

# P R O S O P O N

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### **Women and Inheritance in Norman England: The Case of Geva Ridel [1]**

A few years ago I wrote of aristocratic women in early twelfth-century England that we must be sure not to make the surviving evidence fit into a framework of what we know to have been custom later, by assuming that a son passed over in favour of a daughter must have been illegitimate, or that there may have been two marriages, or that daughters inherited all their mothers' lands. [2] In other words, how flexible were norms of inheritance -- I use 'norms' rather than 'customs' here deliberately -- where women were concerned in early twelfth-century England? I suggested that, although we probably only hear part of the story from the written evidence, we need to place women in the context of their families to understand the decisions that were made about inheritance and marriage. Further problems arise when we remember that the written records usually relate to aristocratic women and (often) to special cases: the marriage settlement of Miles of Gloucester and Sybil of Neufmarché, for instance. [3] Yet some of the greatest honours of England, such as Belvoir, [4] Huntingdon, [5] and Wallingford, [6] to name but three, descended through women. The claims of women, whether as heiresses or as wives, thus presented opportunities for their overlord, the king, and they were also sensitive political issues. Marriage was, as Sir Richard Southern wrote, 'the easiest road to ready-made wealth' in Norman England, [7] and if some became (by modern standards) millionaires on marriage, others must have been disappointed or angry when decisions about important marriages were announced.

One of the best known texts dealing with a marriage settlement in early twelfth-century England is that of Richard Basset, near the start of his career as a royal justice and sheriff of King Henry I, and Matilda, daughter of another royal justice, Geoffrey Ridel, who had drowned in the wreck of the White Ship. This, the *Titanic* of the twelfth century, had robbed the king of his heir and two other children, plus leading members of his entourage, who were returning from Normandy in November 1120 after a four-year absence. The king's happiness and his plans for the future had been destroyed, but he moved quickly to remarry in the hope of an heir, and there were pressing decisions about government which could not wait whilst he

withdrew for a protracted period of mourning. The casualty list included Richard, the young earl of Chester, who had died without heirs, and Geoffrey Ridel, a royal justice, and the question of their successors was related in the person of Geva Ridel, mother of Matilda, whose marriage was disposed of in the text we shall now look at in more detail. [8]

The text survives in the form of a royal notification addressed to three earls, David of Northampton and Huntingdon, not yet king of Scots, the earl of Leicester, Robert II de Beaumont, and Ranulf I earl of Chester, and the sheriffs of those counties in which Geoffrey Ridel had held land. The notification was twice copied into the thirteenth-century Basset cartulary in the British Library, one of the earliest surviving collections of charters and memoranda for a lay family surviving from medieval England, its compilation recently redated to the years between 1236 and 1241. [9] The main provisions of the text are that Richard Basset was awarded permission to marry a daughter of Geoffrey Ridel and custody of Geoffrey's land until Robert Ridel could be knighted (i. e. attained his majority) and could marry a granddaughter of Ralph Basset. Ralph was the father of Richard and there is a clear sense conveyed by this terminology of the Bassets' concern not to lose Geoffrey Ridel's lands. Richard was to have twenty poundsworth of land with his wife as her marriage portion in chief ('of my fief') and the service of four knights. If Robert Ridel died without an heir by his wife, the king granted to Richard Basset and his heir by the daughter of Geoffrey Ridel, all Geoffrey's land of whomsoever it was held, that is, the under-tenancies as well as the tenancies in chief. And if the daughters (plural) of Geoffrey were not married in the lifetime of Robert Ridel or whilst they were in the custody of Richard Basset, Richard was to make provision for them according to the king's advice and consideration. The king concluded that this gift and agreement had been made at the request and advice of Ranulf earl of Chester, William (de Roumare), Ranulf's half-brother, Nigel d'Aubigny and other kinsfolk. The notification was witnessed by the chancellor of the earl of Chester, the dean of Lincoln, a clutch of royal *familiares*, three Bassets, perhaps Richard's brothers, and prominent members of Ranulf of Chester's entourage. The place of issue was Woodstock, one of the king's favourite residences, and the date of issue was between January 1121 and 10 June 1123 when the king left England for Normandy. Henry is known to have been at Woodstock in March 1121 [10] and again in January 1123. [11] It is tempting to ascribe the text to the earlier date, when Henry took a series of crucial decisions about patronage in the aftermath of the wreck of the White Ship.

