

King Harold's Daughter

Richard Sharpe

A little before 1675 a lead tablet was discovered in an ancient grave near the Norman west door of Lincoln cathedral. A drawing of it was made by the dean, Dr Michael Honywood (1596–1681), and sent to Sir William Dugdale (1605–1686), who published an engraving of the tablet in his *Baronage of England*.¹ A second and independent copy exists, from which it was again published among the appendices to one of Thomas Hearne's volumes of English chronicles.² It has been reproduced several times since then, most recently in 1850.³ Known as

¹ William Dugdale [1605–1686], *The Baronage of England, or An historical account of the lives and most memorable actions of our English nobility*, 2 vols. (London, 1675–6), i, 386. He describes the inscription as 'made on a plate of lead, in Saxon capital letters, with abbreviations; and lately found in his grave in the churchyard, near to the west door of the cathedral church of Lincoln'. Nothing is reported about the grave itself or any body in it. A letter from the antiquary Maurice Johnson (1688–1755) to William Bogdani, of Hitchin, published in *Archaeologia* 1 (1770), 31, reports the finding of a body outside the west door on 28 September 1741; it was 'sewed up in a strong tanned leather hide', and Johnson thought it might be a noble burial; he knew the inscription from Dugdale and had himself seen the plaque in the library of the dean and chapter, but no connexion is established.

² Thomas Hearne [1678–1735], *Thomae Sprotti Chronica. E codice antiquo descripsit ediditque T. Hearnus, qui et alia quaedam opuscula subjecit* (Oxford, 1719), p. xxvi, refers to the inscription, reproduced in an engraving as Appendix iv, inserted between p. lx and p. lxi; an editorial addendum, p. lxx, provides a restored reading. Hearne states his source as 'e Collectaneis penes me Smithianis' (p. xxvi), i.e. among the papers of the late Dr Thomas Smith (1638–1710), keeper of the Cotton library, which had been bequeathed to Hearne. The immediate source is now Bodl. MS Smith 42 (SC 15649), p. 25, among transcripts made in the Ashmolean Museum. No precise reference is given, but this must have been copied from the representation of the plaque among the papers of Elias Ashmole (1617–1691), Bodl. MS Ashmole 860, p. 443 (without source). In both contexts it follows Ashmole's own drawing of a medieval grave-cover from St Martin-le-Grand in London, which is dated 8 May 1673. The text is less complete than Dugdale's, reflecting an independent transcription from the tablet, and does not follow the line-divisions of the plaque.

³ Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt [1784–1861], 'Memoir on the leaden plate, the memorial of William D'Eyncourt, preserved in the Cathedral Library at Lincoln', *Memoirs illustrative of the History and Antiquities of the County and City of Lincoln*, Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute [4] (London, 1850), 248–52, includes the best reproduction. While *DNB* remarks on his devotion to antiquarian subjects, *ODNB* tells us that the author 'tried to revive the barony of D'Eyncourt, but Melbourne, the prime minister, refused what was generally seen as a grotesque request'. Tennyson refers to other reproductions in Richard Gough [1735–1809], *Sepulchral*

the D'Eyncourt plaque, it is now in Lincoln Cathedral Library.⁴ It came from the burial of William, a son of Walter d'Aincourt, who was lord of Blankney and Branston in Lincolnshire and of Granby in Nottinghamshire at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, and who is recorded in King William II's service in 1088.⁵ And it reveals a surprising fact:

+ HIC IACET WI[[LLELMVS]]
 FILI(us) WALT(er)I AIENCVR[[IEN-]]
 SIS C(on)SANGVINEI REMIGII EP(iscop)I
 LINCOLIENSIS Q(u)I HANC ECCL(esi)AM
 FECIT. P(re)FATUS WILL(el)M(us) REGIA STYR-
 PE P(ro)GENIT(us) DV(m) I(n) CVRIA REGIS WILL(elmi)
 FILII MAGNI REGIS WILL(elmi) Q(u)I AN-
 GLIAM C(on)Q(u)ISIVIT ALERET(ur)
 III [[KA]]L' NOV(em)B' OBIIT +

'Here lies William, son of Walter d'Aincourt who was a kinsman of Remigius, bishop of Lincoln, who built this church. The said William, born of royal stock, died on 30 October, while living in fosterage at the court of King William, son of King William the elder who conquered England.'

This artefact and its lettering have not had the study they deserve.⁶ Nor is it without interest to see what the family chose to say in this boy's burial. The plaque provides what may be among the earliest evidence of stock-phrases for King William I as William the elder (*magnus*) who conquered England.⁷ Walter

Monuments in Great Britain applied to illustrate the history of families, manners, habits, and arts (London, 1786–96), in two printings of Gough's edition of Camden's *Britannia* (1789, 1806), and in Samuel Pegge [1704–1796], *A Sylloge of the remaining authentic inscriptions relative to the erection of our English churches* (London, 1787).

⁴ I am grateful to the cathedral librarian, Dr Nicholas Bennett, for showing me the plaque, which is 22 cm in width, 34 cm in height; the lower third of the plaque is blank.

⁵ Walter held lands as a tenant in chief in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Northamptonshire. It was Walter d'Aincourt who, during the stand-off with Bishop William of Durham in the summer of 1088, brought the command from King William, presumably a writ, to order the men of Bishop William to restore the cattle they had taken from Bishop Geoffrey, who at the time was acting as earl in Northumberland on behalf of his nephew Robert de Mowbray (*De iniusta uexatione Willelmi episcopi*, ed. H. S. Offler, Camden Miscellany 34, Camden 5th ser. 10 (1997), 53–104, at 93–4).

⁶ For wider context, R. Favreau, 'Les inscriptions sur plomb en moyen âge', in *Inscript und Material, Inschrift und Buchschrift*, ed. by Walter Koch and Christine Steininger (Munich, 1999), 45–63. Contemporary examples from England include the plaque from the grave of Bishop Godfrey of Chichester (d. 25 September 1088), illustrated by Elisabeth Okasha, 'A third supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*', *ASE* 33 (2004), 225–81, and the simpler burial plaques of Abbot Wulfric (d. 1061) and Abbot Scotland (d. 9 September 1087, 'Anno ab incarnatione MLXXXVIIº obiit Scotlandus abbas Vº idus Septe(m)bris'), which survive in the museum at St Augustine's abbey in Canterbury. For the plaque of King Harold's sister, Gunnhild, who died as a nun in Brugge on 24 August 1087, see n. 108 below.

⁷ The phrase 'filius magni regis Willelmi' is used in two authentic diplomas of Henry I, neither of them drafted by royal clerks (*Regesta [regum Anglo-Normannorum]*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1913–69), cited by no.] 919 for Ely, dated 1109; *Regesta* 1015 for Savigny, dated 1112). In several

d'Aincourt's connexion with Remigius, monk of Fécamp and bishop of Lincoln, is not documented, but it is plausible.⁸ The new cathedral at Lincoln was to have been dedicated in the presence of King William II and many bishops in 1092, but the sudden death of Remigius caused a postponement.⁹ The wording here suggests a date after that. What is said about William d'Aincourt clearly tells us that he died young, while still a fosterling at the court of William II.¹⁰ His father's heir was Ralph d'Aincourt, presumably another son, the founder of Thurgarton priory in Nottinghamshire.¹¹ Sir Frank Stenton noted this as evidence of how the heirs of 'noble families' were drawn into the king's *curia* for their education; on the claim to royal lineage Stenton improbably speculated

forgeries from Durham it is used with words emphasizing legitimate succession, 'qui regi Edwardo hereditario iure successit' (*Regesta* 349, 778, 918); and it occurs in other forgeries, such as *Regesta* 1568 for Guisborough priory, and in narrative portions of *Textus Roffensis*. The formula 'qui Angliam conquisiuit' is found in *Breuis relatio de Guillelmo nobilissimo comite Normannorum*, § 20, ed. E. M. C. van Houts, Camden 5th ser. 10 (1997), 25–48, at 47, a work composed by a monk of Battle during King Henry's long absence from England, 1114 × 1120; its lengthy title combines succession and conquest, 'quo hereditario iure Angliam sibi armis adquisiuit'. The conquest formula is found also in a forgery in the name of King Stephen for Winchester cathedral priory, 'Willelmi gloriosi regis Anglorum aui mei qui Angliam conquisiuit' (*Regesta*, iii, no. 949). A mid-twelfth-century forgery from Saint-Valéry in the name of Archbishop Anselm has a strong variation: 'ex dono Willelmi regis, illius scilicet Willelmi qui Anglos sibi subiugauit' (Martin Brett and Joseph A. Gribbin, *English Episcopal Acta xxviii Canterbury, 1070–1136* (London, 2004), 35–6, no. 32). In spite of the temptation to equate 'magni' with the later 'gloriosi' and translate as 'the Great', a strong case for its meaning 'the elder' in eleventh- and early-twelfth-century Normandy is made by W. Kienast, 'Magnus = der Aeltere', *Historische Zeitschrift* 205 (1967), 1–14 (my thanks to John Gillingham for this reference).

⁸ Trevor Foulds, *The Thurgarton Cartulary* (Stamford, Lincs, 1994), p. lv, reports that the church of Aincourt, near Offranville (Dieppe), from which the family name derived, was in the patronage of the abbey of Fécamp, but he cites no source.

⁹ John of Worcester, *Chronica*, ed. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1995–), iii, 62–3.

¹⁰ Evidence for fosterage at William Rufus's court also exists in the case of William fitz Odo, an under-constable in the household of Henry I in the 1120s and '30s, the son of Odo fitz Gamelin, Domesday tenant in chief in Devon. In a personal statement from the time of Pope Eugenius III (1144–53), we learn that he had given up his secular life and become a canon of Lanthony, 'qui regi Willelmo secundo collateralis puer audiuit ...' (W. H. Hart, *Historia et cartularium monasterii S. Petri Gloucestriae*, RS 33 (1863–7), ii, 112–13).

¹¹ Foulds, *Thurgarton Cartulary*, pp. lvii–lix. 'Radulfus de Hencurt' was addressed by Henry I in *Regesta* 1154 for Lincoln cathedral, datable to 1115 × 1116 (by which date his father was presumably dead), and 'Radulfus de Agencurt' in *Regesta* 660 for Durham cathedral, correctly dated to the 1120s by William Farrer, 'An outline itinerary of King Henry I', *EHR* 34 (1919), 303–382, 505–579 [cited by no.], § 489; the editors of *Regesta* dated it 1100 × 1129 and then entered it under 'c. 1103'. The misleading arrangement of *Regesta* has led several people to suppose that Walter d'Aincourt was dead by c. 1103 (I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies* (Oxford, 1960), 15; Foulds, *Thurgarton Cartulary*, p. lvii; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People* (Woodbridge, 1999), 448). Ralph had a younger brother Walter, who witnessed his deed for Bardney abbey (p. ccvii). Foulds follows the lineage through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; G. W. Watson in *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, new edn., 13 vols. (1910–59), iv, 118–30, continues the male line from the creation of a barony by writ in 1299 to the last Baron Deincourt (d. 1422).

‘that an unrecorded family relationship may not infrequently have connected individual barons with the Conqueror’.¹² David Bates also supposed that the plaque claimed a relationship with King William for both Bishop Remigius and the family of Walter d’Aincourt, though his inference of descent from an earlier duke and his concubine would not constitute royal lineage.¹³ Trevor Foulds, discussing the d’Aincourt family as patrons of Thurgarton priory, knew the evidence that William’s mother was named Matilda, and he hovered between two possibilities for her parentage: was she a daughter of William the Conqueror or an Anglo-Saxon princess?¹⁴ I am here able to offer the possibility of a precise explanation.

