manors of Beckley and Horton in Oxfordshire to a Dane called Toti for the gold that the king needed *ad reddendum tributum* to the Danes (who had sacked Wallingford in the previous year).<sup>104</sup> Around 1050 Edward the Confessor gave the manor of Sandford-on-Thames, a neighbour of both Cowley and Iffley, to Abingdon Abbey.<sup>105</sup> His charter was witnessed by Leofwin *minister* and Godwin *prepositus ciuitatis [Oxonie]*. In 1086 the manor was held from Abingdon by Robert d'Oilly and Roger d'Ivry.<sup>106</sup> Bricwin and Ælfric a reeve are found among the abbey's pre-1066 tenants in Berkshire.<sup>107</sup>

If one further considers the great probability that in the Ailwinus *prepositus* who gave four acres in Cowley to Cowley Temple in 1139 we have the father of Henry of Oxford, then our search for his ancestors is complete.<sup>108</sup> Henry's father and grandfather were reeves (*prepositi*) of Oxford. In Tova's charter the connexion of Henry of Oxford's family with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire is well represented; so too is the connexion of his family with the families, tenants and predecessors of the earls of Mercia, the Ardens, and the bishops of Bayeux and Coutances. Henry and his sons outgrew the role of reeve of Oxford, but that role was the basis of their subsequent power and influence. Certainly, we can see the career of Henry of Oxford as parallel to that of Bernard the Scribe (died c.1148), member of a once-prosperous Cornish family impoverished by the Conquest, who assiduously set out to repair the family fortunes by entering the service of Henry I, and charming his way into the patronage of other royal servants; Bernard's three sons became minor landholders, related by marriage and by tenure to several important Cornish families of the 12th century.

#### SUGGESTED ORIGINS OF HENRY'S INFLUENCE: (b) NORMAN FEUDAL RELATIONSHIPS

Our account of the Arden holdings as described by Domesday Book has crossed the paths of the Clinton and d'Oilly families several times, and we can strongly suspect marriage alliances between the three groups. For example, we might suspect that Osbert, son of Geoffrey I de Clinton's brother or uncle William, derived his name from an alliance connected with Thorkil's son Osbert by his second marriage. We have also found Osberts connected with the king's manor of Bloxham, where the de Clintons may once have held land (if William the Sheriff (1100–1110) was in fact Geoffrey de Clinton's brother) and where the de Clintons' relative Walter de Verdon held land in 1212, and with Cowley where Henry of Oxford's great-grandson John fitz Hugh was apparently heir to Osbert of Cowley's grand-daughter Denise Talemasche.<sup>109</sup>

It is, of course, most likely that Henry of Oxford's overlord was originally Robert d'Oilly (though he probably had a few insignificant holdings in Wallingford in 1135), and that he was brought to the notice of the Empress and Brien fitz Count after Robert

<sup>104</sup> See F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1st edn. 1943), 376 n.1.

<sup>105</sup> *Chron. Mon. Abing.* i, 466–9.

<sup>106</sup> *DB Oxfordshire*, 9.3–5 (156d).

<sup>107</sup> *DB Berkshire*, 7.14 (58d).

<sup>108</sup> *Mon. Ang.* ii, 528.

<sup>109</sup> John fitz Hugh, *familiaris* of King John, like his master and his great-grandfather, can be suspected of unscrupulousness, but when the *Testa de Neville* records that c. 1198 he held half a fee in Fawley (Berks.) by gift of the king, formerly the fee of Richard d'Oilly (*Book of Fees*, 105) it appears to be a case of the regnant of the fee, since neither manor of Fawley (Great or Little, the latter being the king's in 1086) was originally part of the d'Oilly fief.

d'Oilly changed sides in 1141. But he may have had closer ties with a junior branch of the d'Oilly family, represented from the early 12th century by men by the name of Roger. Geoffrey fitz Durand gave to Oseney a meadow *iuxta Bulestache* in Oxford, itself held by Roger d'Oilly whose charter for Eynsham concerning it was confirmed by his son Roger and by his son-in-law William Chesneduit. In c. 1233 the daughter of Matilda of Ibstone, Adelicia Foliot, was the wife of Ralph fitz Robert Chesneduit.<sup>110</sup>