This is a remarkable text for a variety of reasons: first there is the careful provision for the custody of heirs to a royal official, not their mother, who does not figure here. Secondly, there is the involvement of Ranulf of Chester, who had recently been allowed to succeed his cousin Richard as earl, his half-brother William de Roumare and their kinsman, Nigel d'Aubigny, one of the king's closest companions: here is a valuable insight into those able to influence royal decisions. Thirdly, a close inter-relationship between the affairs of royal officials, Geoffrey Ridel, Ralph and Richard Basset, is indicated. Fourthly, there is the king's interest in all of this to ensure that Geoffrey Ridel's successor in the midlands was a safe pair of hands. Perhaps there is a parallel with the appointment of Geoffrey de Clinton as sheriff in nearby Warwickshire. [12]

My concern here, however, is with the unnamed mother in the case, Geva Ridel, of whom it has been claimed that 'perhaps no figure in medieval history has excited more controversy or engaged the attention of genealogists so much,' [13] an overstatement, but one which alerts us to the interest of the problems surrounding her

life and lands. To understand the ramifications, however, we need a few details about her husband Geoffrey, and about the lands of Robert de Boucy which passed via Geva to the Bassets. The early stages of Geoffrey's career are obscure. [14] He, or a man of the same name, was mentioned in Domesday Book as having come to England from Apulia in the company of Roger Bigod's brother. [15] A man named Geoffrey Ridel, who became duke of Gaeta, was prominent amongst the Normans of south Italy at this time, and he obviously may well have been related to our Geoffrey. [16] The place of origin of the latter has not been identified, but it seems likely that it was somewhere in western Normandy, possibly in the neighbourhood of Mont-Saint-Michel, where Geoffrey's brother Matthew was a monk. [17] A man from this region might well have attracted the notice of Henry I, who before his accession had been count of the Cotentin. [18] Matthew Ridel was promoted to the important abbacy of Peterborough in 1102, but remained abbot for only a short period. [19] Geoffrey Ridel began to appear as a witness to royal documents for the first time during the early years of Henry I's reign, particularly in relation to the east midlands. [20] It has been pointed out that Henry's justices tended to work in the region where their own lands were situated, [21] and thus it seems likely that Geoffrey by this time was married to Geva Ridel.

The manor of Drayton in Staffordshire was Geva's marriage portion, given to her by her father Earl Hugh of Chester: it was so identified in a charter of Earl Ranulf II of Chester. [22] Yet by the time of the Basset cartulary, it was evidently family tradition that Geva was the daughter and heiress of Robert de Boucy. For the Bassets, this explained how the Boucy estates had come into their family. [23]

In her two surviving charters, however, Geva styled herself as the daughter of Earl Hugh. [24] After the death of her husband Geoffrey, Geva never seems to have remarried, and in the 1140s she turned to the foundation of a religious house, Canwell Priory in Staffordshire, and it was in favour of Canwell that her charters were issued. These make no reference to her maternal kin, and Geva styled herself by reference to her husband and her father. There is no doubt that Geva was the channel through which the Boucy estates passed to the Bassets; the question is when and how?

Was Geva the child of a lawful marriage of her father? Dugdale thought she was, because Drayton had been granted to her in free marriage, but it seems he was mistaken. [25] Geva was a Latinized form of the old English name Gïofu, and it seems possible therefore that she was the child of a liaison between Earl Hugh and an Englishwoman. [26] Earl Hugh, as already mentioned, is known to have married only once to a wife of high rank: if Geva was her daughter then this would surely have been recalled? He is also known to have been promiscuous, because the chronicler Orderic Vitalis, in a memorable pen portrait, mentioned Hugh's numerous sons and daughters by concubines. [27] Two sons are mentioned elsewhere by the author: one, Robert, became a monk at Saint Evroul and, briefly, abbot of Bury St Edmunds. [28] Another, Otuel, became tutor to Henry I's heir Prince William and died with his master in the White Ship. Otuel married Margaret, the widow of William de Mandeville, and by marriage acquired some of the Mandeville estates. [29] Two sons had thus been generously provided for, so the king was hardly going to jib at generous provision for a daughter. The earl like his royal master was willing to provide handsomely for illegitimate daughters and to arrange prestigious marriages for them.