The name of Walter d’Aincourt’s wife, *Matildis* in Latin, the usual contemporary form of the name later conventionally written Matilda, is found only in two twelfth-century confirmations. None of Walter’s deeds survive to mention her.¹⁵ The couple were early benefactors of St Mary’s abbey in York, and we know from the fourteenth-century liturgical ordinal of the abbey that Walter d’Aincourt’s tomb at that date still occupied a prominent position in the rebuilt choir.¹⁶ In the twelfth century, the monks of St Mary’s compiled a series of bogus charters of confirmation in the names of William II, Henry I, and Henry II. These were closely based on deeds in the archive of the abbey. The deed of Walter and Matilda has not been found, but the compiler of the charter in the name of Henry I abstracted this from it:¹⁷

Walterus ecclesiam eiusdem uille et IIII carrucatas terre et II molendina et decimas suas de Hanawrda et de Blancaneaia et de Corbi et de Cotes et de Turgarstun et de Granabi et de Hicalinga et de Cnapethorp et de Hocartun, Matildis uxor eius I carrucatum terre que fuit Brictiuç in Corbi et siluam quę pertinet ad eandem terram, decimam de dominio de Abintun et de Lins et de Tudenham et decimam Ribaldi de Pichenham et de altera Lins et decimam Herui de Torp, decimam Normanni de Flicaburn, decimam Gerardi in Appelbi

¹² F. M. Stenton [1880–1967], *The First Century of English Feudalism* (Oxford, 1929; 2nd edn., Oxford, 1961), 32n.

¹³ David Bates, *Bishop Remigius of Lincoln 1067–1092* (Lincoln, 1992), 3.

¹⁴ Foulds, *Thurgarton Cartulary*, p. lvi; remarking that William’s fosterage at court was ‘an arrangement that might, perhaps, suit a closer blood-relative than the son of an Anglo-Saxon princess’, he tips the balance towards Norman descent.

¹⁵ Foulds, *Thurgarton Cartulary*, pp. ccvii–ccxxi, supplements the Thurgarton archive with deeds of family members from the archives of Bardney abbey, Belvoir priory, Kirkstead abbey, Stixwold priory, and Welbeck abbey, but there are none in the name of the first Walter d’Aincourt.

¹⁶ The ordinal prescribes that on Christmas day the procession enters the choir and goes ‘ad tumbam Symonis abbatis [d. 1296] quam primo thurificat, deinde Stephani comitis [d. 1137], et postea Walteri Dayncourt, et alias tumbas sicut transeunt’ (Laurentia McLachlan and J. B. L. Tolhurst, *The Ordinal and Custumal of the Abbey of St Mary, York*, 3 vols., Henry Bradshaw Society 73, 75, 84 (1936–51), ii, 183; cited under Count Stephen in *Complete Peerage*, x, 787).

¹⁷ The charters survive in BL MS Add. 38816 (s. xii²), fols. 21r–28v; quotation from that in the name of Henry I, § 52; the full text will be included in Richard Sharpe and others, *Writs and Charters of Henry I*. The words shown in angle-brackets are added from the confirmation in Henry II’s name, where several lines appear to have been omitted in the only extant copy of that in Henry I’s name.

et Gamesthorp < et terram que uocatur Northwda iuxta Burtunam in Lincoln' scira >.

'Walter [gave] the church of the same vill [sc. Belton] and four carucates of land and two mills, and his tithes of Potter Hanworth and Blankney and Corby Glen and Cotham and Thurgarton and Granby and Hickling and Knapthorpe and Hockerton. Matilda his wife [gave] one carucate of land that had belonged to Bricteva in Corby Glen as well as the wood pertaining to it, the tithe of the demesne of Little Abington and Lyng and East Tuddenham, and Ribald's tithe from Pickenham and the other Lyng, and Hervey's tithe from Thorpe, Norman's tithe from Flixborough, Gerard's tithe in Appleby and *Gamesthorp*, < and the land called Northwood near Burton Coggles in Lincolnshire >.'

The identity of Walter with Walter d'Aincourt is not in doubt. When the confirmation in the name of Henry II was made, his surname was included, 'Walterus Daincurt ecclesiam eiusdem uille ...'.¹⁸ The lands and revenues that he gave to St Mary's are easily located among his holdings recorded in Domesday Book.¹⁹ In two of these entries he is called 'Walter the bishop's man', a relationship reflecting his kinship with Bishop Remigius.²⁰ What is more difficult is making sense of the gifts of his wife, whose descent remains unknown. While it is common to find husband and wife making gifts of this kind jointly, it is extremely unusual to find a wife, not a widow, who makes separate gifts. One can only wonder whether their deed included some clause to explain this. Then there are the questions raised by what we can learn about the properties and tithes she gave. Apart from her land in Corby Glen, which was held by an English freewoman in 1086,²¹ most of what Matilda gave was held in 1086 by Count Alan, known as Alan Rufus.²² One of the twelve sons of

¹⁸ Printed from the earliest of the cartularies, now BL MS Harley 236, by William Dugdale and Roger Dodsworth, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 3 vols. (London, 1655–72), i, 387–90, reprinted in the augmented *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. Henry Ellis and others, 8 vols. (London, 1817–30), iii, 548–50 (no. v); and from the charter rolls and BL MS Harley 236 by William Farrer [1861–1924], *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 3 vols. (1914–16), i, 269–77 (no. 354).

¹⁹ Domesday Book [DB] is cited by folio from the edition of Abraham Farley (London, 1783) and by county and section from the Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1975–92).

²⁰ The properties given to St Mary's begin in Belton ('eiusdem uille'), where Walter had the church, four carucates, and three mills in 1086 (DB i, 361r; Lincs § 31. 1). He also gave his tithes from various holdings, Potter Hanworth (Lincs § 31. 17), Blankney (Lincs § 31. 16), Corby Glen (Lincs), where 'Walter the bishop's man' had twelve carucates (DB i, 344v; Lincs §§ 7. 39–41), Cotham ('Cotes', DB i, 288r; Notts § 11. 4), Thurgarton (Notts § 11. 12), Granby (Notts § 11. 26), Hickling (Notts § 11. 30), Knapthorpe (Notts § 11. 9), and Hockerton (Notts § 11. 8). Farrer found little evidence concerning the small Aincourt holding in Yorkshire (*EYC* i, 510–12).

²¹ The first of her gifts was one carucate in Corby Glen, held by a free woman, 'Bricteua' (OE Beorhtgifu), in her own right in 1066 and still in 1086 (DB i, 371r; § 68. 18).

²² Farrer, *EYC* i, 275 n. 2, noted that several of the places named could be identified as lands held by Count Alan: Little Abington (DB i, 194r; Cambs § 14. 14); Lyng (DB ii, 147r; Norf § 4. 29; East Tuddenham (Norf §§ 4. 15, 29; rather than Tuddenham St Martin, near Ipswich, Suff § 3. 18, where a man of Count Alan's constable had a mere 4 acres); Pickenham, held as sub-tenant by Ribald, lord of Middleham (Norf §§ 4. 6–7), who had many manors in Count Alan's fee in Norfolk as well as in Yorkshire; Thorpe he identified as Honingham Thorpe (Norf § 4. 9), but the connexion with Harvey, the count's man in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Essex is not apparent. Gerard is named as sub-tenant only in Cambridgeshire, and I have found no connexion with Appleby (three manors in

Count Eudo of Brittany (d. 1077) and a close kinsman of the dukes of Brittany, he held a vast fee with lands in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, and several other counties.

The puzzle is, how could Matilda give what was held by Count Alan or his men? How indeed could she hold any lands that had been Count Alan's? How does she have the power to make gifts while her husband is living? Count Alan is not known to have married, and he was succeeded in his estates by his younger brothers: Count Alan, known as Alan Niger, and Count Stephen.

An answer, I suggest, lies among the letters of Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury from 1093, much more familiar to historians now than either the D'Eyncourt plaque or the forged confirmations for St Mary's. Two letters, preserved separately and outside the main letter-collections, reveal a sexual relationship between Count Alan Rufus and Gunnhild, described by Anselm in one letter as *filia regis et reginae* 'daughter of the king and queen'. The address of the other letter makes clear that Gunnhild's father was Harold Godwineson, the last Anglo-Saxon king of the English.²³ Might her relationship with Count Alan have produced a daughter Matilda, who could have married Walter d'Aincourt and given property from her father's estate to his abbey in York? The discovery of these letters by the great French scholar, Dom André Wilmart, led him to investigate the careers of Count Alan Rufus and his brother Count Alan Niger.²⁴ Yet the letters have always been considered in only one context, and I shall argue that the relationship between Gunnhild and Count Alan has always been misunderstood.

Appleby, Risby, and Sawcliffe, held by the abbot of Peterborough, Roger de Busli, and Gilbert de Gant, Lincs §§ 8. 27, 17.2, and 24.10) or with 'Gamelstorp' (held by Ivo Taillebois, Lincs § 14. 27).

Norman, the tenant of 'Flicaburn', is identifiable: he must be Norman d'Arcy, a tenant in chief in Lincolnshire in 1086, who held a manor in 'Flichesburg' (Flixborough) (DB i, 361v; Lincs § 32. 17); his grandson Thomas d'Arcy in the reign of Henry II confirmed (among other gifts) the tithes of 'Flikkeburre' to St Mary's abbey in two deeds surviving in an inseximus by the dean and chapter of York (Bodl. MS Dodsworth 76, fol. 121; *Monasticon* iii, 618, nos. iii, iv).

(Note that Great Abington was held in 1066 by Eddeva and in 1086 by Aubrey de Vere, though Count Alan claimed it (DB i, 199v; §§ 29. 10), without success, for in 1166 the two Abingtons were still divided between their heirs; William Farrer, *Feudal Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1920), 54–5.)

²³ F. S. Schmitt [1894–1972], *Sancti Anselmi opera omnia*, 6 vols. (Seckau, Rome, Edinburgh, 1938–61), iv, 43–50 (*Epp.* 168, 169); English translation with notes by Walter Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990–94), ii, 64–74; translated again with brief introduction by Rhona Beare, 'Anselm's letters to Gunhild, daughter of King Harold', *Prudentia* 28: 2 (1996), 25–35. For Wilmart's discovery of its addressee, see n. 50 below.

²⁴ André Wilmart [1876–1941], 'Alain le roux et Alain le noir, comtes de Bretagne', *Annales de Bretagne* 38 (1929), 576–95, following earlier papers on the letters (below, nn. 49, 50). (This excellent paper lies so far outside his normal range of interest that it was overlooked in the posthumous list of his publications, by J. Bignami-Odier and others, *Bibliographie sommaire des travaux du Père André Wilmart OSB* (Rome, 1953), though it was found in time for the loose leaf of addenda.)