Certainly it was Henry of Oxford's transfer of service to Brien fitzCount that really made his fortune and allowed him to assume the prominence that eventually led to the 'governorship' of Wallingford in 1150, for which service he was well rewarded by Henry II. The statement of the *Testa de Neville* that Henry of Oxford was a burgess of Wallingford is slightly problematic, but may well be true. At all events, the borough of Wallingford supported the Angevin cause as vigorously as did the knights of the honour, as the charter of liberties demonstrates. The presence of feudal castles and feudal personnel in boroughs was a frequent cause of tension between burgesses and barons, as the case of Baldwin de Redvers and Exeter illustrates. The unity of aim manifested by the borough and the honour in the case of Wallingford probably owed a good deal to the personality of Brien fitzCount, who built the mill at the South Gate for the burgesses. The three officers of Wallingford addressed by Matilda and Henry in 1150 can be divided into two groups, with Ansfrid fitz Ruald and William Boterel representing officials of the honour, and Henry of Oxford representing the borough. The distinction cannot be carried too far, however. By 1155 Henry of Oxford's holdings were clearly tenurial as well as burghal, and probably had been, like those of his ancestors, long before that date. His descendants included tenants of the honour of Wallingford as well as officials of the borough of Oxford. His own career in both Wallingford and Oxford illustrates not only the fact that burgesses did enter into feudal relationships, but also that in Wallingford the two worked closely together. Whether or not he had an original burghal tenure there, he certainly managed to impress Brien fitzCount from whom, apart from a mill in Shillingford, he acquired a quarter-fee in Clapcote, associated with the castle, still held by his family in 1212. In short, Henry's career illustrates not the separation of the functions of borough and honour, but their essential mutual involvement; his control of Wallingford in 1150 bridged and encompassed both.

Charter evidence shows that Henry was sheriff of Berkshire from 1153 until 1155.<sup>111</sup> He apparently resigned his post voluntarily, since his appearance in the Pipe Rolls of 2 Henry II and later holding a good deal of *terra data* in Oxfordshire and Berkshire (including land in Headington and Bensington, royal manors since before the Conquest) excludes the notion that he might have been removed from office.<sup>112</sup> Henry's shrievalty was not, however, without incident, for a dispute is recorded during which one Simon fitz Thurstin the Despencer accused Henry of Oxford of bullying as sheriff.<sup>113</sup> an accusation it is all too easy to credit, given the inferences one can draw from his property dealings. Henry is found in charge of the king's building works in Oxford in 1163,<sup>114</sup> shortly before his death, so that he maintained the king's favour to the end of his life, and indeed his sons profited from it after his death. John of Oxford was a familiar of Henry II, and died in 1200 in the influential office of bishop of Norwich; his

<sup>110</sup> *Cart. St. Frids.* i, 173.

<sup>111</sup> *RRAN*, iii, Nos. 13 and 44.

<sup>112</sup> *Pipe Rolls 2-4 Henry II*, 36, 82, 149; *Pipe Roll 5 Henry II*, 34.

<sup>113</sup> *RRAN*, iii, No. 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Pipe Roll 9 Henry II*, 48.

brother William of Ibstone was given the hereditary manor of Turkdean (Gloucs.) in the king's honour of Wallingford c. 1174, which passed to his son and grandson Robert and William of Torigny. We have seen that Henry's great-grandson John fitz Hugh commended himself to King John, in whose service he mixed with the greatest in the land, and in 1215 he was one of those named as the king's familiars in Magna Carta.<sup>115</sup>

Henry of Oxford was thus drawn from well-connected English stock, connexions that probably included the Ardens. The marriage of his father Eilwi to a Poitevin in itself demonstrates how well his family adapted itself to post-1066 conditions. The high proportion of Bretons in the honour of Wallingford also left its mark on his family. Henry commended himself to its Breton lord Brien fitz Count and worked there alongside the Bretons Ansfrid fitz Ruald and William Boterel. Ansfrid fitz Richard of Oxford, probably Henry's nephew, married a woman of Breton stock, and his son-in-law Geoffrey fitz Durand acquired land formerly belonging to Ralph Brito, with whom he is closely associated in the Pipe Rolls. Further, it is almost certainly the case that by 1200, if not long before, Henry of Oxford's family was related by marriage also to the once-great families of Clinton and d'Oilly, of whom the former at least had probably long been allied to the Arden family who, like Henry of Oxford's family, profited from the favour of Henry II.

#### APPENDIX

Two other men found bearing the appellation *de Oxonia/Oxoneford* are worth a moment's relection. Richard of Oxford was a contemporary of Henry of Oxford, and seems likely to have been a relative. His two sons William and Ansfrid fitz Richard, who almost invariably appear together in witness lists, are sometimes described as *fili prepositi*. It is possible that Thomas and Lambert *prepositi*, who also often appear together, were relatives of William and Ansfrid; one charter gives Lambert a brother William, while Ansfrid fitz Richard had two sons named Thomas and William.<sup>116</sup> William and Ansfrid fitz Richard frequently witness the charters of Geoffrey fitz Durand and his son Peter, appearing here and elsewhere with the Kepeharns, themselves related by marriage to Peter fitz Geoffrey. Ansfrid was given two hides in Chesterton by Robert fitz Amauri c. 1166.<sup>117</sup> He had three sons: Richard his heir, Thomas, and William the Miller of Iffley. A grandson Walter Coillun made a grant to St. Bartholomew's Hospital for the souls of his ancestor Ansfrid and Wymarc his wife.<sup>118</sup> Wymarc is a distinctive Breton name; her mother was probably the Agnes of Sibford whose Sandford charter of 1153 she attested, together with Robert de Clinton.<sup>119</sup> She could have been the daughter of either of Agnes's first two husbands, one Gilbert, or Ralph Clement, but her father or her mother or both are likely to have been of Breton descent. William fitz Henry of Oxford's Sandford charter names his mother as Estrilda, his wife as Alice, and an otherwise unattested son Thomas.<sup>120</sup>