If Geva's mother was English, there is no clear information about her status. The manor of Drayton had been held before the Conquest by Earl Aelfgar of Mercia and was in the king's hands in 1086. [30] It is just possible that Geva's mother came from Earl Aelfgar's family. After all, this would help to strengthen Hugh's claim to

succeed to the earl's lands and power in the midlands, and it might explain why she was generously treated. On the other hand, it might be argued that if the mother *was* of high status, her ancestry would not have been forgotten and the earl would have surely have gone through a marriage ceremony with her. We simply do not know.

Earl Richard of Chester came of age and was married to Matilda, Henry I's niece, [31] probably in 1115, and about five years later perished in the White Ship without leaving any children. Who then was to succeed to the vast inheritance of Earl Hugh? Orderic was quite clear on this point: Ranulf, daughter of Earl Hugh's sister Matilda was the nearest heir (*contiguus heres*). [32] There were other nephews: another sister Judith had married Richer of L'Aigle, a marriage which had produced sons and daughters, [33] and a third sister, Hélisende, had married William count of Eu. [34] In other words, there were legitimate nephews and nieces as well as a surviving daughter, Geva.

Was there any chance that Geva would succeed? If of legitimate birth, she was a great heiress. In the early twelfth century it was by no means certain that the claim of a daughter would be preferred over nephews, nor would she have been allowed to remain a widow outside a religious community. An earlier comparable instance was perhaps Judith, widow of Earl Waltheof, who allegedly preferred to enter the religious life rather than remarry, and whose daughter became the bride of Simon de Senlis. [35] The fact that Geva did not so far as is known either remarry or retreat from the world strengthens the possibility that she was illegitimate.

One possibility is that Geva's claim to succeed her father was in effect bought off by a grant of the lands of Robert de Boucy, and that this was the route by which the Boucy lands came to the Bassets. [36] Yet if her claim was not strong because of her birth there was little for which to compensate her. She could however have been the wife of Robert de Boucy. If so, would this marriage have been before or after that to Geoffrey Ridel? Geva was said to have held Drayton in the time of Earl Hugh according to Ranulf II's charter, from which it is possible to calculate that she would have been at least fourteen or fifteen in 1100, old enough to have been married or widowed once. [37] The concern of Richard Basset's marriage settlement was with the land of Geoffrey Ridel, not Robert de Boucy, and by 1130 Richard Basset seems to have been in possession of most of the Boucy estates. [38] There is also the commonsense argument that Geoffrey Ridel is unlikely to have spent years as a royal justice, one of the few whom Henry of Huntingdon called a 'justice of all England,' [39] had he not had some reward for his service, and again this could have been from Rufus or Henry.

Against the argument for Geva's first marriage being to Robert de Boucy, however, is the text of another charter in the Basset cartulary by which Robert de Tosny of Stafford granted Madeley to Robert de Boucy to hold in fief, a charter witnessed by several of the same witnesses as the Basset marriage settlement. Taken at face value this suggests that a Robert de Boucy was still living after 1120: perhaps this was why the compiler of the Basset cartulary believed that Geva must have been Robert's daughter, not his wife. It is of course possible that although the charter is genuine in substance, the witness list was added later, or that this was a younger Robert de Boucy, not the man who may have been Geva's husband.

The problem clearly cannot be decisively resolved, but on balance it seems more likely than not that Geoffrey Ridel had held the lands of Robert de Boucy and that they passed via his widow Geva to the Bassets. It was Geoffrey Ridel whose name Geva retained and whose arms her grandsons are said to have used. [40]

Geoffrey could have acquired them through marriage, if Geva had earlier been Robert's wife, or they may have escheated and been regranted to him.

It would help if we knew more about Robert de Boucy. His name is thought to derive from Boucey near Pontorson on the border between Normandy and Brittany. [41] A close neighbour there was the family of Macey, and members of this family were prominent tenants of Earl Hugh. [42] Again, therefore, there is a connection with the earl. If Geoffrey Ridel came from the same region, given that his brother entered Mont-Saint-Michel, this might help to explain why he benefitted from a grant of the Boucy estates. He would not have been a complete outsider, and may even have been a kinsman.