Before considering interpretations built on these letters, a few words more should be said about Count Alan Rufus's life and death. He is thought to have taken part in the conquest of England in 1066, but the evidence is not strong; he does appear at William I's side in Rouen in 1070.²⁵ The stages by which he built up the huge estates recorded in Domesday Book are not known, nor has any detailed study been made of his tenurial *antecessores* in different parts of England. What the survey calls his *castellatus* in Yorkshire, with its centre initially at the comital manor of Gilling, later at Richmond castle, can hardly have been created until the latter part of William I's reign, around the same date as Ilbert de Lacy's castlery of Pontefract and Roger de Busli's of Tickhill, both of them also centred on former comital manors.²⁶ Those comital manors are likely not to have been distributed before 1080, when the last earl of Northumbria died and the earldom was dismantled. By then Alan already held estates in eastern England from another dismantled earldom. Some of his lands in Norfolk and Suffolk had been previously held by Earl Ralph, in which context we find a telling phrase: *modo tenet A(lanus) quia tenuit Rad(ulfus) comes* 'Alan now holds it because Earl Ralph held it'.²⁷ Does *quia* imply that he was thought of as successor to the earl? No. The former earl's lands were divided between the king and Count Alan, *quando facta est diuisio terrarum inter regem et comitem* 'when the division of lands was made between the king and the count'.²⁸ Most of what Earl Ralph had held was in the king's hands in Domesday Book. Earl Ralph in East Anglia in 1066 was Ralph the Staller; his son Ralph de Gael followed him as earl around 1069, and the text of Domesday Book does not always differentiate them.²⁹ The younger Ralph lost his lands in 1075, and he is clearly intended where the survey says, *hoc totum tenebat Edricus quando Rad(ulfus) forisfecit* 'Edric held all this when Ralph was forfeit' or *hanc terram habuit episcopus Baiocensis ea die qua Rad(ulfus) forisfecit* 'the bishop of Bayeux had this land on the day when Ralph was forfeit'.³⁰ Some of these lands, therefore, could not have been Alan's before 1075. A small proportion of his manors in Lincolnshire had also been held by Ralph the Staller in 1066, and it is possible that these

²⁵ Wilmart, 'Alain le roux', 578–9, builds this as supposition on the late witness of Geffrei Gaimar; Clay, in *Complete Peerage* x, 783, adds reference to his attesting alongside King William at Rouen in a deed of Gerald de Roumare, which he dates to March × August 1067, though it is now assigned to a slightly later date, 1070 (Bates 237).

²⁶ DB i, 309r, 315r, 319a; §§ 6. 1 (Gilling), 9. 1 (Kippax), 10. 1 (Laughton-en-le-Morthen); all held by Earl Edwin in 1066 and all given first place in their different fees in 1086.

²⁷ DB ii, 147r; Norf § 4. 28; other lands where Earl Ralph is mentioned as Alan's *antecessor* are Norf §§ 4. 1, 23, 28, 30, 37, 45; Suff §§ 3. 1, 10, 15, 18, 59, 61, 98–9.

²⁸ DB ii, 150r; Norf § 4. 51. I have not found evidence for the statement that Count Alan was Earl Ralph's brother-in-law, presumably meaning that Ralph had married a sister of Alan (Helen M. Cam, 'The English lands of the abbey of St Riquier', *EHR* 31 (1916), 443–7, at 446).

²⁹ References to Ralph the Staller in Count Alan's entry are §§ 4. 1 ('rex Edwardus dedit R. comiti'), 23 ('liber homo Rad(ulfi) starle'), 30 ('tenuit Rad(ulfus) comes T. R. E.'), 37 ('soc(mannus) Radulfi Stalra'), 45).

³⁰ DB ii, 149r; Norf § 4. 42, 44, and compare §§ 4. 51, 57; other probable references to Ralph de Gael are Norf §§ 4. 26, 42; Suff §§ 3. 40, 41, 57.

too did not come to Alan until 1075 or later, though there is no mention of Earl Ralph's forfeit in that context.³¹ Strangely, lands that had been William Malet's in 1071 and were taken by Earl Ralph did not revert to Robert Malet, though he had a major role in defeating Earl Ralph's rebellion in 1075 and remained one of the biggest landholders in Suffolk.³² Alan's estates in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Essex will be considered in due course, but there is a strong case for thinking that the earliest core of his fee lay in these three shires. He was a considerable figure in East Anglia, so much so that at Bury St Edmunds, where he was buried, the Breton count is in one context transmuted into earl of East Anglia.³³ In 1086 his holdings made him the fourth largest lay tenant in chief in England.³⁴

Count Alan died early in the reign of William Rufus, but there has been some chronological confusion here. The eighteenth-century scholar Roger Gale placed his death in 1089 and his brother's in 1093, dates that became traditional.³⁵ Wilmart, in the first well-documented study of Alan's career, sets out the same evidence: an obituary for *Alanus comes Rufus* 'Count Alan Rufus' in 1089, associated with the death of Archbishop Lanfranc, and one for *Alanus comes Britannie* 'Alan count of Brittany' in 1093, linked with the consecration of Anselm as archbishop.³⁶ He also found that both Alans were commemorated at St Mary's abbey on 4 August.³⁷ This led Sir Charles Clay to date the death

³¹ DB i, 347r; Lincs §§ 12. 21, 43, 47–9, 60, 62, 91; and compare § 12. 76, where Earl Ralph is mentioned.

³² See, for example, DB ii, 148v, 293v–294r; Norf § 4. 39, Suff §§ 3. 39–41, etc.

³³ The Bury source that provided the year of his death changed his subscription to a diploma from 'Alanus comes' to 'Alanus comes Orientalium Anglorum'; printed from the mid-twelfth-century Bury addenda to the chronicle of John of Worcester in McGurk, *Chronicle of John of Worcester* iii, 312. The diploma in the name of William I was drafted by a scribe from Bury in 1081 but arguably never authenticated by the king; the original survives (Bates 39; D. C. Douglas [1898–1982], *Feudal Documents from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (London, 1932), 50–55, no. 7), but there the count witnesses simply as 'Alanus comes'.

³⁴ J. F. A. Mason, 'The "Honour of Richmond" in 1086', *EHR* 78 (1963), 703–4, noted that Count Alan's lands, worth 'a trifle over £1200 yearly', ranked him behind only Bishop Odo, Count Robert of Mortain, and Roger de Montgomery. Cumulative figures are hazardous. P. Jeulin ('La consistance du comté de Richmond, en Angleterre, d'après le Domesday Book', *Annales de Bretagne* 44 (1937), 250–78 at 275) gives a total of £1,354 in 1066 and £1,011 in 1086; '£1100+' is the figure in C. Warren Hollister, 'Magnates and *curiales* in early Norman England', *Viator* 8 (1977), 63–81, at 65, 75).

³⁵ Roger Gale [1672–1744], *Registrum honoris de Richmond* (London, 1722), p. vii. (This Latin preface was composed in English by Gale and translated by Michael Maittaire (1668–1747), who made the fact public because he felt that Gale cheated him in the matter of payment, as we learn from an anecdote in Thomas Hearne's journal, *Remarks and Collections*, Oxford Historical Society, 11 vols. (1885–1921), ix, 25.) Gale was the source behind the original edition of G. E. C[okayne, 1825–1911], *Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, 8 vols. (London, 1887–98), vi, 343; followed, for example, by Farrer, *Feudal Cambridgeshire*, 228, and Douglas, *Feudal Documents*, 152 (no. 169).

³⁶ Wilmart, 'Alain le roux', 584, 595–7.

³⁷ A calendar of obits in the St Mary's ordinal, fol. 259v, commemorates the two Alans together, 'ii nonas Augusti obiit Alanus comes Rufus et Alanus comes niger' (McLachlan and Tolhurst,

of the elder of the two, Alan Rufus, to 4 August 1089; evidence for the death of the same Count Alan in 1093 was then assigned to Alan Niger, a date previously unsupported.³⁸ The truth is that we do not know when Alan Niger died. Different sources provide two different years for the death of Alan Rufus; this is not unusual, but the rare circumstance of homonymous brothers disguised the awkward fact. Richard Southern corrected the error.³⁹ The year 1089 was drawn from the Annals of Margam, which erroneously links the deaths of Lanfranc and Count Alan in one year.⁴⁰ It appeared also to chime with the account of the founding of St Mary's abbey by Abbot Stephen (d. 1112), which suggested that Alan died as early as 1088.⁴¹ The date 1093 derives from an addition made at Bury St Edmunds in a copy of the chronicle of John of Worcester, which relates how Count Alan was buried by Abbot Baldwin in the cemetery outside the south door of the abbey at Bury.⁴² The late medieval register of the honour of Richmond likewise says that Alan Rufus was buried at Bury.⁴³ Any question as to which Count Alan they refer to is removed by a deed of Count Stephen, a younger brother, who gave property to the monks of Bury in 1135 in recognition of the fact that his brother, Alan Rufus, was buried there.⁴⁴ Less specifically,

Ordinal of St Mary's iii, 371; the obits are also printed in H. H. E. Craster and M. E. Thornton, *The Chronicle of St Mary's Abbey, York*, Surtees Society 148 (1934), 112–14; cited by Clay, *EYC* iv, 86 n. 7; *Complete Peerage* x, 785). The singular verb, and similar entries for 'Count Stephen and his wife Hawise', 'Richard d'Orval and his relatives', suggest that the date of death belongs to the first name.

³⁸ C. T. Clay [1885–1978], *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 10 vols., Yorkshire Archaeological Society (1935–65), iv, 85–6; Clay also contributed to the account of the family in *Complete Peerage* x, 779–797.

³⁹ R. W. Southern [1912–2001], *St Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), 187 n. 2; Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), 314, was not so sure. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan ('The lords of Richmond 1086–1138', appendix to her paper, 'The Bretons and Normans of England, 1066–1154: the family, the fief, and the feudal monarchy', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36 (1992), 42–78, at 77–8), sets out the evidence again very clearly.

⁴⁰ Printed by H. R. Luard [1825–1891], *Annales monastici*, 5 vols. RS 36 (1864–9), i, 4; cited by Gale, p. vii; Wilmart, 'Alain le roux', 584; Clay, *EYC* iv, 86 n. 7, and *Complete Peerage* x, 785.

⁴¹ Stephen of Whitby's account, printed in an unsatisfactory form in *Monasticon* iii, 544–6 (no. i), dates Count Alan's gift of the site of the abbey to 1088 and then says, 'Paucis admodum diebus transactis, mortuus est amicus noster comes Alanus' (p. 546a). Nicholas Karn has a new edition in hand.

⁴² Below, n. 44; cited by Wilmart, 'Alain le roux', 597, and by Clay, *EYC* iv, 87 n. 2, and *Complete Peerage* x, 786. The same source adds that, at a later date, Count Alan's body was moved, at the request of the monks of St Mary's in York and of his family, from outside the south door (*iuxta australe ostium ecclesie*) to a corresponding position inside the abbey (*in opposito loco prioris tumulationis*). At Bury, the south door of the church led directly into the cemetery, and the cloister lay on the north side of the church.

⁴³ 'Et obiit sine exitu de corpore suo et apud Sanctum Edmundum sepultus est'; printed from BL MS Cotton Faustina B. vii (s. xv), fols. 72r–136r, by Gale, *Registrum honoris*, 1; excerpt in *Monasticon* v, 574 (no. xv).

⁴⁴ The entry was printed by Thomas Arnold [1823–1900], *Memorials of St Edmund*, 3 vols. RS 96 (1890–96), i, 350; it is printed again in an appendix by McGurk, *Chronicle of John of Worcester* iii, 314. Wilmart and Clay took this entry to refer to the burial of Count Alan Niger, supposing

but much nearer the time, Count Alan Niger, gave land to the monks of Bury for the souls of his father and mother and of his brother Alan.⁴⁵ Combining the date 4 August from commemoration at an abbey that looked on Alan Rufus as a founder with the year 1093 recorded at the place of his burial gives an apparently well-founded date for his death. The recognition that Count Alan Rufus lived until 4 August 1093 resolves other problems. In witnessing acts of William I and William II, Count Alan is never qualified as Rufus or Niger, which argues that there was no ambiguity; all occurrences are the same Count Alan. His attestations continue until 27 January 1091.⁴⁶ His death was quite recent when Archbishop Anselm wrote his letters to the count's lover, King Harold's daughter Gunnhild. The younger brother Count Alan Niger succeeded after Alan Rufus's death. He gave land *pro anima fratris mei A(lani) comitis* 'for the soul of my brother Count Alan' to St Mary's abbey, which looked on his brother as a founder.⁴⁷ And, as we have seen, he gave land to the monks of Bury. Anselm's story provides the only other evidence for Alan Niger's presence in England. The negative is not a strong basis for argument, but he cannot be seen to have taken any active role at William II's court. Count Stephen is thought to have succeeded to the lands in Brittany of an elder brother, Geoffrey Boterel, who was killed at Dol on 24 August 1093.⁴⁸ Stephen is first seen to have succeeded to Alan Niger's English estates in a writ of William II, datable to 28 December in a year when King William spent Christmas in Normandy, 1096, 1097, or 1098.⁴⁹

that both Alans were buried at Bury. In 1135, however, Count Stephen gave to the monks of Bury 'totam terram quam habui infra burgum Cantebrigie in elemosina pro anima patris mei et fratrum meorum, Alani uidelicet Rufi in ecclesia sancti Ædmundi iacentis et aliorum, et pro anima mea' (copied from the original in one of the later Bury cartularies, CUL MS Gg. 4. 4, fol. 380v; Douglas, *Feudal Documents*, 155, no. 173, bases his text on inferior copies in earlier cartularies, relegating part of the witness list and the date to his textual notes; Clay, *EYC* iv, 13–14, no. 11, using Douglas's notes, fixes his text).