There is also the case of William of Oxford, who was sheriff of the county from 1100 to 1110. It is known that Henry I liked to appoint his local government officials from local men, so we may presume that William of Oxford was named from the place in which he probably lived and held land. Frequent references to William's shrievalty in the Abingdon Chronicle give the impression that he was a local man, but add no further details about him. A charter of Henry I, however, confirms to William's wife and children the manor of Kineton (Warwicks.) in exchange for that of Bloxham (Oxon.) (apparently an earlier gift since it was the king's in 1086) and the land called *Swinlic*; Kineton was later confirmed to William's son Miles.<sup>121</sup> Domesday Book records Bloxham in various parcels as the king's manor, and later fee lists for Kineton suggest that this holding escheated at some time in the 12th century.

<sup>115</sup> Stubbs's *Select Charters* (9th edn., ed. H.W.C. Davis, 1943), 292.

<sup>116</sup> *Oxford Charters* op. cit. note 16 No. 81; cf. *Oseney Cart.* vi, 30-32.

<sup>117</sup> *Oseney Cart.* loc. cit. note 116.

<sup>118</sup> *Cart. St. Frids.* i, 322; cf. *Ibid.* 102.

<sup>119</sup> *Sandford Cartulary*, No. 382.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 140.

<sup>121</sup> W. Farrer, 'The Itinerary of Henry I', *English Historical Review*, xxxiv (1919), 367.



We find, in the charter of Henry II confirming the lands of Kenilworth Priory, reference to the land which was Miles's in Kineton, and the land which was Turgis's in the same place (see note 38 above). Turgis was possibly a relative of Miles, perhaps a brother, since Henry I mentions the sons of William of Oxford; if this were so then the family was probably Norman, and they may have been neighbours in Normandy of the ancestors of Geoffrey de Clinton. Geoffrey de Clinton has already been found acquiring property from his tenants with which to endow his foundation, among whom the Ardens have figured, and this may be a further example perhaps connected also to the Ardens. In the *Testa de Neville* for 1219 we find that the heir of Osbert fitz Alan of Headington (enfeoffed by Hugh de Plugenai) holds from the king in chief in the vill of Bloxham, which is worth 32s. blanch, and Walter de Verdon has custody of the heir.<sup>122</sup> In 1212 Walter de Verdon is recorded as holding Bloxham by gift of the king's ancestors. He descended from Geoffrey de Clinton's daughter Lescelina, wife of Norman de Verdon and mother of Bertram, who gave various lands in Mollington to Kenilworth, as we have seen. In 1212 Richard Siward holds Headington for one fee and by service of £20 annually, while William of Middleton and William of Headington each have half a fee in Bloxham.<sup>123</sup>

The Norman family seat of the Clintons was identified by J.H. Round as St-Pierre-de-Semilly and la Barre-de-Semilly, two adjoining communes just to the east of St-Lô in the Cotentin. The de Clintons were named from Glympton in Oxfordshire, held in 1086 by one William from the bishop of Coutances.<sup>124</sup> The manor of Hethe, acquired by Lescelina de Clinton from her mother, was held by one Roger from the bishop in 1086. The Kenilworth cartulary reveals that Geoffrey I de Clinton had a brother and an uncle called William de Clinton, of whom the latter appears as a witness to his charters, but the brother, like another brother Robert, apparently predeceased him. It is not impossible that William the sheriff of Oxford was Geoffrey's brother, particularly in view of the fact that Kineton is frequently mentioned in Kenilworth charters (both of the de Clintons and of their overlords the earls of Warwick), and of Walter de Verdon's later association with Bloxham. Geoffrey de Clinton's father was probably the Geoffrey the Chamberlain who founded the church of Holy Trinity Wallingford in the late 11th century; in 1166 Geoffrey II de Clinton held 3½ fees of the honour of Wallingford.<sup>125</sup>

*The Society is grateful to the Greening Lamborn Trust for a grant towards the publication of this paper.*

<sup>122</sup> *Book of Fees*, 253.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 104 and 587.

<sup>124</sup> *DB Northamptonshire*, 4.33 (221a).

<sup>125</sup> *Red Book*, 310–311; for the Arden connexion see Kenilworth cartulary (B.L. Harleian MS 3650) f.9r, 12r, 18v etc.