In any event Geva was allowed to remain a widow and later in life turned to founding a priory. It is interesting that she chose a house for men, not for women, and that it was situated in Staffordshire, near an episcopal manor, not on her manor of Great Drayton nor that of Great Weldon, the chief manor of her daughter and son-in-law. The timing suggests that it may have been influenced by the death of her son-in-law and the political situation in the midlands in the 1140s. Both of her charters refer to the consent of her kinsman Earl Ranulf. She also referred to the authority of Bishop Roger of Coventry and Lichfield, who had an estate at Hints close to Canwell. [43] The site of the priory itself was near a spring associated with St Modwenna, a seventh-century hermit whose cult was centred on Burton-on-Trent. [44] It may be speculated that the decision to found a priory for men, rather than, say, a house for women where Geva herself could have retired, may have been shaped by family considerations, and it fits in with the devolution of her other estates which were hived off to Ralph II Basset.

Very little is known of the fate of her son-in-law Richard Basset after the death of Henry I. With the possible exception of an attestation of a document issued by King Stephen in 1136, [45] and a reference to the takeover of his castle at Montreuil-au-Houlme by William de Montpinçon as a base against the Angevins, [46] Richard disappeared from view. He was certainly dead by 1146 or 1147, when Geoffrey Ridel secured confirmation of his father's estates in England and Normandy from the Empress. [47] He in turn transferred a good part of the inheritance granted to his brother Ralph Basset: the manor of Colston Basset in Nottinghamshire, all that Geoffrey held of his grandmother's land, certain of his father's gains plus Witherley in Leicestershire (held of the earl of Leicester) and Pattingham in Staffordshire (held of the earl of Chester) in exchange for the Basset lands in Normandy, and their mother's dower manor of Kington Winslow in Berkshire, which was held of the abbey of Glastonbury. [48] Here we have the use of a grandmother and mother's estates to provide for a son -- whether a younger or elder is not made clear, and the generosity of the settlement raises questions about the context in which the settlement was drawn up. Ralph Basset, founder of the Bassets of Drayton, thus held most of what might be called the Chester interest, and the rest of his grandmother's land passed to the church. Perhaps then we have another case where family arrangements were made to safeguarding landed inheritances in difficult political times, by dividing them between sons or by making pious donations partly motivated by the hope of removing them from the combat zone.

This tangled story tells us a good deal about politics, marriage, and the politics of marriage in the reign of Henry I. We can see how Ralph Basset kept a weather eye out for the advancement of one of his sons, Richard, by an alliance with the daughter of a colleague. We can see too how far-reaching the effects of the wreck of the White Ship were, most drastically obviously for Henry I, but also for other great families,

who sought to shape the king's decisions. Henry was not allowed to opt out for long. And with Geva Ridel it looks as though we have the child of a previously unknown union between a Norman father and an English mother.

Judith A. Green  
School of History  
The Queen's University of Belfast

#### NOTES

- [1] I should like to thank Prof. William T. Reedy Jnr for prompting me to reassess my views in *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 169-70, 232, and Dr K.S.B. Keats-Rohan who both invited me to present a revised assessment at the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 2001 and for her helpful discussion of the case.
- [2] Judith A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 376.
- [3] J. H. Round (ed.), *Ancient Charters*, Pipe Roll Society, 10 (1888), pp. 8-10.
- [4] Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp. 374-75; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'The heirs of Berengar de Todeni', *Prosopon*, 9 (July 1998); Judith A. Green, 'The descent of Belvoir', *Prosopon*, 10 (April 1999).
- [5] G. E. C., *Complete Peerage*, rev. edn V. Gibbs, H. A. Doubleday and G. H. White, 13 vols in 12 (London, 1910-59), VI, 637-42.
- [6] K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'The devolution of the Honour of Wallingford, 1066-1148', *Oxoniensia*, 54 (1989), 311-18.
- [7] 'The place of Henry I in English history', first publ. in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 47 (1962), 145, repr. in *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 206-33.
- [8] W. T. Reedy (ed.), *Basset Charters*, Pipe Roll Society, n.s. 1 (1995), no. 47.
- [9] *Basset Charters*, nos. 47, 26; pp. vi-viii for a description and dating of the Cartulary.
- [10] J. Stevenson (ed.), *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, Rolls Series, 2 vols (London, 1858), II, 162.
- [11] ASC (E) 1123.
- [12] D. Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton and Roger earl of Warwick: new men and magnates in the reign of Henry I', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 116-18.
- [13] G. Wrottesley, 'The Staffordshire Cartulary', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 3 (1882), 187.
- [14] See my forthcoming article in the *New Dictionary of National Biography*.
- [15] *Domesday Book*, ii, 180.
- [16] Amatus of Montecassino, *Histoire*, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, *Fonti per la Storia d'Italia*, 76 (1935), V.9, 18; pp. 231, 237; VII.3, p. 295; VII. 24, p. 315. I should like to thank Dr G. Loud for his help with the branch of the family in Italy.
- [17] M. Chibnall (ed. and trans.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* (hereafter OV), 6 vols (Oxford, 1969-80), VI, 316.
- [18] OV, IV, 118-20; William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998), I, 710-12; Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (ed. and trans.), *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigny*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992-95), II, 204, 210-12. See also the suggestion by Keats-Rohan that Geoffrey was a man of the count of Perche: 'The prosopography of post-