⁴⁵ Douglas, *Feudal Documents*, 152 (no. 169); Clay, *EYC* iv, 3–4 (no. 3). Both assign the date 1089 × 1093. The date must be revised to August 1093 × December 1097, after Alan Rufus's death and before that of Abbot Baldwin of Bury, to whom the deed is addressed.

⁴⁶ William II's diploma granting the abbey of St Peter at Bath to John, bishop of Somerset, surviving as an original, W. de G. Birch, 'Original charters', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 38 (1882), 382–97 at 387; *Regesta* 314–15.

⁴⁷ Henry I's confirmation for St Mary's (above, n. 17), §§ 27, 30; merged into one and moved to follow Alan Rufus's gifts in Henry II's confirmation, § 5 (Farrer, *EYC* i, 270–71). One of Count Alan Niger's deeds of gift, the source of § 30, has survived through an *inspeximus* of 1433 (Clay, *EYC* iv, 3, no. 2, with the incorrect date 1089 × 1093). Among the witnesses is Geoffrey Bainard, sheriff of York, who held office in the early part of William II's reign but does not really help to define the date of the act; Keats-Rohan, 'The lords of Richmond', 78, favours '1093 × 1094/96'.

⁴⁸ Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice [1693–1750], *Mémoires pour servir à preuves de l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1742–6), i, 103, a precise annal-entry whose origin is not clear; cited by Keats-Rohan, 'The lords of Richmond', 78. Other annals give earlier years without the date of the month (Morice i, 5 (1091), 151 (1092)).

⁴⁹ William II for the abbey of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in Angers, *Regesta* 412a, printed in *Regesta* ii, 411 (no. lxix); it was known to Clay, *EYC* iv, 7 and n. 5, who thought that Count Stephen had already inherited in 1093. Keats-Rohan, 'The lords of Richmond', 78, dates this first occurrence too confidently to 1098, 'the year in which Alan Niger presumably died'. She attributes

Now, we turn to Anselm's letters. The first is addressed 'to his beloved sister and daughter, Gunnhild, daughter of King Harold', as we know from a single complete copy.⁵⁰ The second does not name the addressee, but she is said to be *filia regis et reginae* 'daughter of the king and queen', and all internal signs are that she is the same person. This letter has survived in only one copy.⁵¹ In each case one has to wonder how these letters came to be copied at all. If copies had remained in Anselm's archive at Canterbury in the 1120s, it is hard to believe that all three selectors, one of them William of Malmesbury, would have passed over letters to King Harold's daughter.⁵²

the date 1098 to Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 426 (genealogical table), who (also incorrectly) says 'before 1098'.

⁵⁰ André Wilmart, 'La destinataire de la lettre de Saint Anselme sur l'état et le vœux de religion', *Revue Bénédictine* 38 (1926), 331–4, was the first to identify a manuscript that contained, in a small clutch of six letters, a copy of *Ep.* 168 with the decisive superscription, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 8368–96 (cat. 1111) (s. xii^{ex}, England), fol. 216v–217v. It is not known from where this group was copied. The only other copy of this letter, now in Trier, Stadtbibliothek, MS 768 (s. xii^{ex}), has an incomplete address to 'his beloved sister and daughter'. Were Gunnhild's name and parentage deliberately omitted? This manuscript provided the text of some fourteen letters included in the first collected works of Anselm in print, Nürnberg 1491 (*GW* 2032), from which this letter was included in subsequent editions. On the basis of the shortened address, the letter had been thought to address another royal daughter living at Wilton, King Malcolm's daughter Edith Matilda (Martin Rule, *The Life and Times of St Anselm*, 2 vols. (London, 1883), ii, 260–63), on whom see below.

⁵¹ Unknown to earlier editors, *Ep.* 169 was discovered by André Wilmart, 'Une lettre inédite de S. Anselme à une moniale inconstante', *Revue Bénédictine* 40 (1928), 319–32, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 344 (s. xii^{ex}, Durham), fol. 38r–39r, the middle of a group of five letters by and to Anselm, embedded among short passages of Victorine teaching. The letters are *Ep.* 468 to Abbot William of Le Bec, *Ep.* 65 to Abbot William of Saumur, *Ep.* 169 to Gunnhild, *Ep.* 281 from Pope Paschal II, and *Ep.* 240 from Bishop Hildebert of Le Mans). From what sort of exemplar might this varied little group have been copied?

⁵² Schmitt paused to consider whether the two letters might not be authentic but affirmed that they were ('Die echten und unechten Stücke der Korrespondenz des hl. Anselm von Canterbury', *Revue Bénédictine* 65 (1955), 218–27, at 219–20). Studies in the transmission of Anselm's letters by Schmitt, Vaughn, and Southern have concentrated on the two major letter-collections made at Canterbury and at Le Bec and on the selection made from the archive in Canterbury by William of Malmesbury. There is not even a synopsis of where letters survive only independently of these collections. With the two letters to Gunnhild we can assume that the original delivered to Gunnhild herself does not lie behind the extant copies. Nor is there any reason to suspect that either letter was circulated at the time, as some of Anselm's letters were. Copies retained by Anselm might be expected to have stayed in the archive at Canterbury, but neither of these letters was included in the twelfth-century selections made to accompany Anselm's works or to document his life and teaching. Walter Fröhlich, 'The letters omitted from Anselm's collection of letters', *ANS* 6 (1985), 58–71, asks why Anselm omitted eighty-six letters found in Schmitt's edition but not in the principal Canterbury collection. In doing so, he treats the two letters to Gunnhild as part of a 'group of eight letters' written to Bishop Osmund and to nuns in his diocese (pp. 65–6), a group defined by subject but not by transmission. Five of them (*Epp.* 177, 183–4, 190, 195) are transmitted together and in an early copy, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 1. 37 (s. xii^{im}), fols. 67r–68v, along with a sixth omitted from the eventual edition (F. S. Schmitt, 'Zur Überlieferung der Korrespondenz Anselms von Canterbury. Neue Briefe', *Revue Bénédictine* 43 (1931), 224–38). Fröhlich does not ask where the copyist found them. The combination in this case of four letters to

From this second letter, we learn that Gunnhild had been the lover of Count Alan Rufus. The affair was discussed at some length by Richard Southern, and it has continued to attract attention.⁵³ The first letter, though it alone identifies Gunnhild, is lighter on circumstantial detail. From it we learn that Anselm had heard that Gunnhild had worn the monastic habit for a long time but she had thrown it off, a fact widely known (*non latet sed nimis apertum est*). She was never professed, but Anselm treats her throughout as a lapsed nun whose duty was to return to the cloister; her soul's salvation depended upon it:⁵⁴

It is impossible for you to be saved in any way unless you return to the habit and intention that you cast off. Even though you were not consecrated by the bishop and did not read your profession in his presence (*nec coram ipso professionem legeris*), nevertheless profession is evident and cannot be denied since you wore the habit of a holy intention in public and private.

The dating of this letter is inevitably difficult, but in the second letter more contextual detail emerges. We learn that Anselm and Gunnhild have met, and that she had delighted in his conversation; she had also written to him. Anselm now writes:

Take to heart, dearest and most longed-for daughter, to the honour of God and to your own great benefit, take to heart these words and the admonition of one who truly loves you. When once you first spoke with him, you said then that you wanted to be with him always so that you could continually enjoy his conversation, which you said was delightful to you, and afterwards you wrote him a letter full of sweetness. From this I was able to learn that you would not deny the holy intention of which you then wore the habit.

In writing the first letter, Anselm acted on what he had heard. We are left to wonder when and where their meeting took place and what Gunnhild's letter said. Did they meet, as Richard Southern supposed, in a monastic setting in

Bishop Osmund and two to nuns of his diocese suggests that they were copied from the originals at Salisbury; at my request Dr Tessa Webber has examined the manuscript and confirms that several Salisbury hands, recognizable to her, wrote this part of the book. The Gunnhild letters survive only separately in copies from the late twelfth century. Are we to suppose, therefore, that different individuals at different dates had access to the archive and were permitted to make copies of otherwise unavailable letters?

⁵³ R. W. Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), 185–93, and again more briefly in his *St Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), 262–4; David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), 267–8; Eleanor Searle, 'Women and the legitimization of succession at the Norman conquest', *ANS* 3 (1980), 159–70 with notes at 226–9 (at pp. 166–9); Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), 310–14; Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester c. 1008–1095* (Oxford, 1990), 224–8; Ian W. Walker, *Harold. The last Anglo-Saxon king* (Stroud, Gloucs, 1997), 129, 195–6; Frank Barlow, *The Godwins. The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (London, 2002), 162–4; Sally N. Vaughn, *St Anselm and the Handmaidens of God* (Turnhout, 2002), 184–202; Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans* (Oxford, 2003), 216–17; Lois L. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2003), 20–22; Peter Rex, *Harold II. The doomed Saxon king* (Stroud, Gloucs, 2005), 120–24.

⁵⁴ Anselm, *Ep.* 168.

1086 when Anselm, as abbot of Le Bec, visited England? If so, why did he say only that he had heard she had worn the veil? Or had they met recently, since his first letter? And where? Did her letter really say that she was wearing the habit? Yet Anselm goes on in the second letter:⁵⁵

You were the daughter of the king and queen. Where are they? They are worms and dust. Their exalted rank, their pleasures, their riches neither preserved them nor went with them. You loved Count Alan Rufus and he loved you. Where is he now? Where has your beloved lover gone? Go now, sister, and put yourself with him in the bed where he now lies. Gather his worms to your breast. Embrace his corpse. Kiss his bare teeth, for his lips have already decayed. He does not care now for your love in which he delighted while he lived, and you now shudder at the putrid flesh you once desired.

This is strong imagery, very different from what one finds in Anselm's lament for his own lost virginity.⁵⁶ Gunnhild and Count Alan had loved one another (*amasti amantem te comitem Alanum Ruffum*), but Alan was now dead. By his death, Anselm speculates, the count had been prevented from his sacrilegious intention (*sacrilegam uoluntatem*); and perhaps God took him away from this life in order to preserve Gunnhild. She, however, was now involved with Count Alan Niger:

Why are you not afraid that because of you God may kill Count Alan Niger by a similar death? Or, worse, if you are joined with him, God may condemn him with you by eternal death. ... For do you think that, if you die in his bed or he in yours, either you or he will see the Lord Christ except to be condemned at judgement?

People had told Anselm that she did not feel bound to the monastery because a promise of the abbacy had not been honoured – leaving us to muse on who was telling these tales, some senior churchman with a long memory?⁵⁷ He urges her to cleanse her heart from carnal lust and to return to the religious life, begging, beseeching, and commanding her to resume the habit. He asks her to reply to him by letter – again – and not to scorn his advice.

Both of Anselm's letters to Gunnhild were written after he became

⁵⁵ This passage from *Ep.* 169 is translated by Southern in *Anselm and his Biographer*, 185; *Saint Anselm. A Portrait*, 263. Robert Bartlett quoted 'this necrophiliac fantasy' in his own version in *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), 564.