Conquest England: four case studies', *Medieval Prosopography*, 14 (1993), 1-51, at p. 24.

[19] W. T. Mellows (ed.), *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus* (Oxford, 1949), p. 87.

[20] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* (hereafter *RRAN*), II, edd. C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956), nos. 685, 703, 755, 793, 796, 969, 975, 985, 1000, 1015a, 1054, 1064, 1156, 1166, 1167, 1168.

[21] W. T. Reedy, 'The origins of the General Eyre in the reign of Henry I', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 688-724, at p. 719.

[22] G. Barraclough (ed.), *The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester c. 1071-1237*, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 126 (1988), no. 39. Attached to the manor in 1086 were burgesses in Tamworth, and there is a reference to Geva having given property there to Calke, a house of Augustinian canons founded by her half-brother, Earl Richard, *Domesday Book*, i, 246b; *Chester Charters*, no. 45.

[23] BL Sloane Roll xxxi.5r; xxxi.6r.

[24] W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, new edn, 6 vols in 8 (London, 1817-30), IV, 105-6.

[25] W. Dugdale, *The Baronage of England*, 2 vols (London, 1675-6), I, 34.

[26] O. von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names in Domesday Book* (Uppsala, 1937), p. 259. Keats-Rohan has pointed out that this suggestion raises the possibility that Geva, daughter and heiress of the Domesday Book tenant-in-chief Serlo de Burcy may also have had an English mother. For Serlo, see K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 418-19. This Geva was the mother of Robert FitzMartin, whose gift of Teignton to Montacute priory was made for the souls of Earl Hugh and his wife and the welfare of Ranulf and his wife. J. H. Round commented that this Geva may have been connected with Earl Hugh's family: *Family Origins and Other Studies*, ed. W. Page (London, 1930), p. 78n.

[27] *OV*, II, 262.

[28] D. Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke and V. London, *The Heads of Religious Houses 940-1216* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 32; F. S. Schmitt (ed.), *Epistolae, Sancti Anselmi...Opera Omnia*, 6 vols (Stuttgart, 1946-61), nos. 266-67.

[29] *OV*, VI, 304; C. Warren Hollister, 'The misfortunes of the Mandevilles', *History*, 58 (1973), 18-28, reprinted in *Monarchy, Men and Institutions*, pp. 117-27.

[30] *Domesday Book*, i, 246b.

[31] *OV*, V, 314.

[32] *OV*, V, 314.

[33] *OV*, V, 50.

[34] *OV*, V, 50.

[35] Ingulph, *Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1854), p. 146.

[36] Wrottesley, 'Staffordshire Cartulary', p. 188, followed by Reedy, *Basset Charters*, p. x.

[37] *Chester Charters*, no. 39.

[38] This is made clear in the Leicestershire Survey, which was included in the Basset cartulary and is thought to have been drawn up in 1129 or 1130 and is thus very close in date to the 1130 pipe roll. However some of the Boucy estates were said to be held by Richard Basset, others were 'of the fee of Ridel', see C. F. Slade (ed.) *The Leicestershire Survey* (Leicester, 1956). Moreover, although most of Robert de Boucy's estates eventually passed to the Bassets, not all did: the tenancy which he had

held of Countess Judith in 1086 in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire passed to Robert FitzVitalis, see Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 375.

[39] D. Greenway (ed.), *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum*, (Oxford, 1996), p. 614-15.