⁵⁶ Anselm, *Deploratio uirginitatis male amissae*, ed. Schmitt, *Sancti Anselmi opera*, iii, 80–83, one of his earliest works, concentrates on fear, horror, darkness, and the punishment in hell of those who fornicate.

⁵⁷ It is doubtless rash to speculate, but two possible candidates spring to mind. Baldwin, abbot of Bury since 1065, had the length of memory and had presumably met both Gunnhild and Count Alan Niger recently at the funeral of Count Alan Rufus in 1093; Count Alan Niger's deed for Bury is addressed to him; and he would certainly have had access to the archbishop, for instance at the king's Christmas court in Gloucester in 1093. Archbishop Thomas of York had been in England since before 1070 as King William's chaplain; he would have known Count Alan in Yorkshire; and he would also have had access to Archbishop Anselm.

archbishop.⁵⁸ He does not use the qualifier *electus*, so it may be inferred that they were written after his consecration on 4 December 1093, exactly four months after Count Alan Rufus died.⁵⁹ Richard Southern introduced the story of Gunnhild's relationship with the count in the context of another episode from the summer of 1093, for which there is nearly contemporary evidence.

Early in 1094 Anselm wrote to Bishop Osmund of Salisbury about Edith, known as Matilda, daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and Queen Margaret, daughter of Edward Ætheling and niece of Edward the Confessor. She had left a monastery in Osmund's diocese in 1093 – this is presumed to be Wilton – and Anselm, claiming the support of King William, wanted her to return to the cloister.⁶⁰ A few years later Anselm arranged the controversial marriage of this Matilda to King Henry I, and in that context Eadmer fills in some background of what happened in 1093.⁶¹ Matilda had worn the veil but she was not an oblate and she had never been professed as a nun; she herself, according to Eadmer, told Anselm that she had worn the veil only to satisfy her aunt, Christina, herself a nun. In 1100 a council of bishops and abbots was summoned at Lambeth to advise the king, and they decided that, in accordance with the opinion of Archbishop Lanfranc, she should be considered free to marry.⁶² Eadmer relates how Lanfranc with the advice of a council – which some of those present in 1100 had themselves attended – had ruled that Anglo-Saxon women who at the time of the Conquest had protected their chastity by retreating to convents should, with the restoration of peace, make a choice to be professed or to leave the convent. A letter of Lanfranc survives, expressing the same view: *hoc est*

⁵⁸ Anselm was nominated to the see on 6 March 1093, enthroned 25 September, and consecrated 4 December 1093 (Eadmer, *Historia nouorum*, ed. M. Rule, RS 81 (1884), 32–7, 41–2).

⁵⁹ On this point, Vaughn, *St Anselm and the Handmaidens*, 197, falls into error, saying that Anselm *does* style himself 'elect' in *Ep.* 169, which she therefore dates to *before* 4 December 1093. Her dating of *Ep.* 168 to August–September 1093 (p. 195) is merely relative and stands in contradiction to reasoning from the use of 'elect'.

⁶⁰ Anselm, *Ep.* 177 (Schmitt, iv, 60–61; Fröhlich, ii, 91–2), transmitted outside the principal collections in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 1. 37, pt 3 (s. xiii^m, Salisbury), and first published by Schmitt, 'Zur Überlieferung der Korrespondenz Anselms', 231–2). *Ep.* 177 is discussed by Southern, *Anselm and his biographer*, 183. The letter is datable on internal evidence after Anselm was consecrated and before he began his first exile, 4 December 1093 × 8 November 1097; shortly before writing, Anselm had spoken with King William, who was about to cross the Channel; the two possible dates are therefore March 1094 and September 1096. The earlier is a better fit with other correspondence.

⁶¹ Eadmer, *Historia nouorum*, 121–5; Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 183–5.

⁶² Texts and discussion in D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C. N. L. Brooke, *Councils & Synods with other documents relating to the English Church, AD 871–1204* (Oxford, 1981), ii, 661–7. It is not clear who was present, but there were six bishops in 1100 who might already as bishops have attended the council convened by Lanfranc; Archbishop Thomas of York (since 1070) is probably ruled out (*ibid.*, 662 n. 1), leaving Osbern of Exeter (since 1072), Gundulf of Rochester (since 1077), Maurice of London (since 1085), Robert of Chester (since the end of 1085), and John of Bath (since 1088). In the circumstances, one might expect the question to have come up sooner rather than later in Lanfranc's time as archbishop.

consilium regis et nostrum 'this is the king's policy and our own'.⁶³ Another source, Hermann of Tournai, fills in different detail by introducing into his account of their deliberations a statement by the abbess of Wilton. William II had visited Wilton to see the young Matilda, but the abbess, fearing an indecent assault on her, hid her and put a veil on her head; the ruse worked, for the king made no attempt to speak with her.⁶⁴ Eadmer says nothing of this visit to Wilton by the king, but he may have known of it, for it seems to have shaped his telling the story of a lustful visit by King Edgar.⁶⁵ Within a week of King William's visit, said the abbess, the girl's father came to the abbey; when King Malcolm found Matilda in her veil, he was angry, and took her away with him. One may well ask whether the story can be squared with Anselm's letter to Bishop Osmund, for what could Osmund do if she had left his diocese? At this point we rejoin Eadmer, relating how Matilda herself explained her position to Anselm; she said that, when her father found her in a veil, he took the veil off her head, cursing the person who had put it on her and exclaiming (in words Eadmer puts

⁶³ Lanfranc, *Ep.* 53, ed. Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford, 1978), 166–7. It is addressed in the two principal manuscripts (NV) to Bishop G. and in the third manuscript (Lz) to Gundulf, bishop of Rochester from 1077. Previous editions had printed 'Goisfrido' (starting with that of Luc D'Achery in 1648, repr. *PL* 150. 531), identified as Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances (for example, A. J. Macdonald, *Lanfranc. A study of his life, work, and writing* (Oxford, 1926; 2nd edn 1944), 263–4; John Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray, bishop of Coutances, 1049–1093', *EHR* 59 (1944), 129–61, at 149). This would allow an earlier dating but raises questions as to why Geoffrey should be concerned. Clover noted that he acted as a king's justice, but Gibson accepted the reading 'Gundulfo', 'mainly because it is not a case for a king's justice'. The source of the reading, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 363 (s. xii), fols. 110v–111r, is a selection of letters of Fulbert of Chartres (9) and Lanfranc (5), all of them embodying judgements; they include *Ep.* 51, in which Lanfranc comments on a decision by 'Constantiensis episcopus'. Given the prevalence of initials in Anglo-Norman usage, the reading 'Gundulfo' is likely to be a twelfth-century guess. There is no manuscript authority at all for the reading 'Goisfrido', for D'Achéry printed the text from a sixteenth-century transcript, now BN lat. 13412, of the collection copied for Le Bec in the mid-twelfth century, now BAV MS Regin. lat. 285 (V), which reads 'G. episcopo'.

⁶⁴ Hermann, *De restauratione S. Martini Tornacensis*, § 15, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH Scriptores* xiv, 281; transl. Lynn H. Nelson (Pennsylvania, PA, 1996), 31–3. Writing in 1142, Hermann anachronistically names the Scottish king David.

⁶⁵ In his *Vita S. Dunstani*, § 56 (ed. A. J. Turner and B. J. Muir (Oxford, 2006), 134–7), retells from Osbern's *Vita S. Dunstani* an episode in which King Edgar (d. 975) raped a nun. Eadmer's version locates the episode at Wilton and adds details similar to the case of Matilda: the victim was a woman of high birth living among nuns but she had not taken the veil; she placed a veil on her own head to protect her chastity when the king visited; but the king dragged the veil from her head and raped her. In *Historia nouorum*, 121, Eadmer recites Matilda's descent from King Edgar, and in the prologue he praises King Edgar, his relationship with Dunstan, and Edgar's son Edward. In the prologue to *Vita S. Dunstani*, he is at pains to correct Osbern's story that this Edward was the offspring of the raped nun. Of course, Matilda had a brother named Edgar, who was king of Scots from 1097 to 1107. The editors of the *uita* make the parallel with Matilda's case (n. 121), citing Eadmer, Hermann of Tournai, and Southern, and suggesting that 'Eadmer may have incorporated elements of the queen's testimony into his retelling of the story of Edgar's rape inside the convent'. If the connexion is accepted, it indicates that Eadmer knew a story of King William's visit to Wilton like that related decades later by Hermann of Tournai but chose not to mention it in *Historia nouorum*.

into the girl's mouth) 'that he would rather intend me for Count Alan's wife than for the company of nuns'.⁶⁶

Hermann's source for what the abbess of Wilton said in 1100 may have been Baldwin of Tournai, monk of Le Bec, and Anselm's trusted diplomatic envoy. Hermann certainly cites Baldwin in another context, and it is very likely both that Baldwin was present at the discussion in 1100 and that he revisited Tournai over the next few years. Hermann, incidentally, took a very different line from Eadmer's on Anselm's view of the marriage of King Henry and Matilda: while Eadmer says that Anselm brought it about, Hermann says that he heard Anselm himself say that no good would come of it.⁶⁷

A third source, Orderic Vitalis, not a reliable informant for this period, says that Matilda had been sent to her aunt Christina, a nun at Romsey. Did he mean at Wilton?⁶⁸ After the death of her father King Malcolm, says Orderic, Count Alan Rufus sought her hand from King William.⁶⁹ In fact King Malcolm outlived

⁶⁶ Eadmer, *Historia nouorum*, 122: 'contestans se comiti Alano me potius in uxorem quam in contubernium sanctimonialium praedestinasse'.

⁶⁷ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 184n, treats it as fact that Baldwin was Hermann's source for this account in § 15, but it is no more than a plausible guess. Baldwin of Tournai is mentioned by Hermann only in § 13 as an envoy to Emperor Henry IV in 1071 from Robert the Frisian, who had just seized the county of Flanders (Hermann, *De restauratione*, § 13; ed. Waitz, 280; Nelson, 28). At that time Baldwin himself had recently been appointed as advocate (*aduocatus*) of the city of Tournai by Bishop Radbod, an office he still held c. 1082 (E. Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility before 1300* (Kortrijk, 1975–6), iv, 1169). As Hermann says, Baldwin later became Anselm's monk; and he told Hermann the story recounted in § 13 when Hermann was a small boy (*puerulus*). Since Hermann is thought to have been born c. 1090, a date soon after 1100 for their conversation is plausible. We know from Eadmer and from Anselm's letters that Baldwin was a monk of Le Bec and Anselm's regular envoy to Rome during the disputes of 1103–6, but he might have revisited Tournai at almost any time. Southern's note proposes 'a visit to his old monastery, probably in 1101–2'. No reason is offered for the precise date, and there must be a misunderstanding if Southern thought that Baldwin had ever been a monk of Saint-Martin at Tournai, where Hermann would later become abbot. Baldwin was a monk at Le Bec, and he appears from the *Liber uitae* to have joined the community in the 1080s; monastic life at Saint-Martin was only restored by Odo of Tournai in 1092, the primary subject of Hermann's narrative. It should be noted, however, that at the end of § 15, Hermann describes himself as a youth (*adolescens*) when he heard Anselm himself speak of the marriage between Henry and Matilda.

⁶⁸ The role of Christina comes from Eadmer's account of the conversation between Matilda and Anselm (*Historia nouorum*, 122); Christina, daughter of Edward Ætheling and sister of Queen Margaret, was a nun of Romsey, as we know from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s.a. 1086, and its derivatives as well as from Orderic; Matilda's informal veiling by an unnamed abbess of Wilton comes from Hermann. These three facts do not conveniently join up. Anselm's letter to Bishop Osmund (*ep.* 177) shows that Matilda had been staying at Wilton in Salisbury diocese, and not at Romsey in Winchester diocese; another letter (*ep.* 185, datable to spring or summer 1094) shows that the abbess of Wilton was named Matilda. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, V § 418 (ed. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1998–9), i, 754), who was acquainted with Eadmer's *Historia nouorum*, Anselm's letter-collection at Canterbury, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle texts, says that Matilda was brought up among nuns 'at Wilton and Romsey', but he may be merely merging his conflicting sources.