[40] As cited *Complete Peerage*, II, 1 fn.

[41] G. Tengvik, *Old English Bynames* (Uppsala, 1938), p. 77.

[42] L. C. Loyd, *The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families*, Harleian Society, 103 (1951), pp. 61-62.

[43] *Domesday Book*, i, 247.

[44] *Victoria County History Staffordshire*, III, 213.

[45] *RRAN*, III, no. 284.

[46] *OV*, VI, 466-68.

[47] *RRAN*, III, no. 43, for corrected dating, see R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, 3rd edn (London, 1990), p. 169.

[48] Wrottesley, 'Staffordshire Cartulary', pp. 188-89; W. Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, 3 vols (London and Manchester, 1923-25), II, 269-71.

### **Alethius: quaestor or grammaticus?**

#### **The Problem of Titulature in Claudian's *carmina minora***

*Antonio Honorato octogenario quaestorum imperialium scrutatori sagacissimo.*

Claudius Claudianus, the Alexandrian protégé of the 'almighty' general Stilico, spent the last decade of his life (*ca* 395-404) at the court of the emperor Honorius. By then one of the most renowned poets, he bequeathed a corpus of Latin poems which not only mirrors the revival of classical education at that time but also provides precious insights into the imperial *palatia* at Milan and Ravenna respectively. [1] The twenty-third of his *carmina minora*, the so-called *Deprecatio in Alethium quaestorem* ('Apology to Alethius the Quaestor'), is the only source of evidence for an Alethius in this period. With regard to the office assigned to this Alethius, a re-examination of the poem might arouse the interest of the scholar who has deepened our understanding of this important Roman magistracy and to whom I would like to dedicate this modest contribution. [2]

Claudian begins the poem by calling down four curses upon himself, ending with (v. 5f.): *sic non Tartareo Furiarum verbere pulsus / irati relegam carmina grammatici* ('as sure as I do not wish to suffer the infernal stroke of the Furies and to be forced to read the poems of the [an ?] enraged grammarian again'). The curses are on account of the fact that Claudian had made audacious and unjust criticism (v. 7f.); he admits, however, to have commented on some 'tiny verses' imprudently (v. 9f.): *versiculos, fateor, non cauta voce notavi: heu miser! ignorans, quam grave crimen erat!* ('I confess, I have noted some tiny verses with imprudent voice: poor me! being ignorant of how serious a crime it was!'). To defend himself, he explains that not even the verses of Orpheus, Virgil, and Homer are exempt of being severely noted (v. 11-14). V. 15f. give a syncrisis: *sed non Vergilius, sed non accusat Homerus: / neuter enim quaestor, pauper uterque fuit* ('but not Virgil, but not Homer complains, because neither of them is a quaestor, both however poor'). In order to be pardoned, Claudian applauds ostensibly whatever pleases Alethius (v. 17-20). There is no need to mention that the apology is highly ironical: not only are the beginning (curses), middle (comparisons) and end (approval) exaggerated, but also the derogatory word



*versiculi* (v. 9) betrays the lack of any repentance, and the concluding *flatus remittat* does not fail to ridicule the opponent completely.

The problem facing the prosopographer is to identify Alethius, who is named only in the title. As there is no other evidence for this person, one is compelled to base the identikit solely on the poem summarised above. In such cases, it is always useful to consult, in the first instance, Alan Cameron's *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), in which the entire *oeuvre* of Claudian is scrutinized with a particular interest in prosopography. Cameron (p. 308f.) infers: 'But though Alethius was clearly a poet, he was a *quaestor*, not a *grammaticus*'; and, it is with reference to the inconsistency between v. 6 and 17-20 that he argues against the identity of Alethius with the *grammaticus*. The latter, characterised as *iratus*, is equated with the contemporary epigrammatist Palladas of Alexandria, whose sharp lampoons on prominent officials may well have been famous in Rome. [3] If Cameron is correct, then one must consider the torture of reading the latter's poems in hell is not due to their poor quality but rather to their aggressive tone. I doubt that the latter was Claudian's purpose.