⁶⁹ Orderic Vitalis, VIII 22, ed. M. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1968–80), iv, 272; Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 184. Orderic's context here is Queen Margaret's arrangements for her

Count Alan by more than three months, though he too was dead before Anselm was consecrated as archbishop; Malcolm was killed while raiding Northumberland on 13 November 1093.⁷⁰ Orderic here appears to have sought to interpret the story he found in Eadmer.

Southern takes this notion of an intended marriage between Matilda of Scotland and Count Alan and merges the story he constructed from Hermann and Orderic with what we know from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle about a meeting between King William and King Malcolm at Gloucester in 1093: 'the curious fact later emerged from the gossiping of Anselm's man of business, Baldwin, that Rufus had gone to see her [Matilda] on his way to Gloucester'. The meeting at Gloucester failed because William refused to see or speak with Malcolm. Southern writes, 'that Matilda was a central piece in these negotiations may be inferred from Malcolm's immediate reaction to Rufus's insulting behaviour at Gloucester: he went straight to Wilton, tore the veil off his daughter's head, and took her back to Scotland'. This whole sequence of events is a construct, and Matilda's role in the business of their meeting is conjecture. Neither Hermann, talking about King William's visit to Wilton, nor Eadmer, about King Malcolm's, makes any connexion with the meeting at Gloucester. Discreetly synthesizing different sources, Southern inferred a failed plan by King Malcolm to marry Matilda to Count Alan, rejecting as 'a very far-fetched interpretation' Wilmart's view that Malcolm's exclamation was ironical, 'anything (even marriage to such a scoundrel as Count Alan) would be better than to see you as a nun'.⁷¹ Wilmart's reading of the statement 'avec une forte nuance d'ironie' was prompted by his recollection of Anselm's correspondence with Gunnhild: Count Alan—Wilmart thought it was Alan Niger in 1093—already had a reputation for his relationship with another woman who had worn the religious habit.⁷²

Having connected the meeting at Gloucester in 1093 with two dateless episodes at Wilton, Southern also made a firm connexion between the latter and Anselm's letters to Gunnhild after December 1093. He supposed that Count Alan met Gunnhild when he visited Wilton to see Matilda and preferred the older woman.⁷³ He dates this visit only by reference to the supposed plan for a marriage, and, it must be remembered, no source mentions a visit by the count. The 'strange and passionate romance' begun in 1093 came to an early end when Alan died on 4 August: 'The clearest fact is that Count Alan Rufus had died after his abduction of Gunhilda and before their marriage'.⁷⁴ This intended marriage

children after the death of King Malcolm (mentioned by Orderic on the previous page). Chibnall suggests that Orderic may have had a garbled notion of the story in Eadmer; Wilmart, 'Une lettre inédite', 330, noting that Orderic 'accumule en ce passage les invraisemblances', had wondered whether he sought to make more complex allusions.

⁷⁰ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s.a. 1093; John of Worcester, *Chronica* iii, 66; *Historia regum*, 221–2.

⁷¹ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 185n.

⁷² Wilmart, 'Alain le roux et Alain le noir', 601.

⁷³ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 185.

⁷⁴ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 185–6.

was the ‘sacrilegious intention’ thwarted by providence.⁷⁵ The linkage of the dealings, variously reported, over Matilda’s future and Gunnhild’s relationship with Count Alan has remained in all discussion of the subject. Without bringing forward fresh evidence, different commentators have made their own modifications in their reading of the stories. Southern’s synthesis has become history, vividly restated as such by Eleanor Searle:⁷⁶

At the same time another woman best kept incarcerated was taken from Wilton: Gunnilda, daughter of Harold Godwinsson. At the angry breakup of the Gloucester court, King Malcolm and Count Alan had ridden off, angry men both, and, as it happened, men doomed to die within months. As if they rode together – as well they might – King Malcolm snatched his daughter from Wilton, while his chosen son-in-law rode off with Gunnilda from the same nunnery. In her case Anselm knew that she had willingly worn the veil, for he himself had once talked to her. The facts as we know them are few. Count Alan abducted Gunnilda within a day or so of the breakdown of negotiations at Gloucester, as I have said. Shortly, and without having married her, he was dead.

Southern’s notion that Alan abducted Gunnhild is not supported by anything in Anselm’s letter: she cast off her own veil and she loved Alan. Frank Barlow saw her as ‘living in sin with a husband who, Anselm wishfully suggested, was about to despise and repudiate her’, a different take on that ‘sacrilegious intention’.⁷⁷ But surely Anselm could not have seen such repudiation as sacrilege?

There is in any case a fatal flaw in the close connexion between Malcolm’s meeting with the king, the removal of Matilda from Wilton, and the abduction of Gunnhild by Count Alan. Southern’s chronology was closed off by the death of Count Alan on 4 August 1093. This appears to be what he had in mind when he wrote that the marriage-plan supposedly intended by King Malcolm ‘had already broken down by August 1093’.⁷⁸ He is therefore unclear as to when Count Alan may have abducted Gunnhild from Wilton, or when King William visited Wilton before his meeting with King Malcolm. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is imprecise on the date of that meeting, but John of Worcester’s Latin version of the Chronicle provides the exact date and more detail as to what King William wanted: the meeting between King Malcolm and King William was arranged by envoys to take place at Gloucester on the feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle,

⁷⁵ Anselm, *Ep.* 169 (Schmitt, iv, 48; Fröhlich, ii, 71).

⁷⁶ Searle, ‘Women and the succession’, 167.

⁷⁷ Barlow, *William Rufus*, 314; id., *The Godwins*, 163. Barlow, it should be noted, thought that *Ep.* 168 was written while Count Alan Rufus was still alive, a reading of the letter that cannot be refuted on internal evidence; he accepted that Anselm’s style argues for a date after 4 December 1093 but leaves open the question of when he thought Count Alan died, noting only that, ‘if we accept 4 August’ (for the date of his death), ‘1093 seems to be impossible’ (*William Rufus*, 314).

⁷⁸ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 184: ‘We cannot be sure why this marriage plan broke down, but it had already broken down by August 1093’; *ibid.* 187: ‘he [Count Alan] probably died on 4 August 1093. If this is so, his death may have helped to bring the negotiations between the kings of England and Scotland to an end’.

24 August 1093.⁷⁹ Searle's reading is impossible, for what Southern did not make clear is that Count Alan Rufus was already dead, when he was supposed to be riding with King Malcolm to Wilton. King Malcolm's exclamation about marrying Matilda to Count Alan would, on Southern's sequence of events, have been uttered at least three weeks after the count died. It appears that Southern took no account of this crucial evidence and supposed all the visits to Wilton as well as the meeting at Gloucester took place weeks or months earlier in the year.⁸⁰

The whole scenario is brought to nothing. There was no marriage-plan for Matilda and Count Alan. There is no reason to involve Count Alan in visits to see Matilda at Wilton abbey, and Southern's *mise-en-scène* for his abduction of King Harold's daughter Gunnhild vanishes. We may, if we wish, retain the notion that Alan abducted a nun of riper years, but even Anselm's report suggests that it was a wholly mutual relationship.

On my reading of Anselm's letters, there is nothing to suggest that the archbishop had any idea when Gunnhild cast off her veil and became Count

⁷⁹ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s.a. 1093; John of Worcester, *Chronica* iii, 64. John says that William Rufus wanted Malcolm 'to do him right' (*ut rectitudinem ei faceret*) in his court by the judgement only of his own barons, when the kings of Scots were accustomed to do right to the kings of the English (*rectitudinem facere regibus Anglorum*) on the borders of their realms and by the judgement of the barons of the two kingdoms. The translator of John of Worcester uses the word 'homage' rather than 'right', which may fit our perception of the context but it does not express John's meaning. Barlow (*William Rufus*, 310) comments that 'William tried to subject a diplomatic issue to a court of law and treat a foreign king like an ordinary baron'.

⁸⁰ He can surely be excused for not remembering this detail from the edition by Benjamin Thorpe, *Florentii Wigorniensis monachi Chronicon ex chronicis*, 2 vols. (London, 1848–9), ii, 31. He might, however, have known it from Rule, *Life and Times of St Anselm* i, 371, ii, 261n, or from the discussion of Anselm's letter about Matilda of Scotland by F. S. Schmitt, 'Zur Überlieferung der Korrespondenz Anselms von Canterbury. Neue Briefe', *Revue Bénédictine* 43 (1931), 224–38, at 231. Rule, in particular, uses Eadmer and Hermann of Tournai to present a picture not unlike that of Southern's: he has Matilda 'still in the schoolroom at Romsey when her hand was sought by Alan the Red, Count of Brittany, but the suitor died before the request could be granted'; after that, he brings King William to Romsey to meet the girl; he speculates, 'Can it be that he made his famous visit to Romsey on his way from Windsor to Gloucester and in anticipation of King Malcolm's visit to him?'; he guesses that, after finding her in the veil, William would not discuss marriage when he met Malcolm on 24 August; and he supposes that Malcolm himself went to Romsey to remove the veil only a week later. Rule preferred Romsey over Wilton because that was where Christina was abbess; the group of letters from Salisbury was not known until 1931. Otherwise, the story is all there except for Alan's abduction of Gunnhild. Rule thought *Ep.* 168 was addressed to Matilda (see above, n. 50), and *Ep.* 169 was unknown in his time. Southern used these letters to bring Gunnhild into Rule's story, while avoiding the awkward date, paraphrased from John of Worcester by Rule, i, 371. Two more recent studies brought the evidence of John of Worcester back into play. For this reason Barlow, *William Rufus*, 314, questioned Southern's dating of Count Alan's death to 4 August 1093 (see above, n. 77). Vaughn, *St Anselm and the Handmaidens*, 186, also found Southern's dating of Alan's death 'probably too early' (p. 190), preferring to guess that he fell in battle alongside King Malcolm on 13 November (p. 196); combined with the supposition that Anselm wrote as elect of Canterbury (see above, n. 59), she therefore dated *Ep.* 169 to 13 November × 4 December 1093. This is still to subordinate the historical evidence to a good story.

Alan Rufus's lover. He knew only that Alan Rufus was now dead and that she was about to unite herself with his brother. In this Barlow and I are in agreement. The reasons for Anselm's writing at this juncture and not earlier are, first, he has only recently become archbishop and thereby acquired a pastoral interest; second, he is reacting to fresh reports that Gunnhild's affections had moved from one brother to another, surely a scandal in itself, and to other tales about her; third, perhaps most importantly, because at this time he shows concern in that other letter, to Bishop Osmund, about Matilda's supposed monastic dedication. If Anselm had known that the Count had abducted Gunnhild, and only weeks before his death, that would surely have been brought out with rhetorical effect. A very different reading of Gunnhild's life is possible.

It is not irrelevant to ask who was Gunnhild's mother. Anselm writes, *filia regis et reginae fueris* 'you were the daughter of the king and queen', but did he know who was Harold's queen? It is impossible to know whether Anselm made an informed choice in using the word *regina*. Some have assumed that Gunnhild's mother was Ealdgyth, daughter of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia, sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar, and widow of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn, killed by his own men in Wales in August 1063.⁸¹ When Harold married her is uncertain, perhaps as late as 1066 as part of his agreement with her brothers. Domesday Book names her with no title, but John of Worcester refers to her as *regina* and mentions that a son was born of the marriage.⁸² Others have assumed that Gunnhild was one of the several children born to Harold's long-term partner – only once referred to as countess and never as queen – usually known as Edith Swanneck.⁸³ This name, 'Editha cognomento Swanneshals', comes from the Waltham abbey chronicle and from *Vita Haroldi*, based on it though revised to serve a contrary purpose.⁸⁴ Evidence from St Benet Holme in Norfolk calls her 'Edgiva Swanneshals'.⁸⁵ Two names, quite distinct in Old English usage,

⁸¹ Fröhlich, *Letters of St Anselm*, ii, 74. The death of her first husband is reported by Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s. a. 1063; John of Worcester, *Chronica* ii, 596.

⁸² It is presumably Harold's queen, Ealdgyth, who appears in Domesday Book as 'Aldgid uxor Grifin', *antecessor* of Osbert fitz Richard at Binley (DB i, 238v; Warks § 6. 5). John of Worcester's summary of the West Saxon kings calls her queen and mentions a son Harold, 'de regina Aldgitha, comitis Ælfgari filia, habuit filium Haroldum' (Thorpe, *Florentii Wigorniensis monachi Chronicon ex chronicis*, i, 276; to appear in vol. i of the new edition). William of Malmesbury says that this Harold was with King Magnus of Norway in his attacks on Orkney and Anglesey in 1098 (*Gesta regum Anglorum*, IV § 329, i, 570).

⁸³ E. A. Freeman [1823–1892], *The History of the Norman Conquest*, 2nd–3rd edn., 6 vols. (Oxford, 1870–79), iv, 754–7; Wilmart, 'Une lettre inédite', 332; Schmitt, iv, 47n; Searle, 'Women and the succession', 168; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 20–21. Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester*, 226, allowing the possibility, calculates that her daughter would be rather more than thirty in 1093.

⁸⁴ Waltham Chronicle, ed. L. Watkiss and M. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1994), 54; *Vita Haroldi*, ed. W. de G. Birch (London, 1885).

⁸⁵ This is a memorandum listing who should have *mandata* at mass, compiled 1186 × 1210, which mentions that 'Edgiua Swanneshals' gave Thurgarton (Norf) to the abbey (BL MS Cotton Galba E. ii, fol. 35v; J. R. West, *St Benet of Holme, 1020–1210. The 11th and 12th century sections of Cott.*

Eadgyth and *Eadgifu*, could be confused in Domesday Book and were easily altered in the twelfth century.⁸⁶ King Harold's lady was surely *Eadgifu*, Edgiva the beautiful, who appears in Domesday Book as 'Eddeua pulchra'. Eleanor Searle, assuming that Gunnhild's mother was Swanneck, makes the link without discussion to Domesday Book's Edgiva the beautiful, 'one of the great Danelaw powers'.⁸⁷ This identification was first made long ago, but such ideas are not always properly attributed.⁸⁸ Edgiva was well-provided for. On the day when King Edward was alive and dead, she held some 280 hides of land in Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, and Suffolk, not to mention further land in other counties.⁸⁹ Ann Williams has noted that some of her manors in East Anglia had a tenurial connexion with lands held by Earl Harold.⁹⁰ We may infer that Harold had given her these estates while he was earl of East Anglia between 1045 and 1053. Sometime after the Conquest, much of what she had held in 1066 passed into the hands of Count Alan Rufus, the holder in 1086. Ian Walker

MS Galba E. ii, Norfolk Record Society 2, 3 (1932), i, 33, no. 62). Domesday Book says rather than St Benet's had always held Thurgarton (DB ii, 216r; § 17. 5), an indication that her gift was made before 1066.

⁸⁶ O. von Feilitzen [1908–1976], *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book* (Uppsala, 1937), 229–31, 231–2, collects specimens of the two names. While the forms are distinct, the same person is sometimes entered under a spelling of the other name. So, for example, Edward the Confessor's wife Queen Eadgyth is occasionally found as 'Eddeuæ reginæ' (DB i, 2r; Kent § C6), 'Edeue regine' (DB ii, 306r; Suffolk § 6. 26), and again, 'hoc manerium tenuit Eddeda de regina Eddeua' (DB i, 147r; Bucks § 14. 13); in one entry she appears as 'Eddida regina' in Great Domesday (DB i, 97r; Somerset § 32. 2) and as 'Edeua regina' in Exon Domesday (DB iv, 463r). Edgiva the beautiful does not appear under spellings appropriate to Eadgyth, but the Waltham chronicler, writing after 1177, may have preferred the form Edith for its resonance with St Edith of Wilton and Queen Edith.

⁸⁷ Searle, 'Women and the succession', 168; Searle's join was noted in the same conference volume by Ann Williams, 'Land and power in the eleventh century: the estates of Harold Godwineson', *ANS* 3 (1980), 170–87 with notes, 230–34 (at 176). Taken from there as 'probable' by Pauline A. Stafford ('Women in Domesday', *Reading Medieval Studies* 15 (1989), 75–94, at 79, 92) who also points to the one occurrence of the name with the title appropriate to an earl's wife, 'Ædgeua comitissa' (DB ii, 300r; Suff § 4. 17).

⁸⁸ The most thorough discussion is J. R. Boyle, 'Who was Eddeua?', *Transactions of the East Riding Antiquarian Society* 4 (1896), 11–22. He gives reasons to reject identification with either Edward's Queen Eadgyth or Harold's Queen Ealdgyth and favours 'Edith Swanneck'; he argues from four subtenancies that Eddeua without epithet in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire is the same as Eddeua the beautiful in other counties. Sir Henry Ellis [1777–1869] (*A General Introduction to Domesday Book*, 2 vols. (London, 1833), ii, 79) noted that the woman now known as Edith Swanneck was identified with 'Eddeua pulchra' by Sharon Turner [1768–1847] in his *History of England from the Norman Conquest to the accession of Edward the first* (London, 1814); Ellis sourced this to a seventeenth-century marginal note in the manuscript of the Waltham chronicle used by Turner, BL MS Cotton Julius D. vi (s. xiv), fol. 105r, 'Ista Editha nominatur Editha Pulchra in Libro Domesday'. Ellis himself preferred to identify Eddeua with Queen Ealdgyth, daughter of Earl Ælfgar; Freeman at one point (*Norman Conquest*, ii, 681) inclined to agree with Turner but equivocated elsewhere (ib., iii, 792).

⁸⁹ Williams, 'The estates of Harold Godwineson', 176. Williams does not count the lands of Edeua in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

⁹⁰ Ann Williams in *ODNB* s.n. 'Eadgifu (Eddeua)'.

has gone so far as to suggest a two-way inference, that Alan's abduction of King Harold's daughter Gunnhild in 1093 – following Southern – is best explained as a means of legitimizing his succession to the lands of Edgiva whose relationship to Gunnhild and identity with Eadgifu Swanneshals are thus assured.⁹¹

When we look at who held the property of Matilda d'Aincourt in 1066, we find that Little Abington in Cambridgeshire was held by *Eddeua pulchra* 'Edgiva the beautiful'.⁹² Out of eighty-two holdings itemized under Count Alan in Cambridgeshire in 1086, more than seventy had been held by Edgiva or her men in 1066.⁹³ Little Abington did not go to Matilda's husband or son but remained subsequently with Count Alan's heirs; indeed, his brother Count Stephen confirmed the gift of the tithes to St Mary's.⁹⁴ Pickenham in Norfolk was held in 1066 by Godwin, but who is Godwin? When we look again at Cambridgeshire, we find that *Goduinus cilt homo Eddeuae pulchrae* 'Godwin the young, Edgiva the fair's man' held three manors under Edgiva.⁹⁵ Is this Child Godwin the son of Harold and Edgiva?⁹⁶ The other lands whose tithes Matilda gave to St Mary's were held by free men in 1066, though some are said to be free men of Harold or of his brother Gyrth, who was earl of East Anglia from 1057 to 1066. It is not possible to date Count Alan's succession to almost all of Edgiva's land in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Essex, and to some of her land in other counties. It may well have happened before the rebellion in 1075 that allowed Count Alan to take over some of the lands of Earl Ralph. It has been proposed by Katharine Keats-Rohan that these lands were Alan's first territorial acquisition in England.⁹⁷ There is certainly no trace of any intermediate tenant in Domesday Book. And his deed giving the church of Swavesey (Cambs) to the monks of Angers contains no clue that he then held land outside the shire: is this his thank-offering for his first enrichment, which he attributes to the aid of Queen Matilda?⁹⁸ And at least one or two of Edgiva's estates was held at least briefly by Matilda d'Aincourt.

⁹¹ Walker, *Harold*, 129, 195–6. He sees Gunnhild as 'virtually imprisoned' at Wilton, to prevent anyone from marrying her and so acquiring a claim to the throne; this hardly explains why Alan did not attempt such legitimization twenty years earlier.

⁹² DB i, 193v; Cambs § 4. 14.

⁹³ The exceptions are §§ 4. 29, 30, 39, 40, 47, 64 (part), 71 (part), and 72.

⁹⁴ 'Abicton' in Stephen's confirmation (1135) in Clay, *EYC* iv, 8–11 (no. 8); in 1158 Stephen's grandson Earl Conan held the manor (*Pipe Roll 4 Henry II*, 166; Farrer, *Feudal Cambridgeshire*, 55).

⁹⁵ §§ 4. 1 (*Goduinus cilt*), 6 (*Goduinus*), 80 (*Goduinus cild*).

⁹⁶ Godwin appears to be the name of the eldest of Harold's three sons who sailed from Ireland but were opposed in 1068 (John of Worcester, *Chronica* iii, 6).

⁹⁷ 'C'est indiscutablement dans le Cambridgeshire où il était le tenant-en-chef dominant depuis bien avant 1086 qu'Alain reçut sa première concession dans le pays récemment conquis' (K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Le rôle des Bretons dans la politique de colonisation normande de l'Angleterre (vers 1042–1135)', *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne* 74 (1996), 181–215, at 185–6).

⁹⁸ The deed was printed from an antiquarian transcript in *Monasticon* vi, 1001–2 (no. 1); Clay, *EYC* iv, 1–2 (no. 1). This phrase was then deployed in the late medieval register of the honour

If Count Alan had married Gunnhild, daughter of Edgiva, he would have legitimized his succession to her mother's estates. Indeed, Gunnhild was in exactly the sort of position considered by Lanfranc in his judgement about Anglo-Saxon women of good birth who sought security in nunneries without making profession. Anselm may not have known that advice when he was berating Gunnhild and Matilda, but he used it to change his tune a few years later in 1100.⁹⁹ Eleanor Searle suggested that Lanfranc's reason for saying they should leave the nunneries was 'because they were wanted at home as peace-weavers and channels of inheritance'.¹⁰⁰ Gunnhild provides an example to support her case, and does so at the highest level for which evidence exists. Count Alan's relationship with Gunnhild might have begun when he had received only, or little more than, her mother's lands, well before 1075. A daughter of theirs could certainly have been old enough to have married Walter d'Aincourt by 1090 and to have received from her father property that had come from her grandmother.

Young William d'Aincourt was fostered at the court of King William II, so he must have been at least seven or eight years old before the king was killed in 1100. He could hardly have been born much later than *c.* 1090, so his mother Matilda must have been born no later than *c.* 1076, and her mother Gunnhild no later than *c.* 1062. The chronology is impossibly constrained if one believes that Gunnhild's mother was Queen Ealdgyth, for on that basis Gunnhild could not have been born before 1064. When one follows the descent of Little Abington in Domesday Book, however, it is evident that her mother was Edgiva the beautiful, 'Edith Swanneck'; Harold's relationship with her had begun before 1050 and produced several children. When Gunnhild was born, we do not know, but William of Malmesbury uses the word *femina* in telling a story about her among the nuns of Wilton, when Bishop Wulfstan healed a swelling over her eye.¹⁰¹ If we accept Anselm's word, Gunnhild had lived a long time in the religious habit, though she was not consecrated by the bishop nor did she make her profession.¹⁰² Six or seven years is perhaps a long time in a girl's life. Let us suppose that Gunnhild had been taken to Wilton for safety as

to suggest that, soon after William I was crowned, Queen Matilda had aided Alan's receiving 'honorem et comitatum comitis Edwini in Eborakschira' (BL MS Cotton MS Faustina B. vii (s. xv), fol. 72v; Gale, *Registrum honoris*, 1; excerpt in *Monasticon* v, 574, no. xv).

⁹⁹ Above, 14–15, and nn. 61–63.

¹⁰⁰ Searle, 'Women and the succession', 165.

¹⁰¹ William of Malmesbury, *Vita S. Wulfstani episcopi et confessoris* II §11, ed. R. R. Darlington, Camden 3rd ser. 40 (1928), 1–67, at 34; ed. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), 82; and previously excerpted by Wilmart, 'La destinataire', 334. This healing must have happened before she left Wilton; by 1093 or 1094, the aged Bishop Wulfstan no longer travelled. Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer*, 188, and without the evidence, *Saint Anselm. A Portrait*, 264, cannot be right in inferring from the passage that Gunnhild probably returned to Wilton as a result of Anselm's letters; his suggestion was accepted by Fröhlich, ii, 69, and by F. D. Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1996), 7.

¹⁰² Anselm, *Ep.* 168 (Schmitt, iv, 43–4; Fröhlich, ii, 65–6),

a child of maybe ten or twelve years in 1066, staying until maybe 1072, and had then thrown off the habit to live with Count Alan on her mother's estates in Cambridgeshire and East Anglia; a daughter Matilda, born to her and Alan, might well have been married to Walter d'Aincourt.

This would explain why Matilda d'Aincourt appears as the giver of tithes from Count Alan's fee to his abbey of St Mary in York and why her husband would also favour that foundation. Since their son William was fostered at court in William II's time, they were probably married within a year or two either side of 1090. A joint gift to St Mary's, after their marriage, might well have been made while Count Alan Rufus was still alive. The possibility may have to be entertained that Matilda was purposefully enabled by him to make these gifts from his fee.¹⁰³ After King William I and his son King William II, Count Alan was counted by St Mary's as the founder of the abbey, *post me et patrem meum huius abbatię inceptor et institutor* 'after my father and me the beginner and founder of this abbey'.¹⁰⁴ Most of his prominent tenants made gifts to the abbey in 1088 or during the next five years. Walter d'Aincourt was not a major landholder in Yorkshire, nor was he himself directly dependent on Count Alan, but a relationship of the kind proposed would satisfactorily resolve several questions. Why did the d'Aincourts join in the endowment of St Mary's abbey? How did Walter's wife Matilda come to have property that in 1086 was held by Count Alan? And on what basis did their son William have a royal lineage? If the proposed explanation is correct, he was the great-grandson of King Harold.

A new question, however, may be posed. If Count Alan had *married* Gunnhild, and if Matilda was their only issue, one might have expected her to be regarded as an heiress and her husband Walter to have succeeded in his wife's right to Count Alan's estate. Instead, Count Alan's lands went to his brother – and so, Anselm tells us, did his relict. It appears likely that the relationship between Alan and Gunnhild was like that between Harold and Eadgifu, not a marriage in a sense that Anselm would have recognized, and that their daughter Matilda did not inherit, so that the lands Harold had given to Eadgifu remained with the Richmond fee and did not become the inheritance of the d'Aincourts.¹⁰⁵ None the less Gunnhild knew her own family.

By this date, there were only two close relatives of Harold alive in England. Besides Gunnhild herself, Harold's youngest brother Wulfnoth was brought to England by William Rufus in September 1087, after many years as a hostage in Normandy, and he appears occasionally into the 1090s.¹⁰⁶ A verse epitaph was

¹⁰³ There are other examples in the confirmation charters of people who gave to St Mary's land that was the king's or Count Alan's in 1086, and which may have been transferred to the donor with the intention of its being given to the abbey.

¹⁰⁴ The words come from the forged confirmation in the name of William II (*Regesta* 313).

¹⁰⁵ The statement in the late medieval Richmond register that Alan Rufus died without issue (above, n. 43) was surely based on the fact that the estate passed to his brother and not on more detailed knowledge.

¹⁰⁶ Barlow, *William Rufus*, 65n, pulls together the evidence.

composed for him by Godfrey, prior of Winchester.¹⁰⁷ Harold's youngest sister, also named Gunnhild, had died on 24 August 1087 in Flanders, where she had been a nun for many years. By a curious coincidence, we learn this from a lead tablet found under her head when her tomb was discovered accidentally in 1786. The plaque was immured again with her remains, but it came to light a second time in 1804 during the demolition of the cathedral of Sint-Donaas. The plaque is now displayed in the museum at Sint-Salvator in Brugge.¹⁰⁸ From it we also learn that she had been to Denmark, perhaps to visit her nephews and niece, for three of Harold's children escaped England via Flanders to settle there. The niece, Gytha, our Gunnhild's sister, was given in marriage by King Svein of Denmark to Vladimir Monomakh, who would in time succeed as prince of Pereyaslavl' from 1094 to 1113, prince of Kiev from 1113 to 1125; the marriage took place no later than 1075, and Gytha herself died in 1107.¹⁰⁹ Two brothers remained in Denmark, one in Ireland, and a fourth, Ulf, was allowed to leave Normandy for Scotland in 1087.¹¹⁰ It is impossible to know how far the family was able to retain any contact.

¹⁰⁷ *Epigrammata historica*, no. 12, ed. Thomas Wright [1810–1877], *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century*, RS 59 (1872), ii, 152–3.

¹⁰⁸ First published, with an engraving of the plaque, by G. F. Beltz, 'Observations on the coffin-plate and history of Gunilda, sister of the Saxon King Harold II' [read 3 April 1833], *Archaeologia* 25 (1834), 398–410, and at much the same date by [P.-J. Scourion], 'Notice historique et critique au sujet d'une inscription gravée sur une plaque de plomb trouvée dans le tombeau de Gunilde, princesse Anglo-Saxonne', *Messager des sciences et des arts de la Belgique* 1 (1833), 425–41. Sir Thomas Hardy brought this essay (in the form of an anonymous and unsourced offprint) to the notice of E. A. Freeman, who reprinted the text in his *Norman Conquest*, iv, 754–5. The plaque was also discussed and engraved by J.-J. Gailliard, *Inscriptions funéraires et monumentales de la Flandre occidentale* (Brugge, 1861–7), i, pl. xlv; fuller discussion by W. Robinson, 'Une fille de Godwin à Bruges', *Annales de la Société d'émulation de Bruges* 53 (1903), 31–48. There is a modern description, transcription, and photograph in L. De Vlieghe, *De Sint-Salvatorskathedraal te Brugge* (Tielt, 1979), 97–9 and pl. 163; photograph also at www.kikirpa.be (cliché number z011814). The entry by N. N. Huyghebaert, 'Gunhilde', in *Biographie Nationale*, xxxix = *Supplément* xi (Brussels, 1976), 453–6, has further references.

¹⁰⁹ The marriage, referred to by three northern sources (Saxo Grammaticus, XI 6; *Fagrskinna*, § 77; and Snorri Sturlason's *Heimskringla*), has been dated to the early 1070s on the basis that the eldest son, called both Mstislav and Harold, was born in 1076 (Dmitri Obolensky [1918–2001], 'Vladimir Monomakh', in his *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), 83–114, at 89–90); Saxo Grammaticus, *Danorum Regum heroumque historia* XI 6. 3, trans. with commentary by Eric Christiansen (Oxford, 1980–81), i, 58 and 228–9; *Fagrskinna*, trans. with notes by A. Findlay (Leiden, 2004), 236). Her death in 1107 is mentioned in Russian sources cited by Obolensky. Contrary to what *Fagrskinna* says, Vladimir was not son but grandson of Prince Yaroslav, sovereign of Russia (d. 1054), and his wife Ingigerð, daughter of King Olaf of Norway; his father was Vsevolod, prince of Kiev (d. 1093) (Martin Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov 1054–1146* (Toronto, 1994)).

¹¹⁰ In brief, Barlow, *The Godwins*, 165, 168–71. In the paperback (2003) he also reports from Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* (London, 1831, etc.) the monument, supposedly to King Harold's son Magnus in the church of St John sub Castro, Lewes (Sussex). Its verse inscription was first published in the original edition of Camden's *Britannia* (1586); it refers to Magnus, a prince of the Danish royal family ('Danorum regia proles'), who became an anchorite in Lewes (VCH *Sussex* vii, 37; *Camden's Britannia. Surrey and Sussex*, ed. Gordon J. Copley (London, 1977), 51).

Descent from King Harold was no great asset to the d'Aincourt family, though as long as Gunnhild was alive, it was hardly going to be forgotten. This investigation was prompted by my wish to explain Matilda d'Aincourt's gifts to St Mary's, but it has revealed more than the family's ancestry. It has shown that Anselm's letters to Gunnhild provide less than the whole truth about her life and her relationships with Count Alan Rufus and his brother. 'The tenderness and eloquence that' Anselm 'lavished on the mysterious and tragic daughter of King Harold' made a considerable impression on Southern, who was perhaps too ready to believe Anselm.¹¹¹ And modern scholars have followed where he led. The evidence laid out here suggests that, far from being a lifelong nun abducted at the age of thirty or even forty, Gunnhild had long ago left the refuge of the nunnery, in accordance with the views expressed some years later by Lanfranc, and made a match with Count Alan, one of the major beneficiaries of the Conquest. Starting with the lands of Gunnhild's mother, Edgiva the beautiful, Alan had been further enriched by King William until, in 1086, there were few men in England holding larger estates. Gunnhild, King Harold's daughter, has a low profile, though we know little enough about many great landholders' wives. Emma Mason contrasted the prospect of a return to the nunnery with life as Count Alan's chatelaine.¹¹² The longer she had lived with him, the more likely she was to secure her position with Count Alan Niger. Perhaps even Anselm unwittingly gives us a glimpse of Gunnhild's dignity. In his second letter to her, he mentions how he had spoken to her as her true friend: 'you said then that you wanted to be with him [Anselm] always so that you could continually enjoy his conversation, which you said was delightful to you, and afterwards you wrote him a letter full of sweetness'.¹¹³ Do we sense a grand lady, unruffled by a new and foreign archbishop's letter, engaging in religious conversation, presumably in Norman French, with perfect politeness? Did she quietly ignore everything he proposed for herself? From that letter full of sweetness, Anselm says, 'From this I was able to learn that you would not deny the holy intention of which you then wore the habit'. Perhaps as Alan's widow she contemplated resuming the habit. But Anselm goes on to paint his horrid images of love that ends in dust. Did Gunnhild change her mind? She was perhaps not the only one to have had second thoughts. Anselm had abandoned his former view on Matilda's monastic status. In Gunnhild's case he may have realized that he had got his facts wrong and removed both letters from his archive. What has been unveiled of Gunnhild's story suggests that this daughter of King Harold and Edgiva the beautiful was indeed a channel of inheritance, legitimizing Count Alan's succession to much of her mother's fee. Over time his estate grew significantly larger, so that, while King Edward's family were royal

This monument is surely too late by more than a century to have commemorated King Harold's son.

¹¹¹ Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer*, 193.

¹¹² Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester*, 227.

¹¹³ Anselm, *Ep.* 169 (Schmitt, iv, 47; Fröhlich, ii, 70).

outsiders in King William's reign, and King Harold's were mostly in exile, one daughter and her Breton husband prospered in the first class of magnates. We do not know how her own life ended, but her sense of royal inheritance speaks to us now only from a grandchild's grave at Lincoln.