In his 'Beobachtungen zum Claudiantext', in *Studien zur Literatur der Spätantike* (Bonn, 1975), pp. 45-90, repr. in *Prudentiana*, I (München, 2000), pp. 16-67, Christian Gnilka has argued against these conclusions. In his prosopographical excursus (pp. 44-47), he characterises Alethius as a *quaestor (sacri palatii)*, i.e. the spokesman of the emperor, who was expected to be influential and highly literate. [4] Thus, according to Gnilka, there is no problem in regarding him as a poet as well as a *grammaticus*. He bases his argument on the example of Ausonius, who had formerly been *grammaticus* and *rhetor* at Bordeaux, then tutor of Gratian (again, first *grammaticus*, then *rhetor*), before being promoted *quaestor* by Valentinian. [5] However, Gnilka overstates the case of the Bordelaise professor. Although Ausonius never tried to conceal his social background – on the contrary, he was proud of his successful career including his two periods as *grammaticus* –, there can be no doubt that he was no longer such a teacher when he held the quaestorship. Calling him (or Alethius) *grammaticus* would have been offensive or, at least, dismissive. Of course, Gnilka's view may be defended: the 'degradation' could have been conceived as a deliberate insult alongside the other criticisms contained in the verses, and may have been intended to recall his lowly *parvenu* origin.

The advantages of this interpretation are obvious: *iratus grammaticus* would clearly allude to the enraged Alethius, and the punishment would strike Claudian's fastidious ears which would have to suffer the shortcomings of the *poetaster*; moreover, 'to re-read' would be quite succinct in respect of *notavi* (v. 9) as well. Hence, the third distich appears to be on the same ironical lines as *versiculi* and *flatus*, which deliberately undermine the apology. Yet, I suppose that all this is only half the virtue of these verses, as Claudian aims at ambiguity: namely, *iratus grammaticus* could also be taken more generally, denoting the *typus* of the grumpy teacher. The reputation they enjoyed in society (and still do!) was not very favourable; Augustine's reflexion on his schooldays appear even traumatic. [6] Of course, it is the act of translation which introduces the difficulty of whether to employ the definite or indefinite article with *grammaticus*, whereas the Latin does not exclude either. Thus, the irony of maintaining the guise of an apology is not necessarily interrupted in v. 6. [7]

However, the problem, as raised by Cameron, of the inconsistency between v. 6 and 17-20 is not yet resolved. On the contrary, there are further difficulties neglected by Gnilka: even if the identity of the grammarian, poet, and quaestor is

taken for granted, it is not clear what was the significance of each of the three aspects within the overall concept of the poem. V. 16 seems to imply that criticising Alethius' texts was some kind of sacrilege particularly with regard to his high social standing. One might even be encouraged to go further and suppose that his powerful position at court was the motivation for the apology; at least, the author of the verse might have intended to provoke such an association, which does not seem to have been serious judging from the sharp irony of the excuse. [8] However, the various points of the poem appear rather unconsidered, if Alethius is both the meagre figure of a 'second-class' teacher (ranking below the rhetorician) and also the mighty but untalented *quaestor*, without a key being provided to connect those two roles.

Unaware of this problem, Gnilka (pp. 48-50) put forward the theory that v. 15f. had already been interpolated before the oldest extant manuscript was copied (i.e. cod. Veronensis saec. viii ex.). He draws strongly on the weakness of *neuter*: it is measured disyllabic, which was considered a barbarism in Claudian's day and hence counterproductive. [9] Moreover, he notes that the antithesis of *quaestor* and *dives* is inept (p. 51-55): the *quaestura* was in fact not 'der Inbegriff des Reichtums'. Next he claims that Virgil was by no means poor and, given his 10 million-sesterce fortune, it is not easy to contradict this statement. [10] What finally sanctions Gnilka's case is the illuminating reference to the letter *Ad Olybrium* (carm. min. 40): Claudian underlines his demand to be addressed by the mighty Roman senator with the distich (v. 23f.): *dignatus tenuit Caesar scripsisse Maroni / nec tibi dedecori Musa futura. vale!* ('Caesar [i.e. Augustus] assessed the tiny Maro [i.e. Virgil] worthy of his correspondence, and neither for you the Muse [i.e. to write letters in verses] will be shameful'). Though ignored by Hall, whose amendment renders the text only worse (*sed non Vergilius, non accusaret Homerus / ...*), I consider Gnilka's arguments cogent: v. 15f. are to be deleted. Thus, the poem undoubtedly regains balance, and the allusion to Alethius in *iratus grammaticus* becomes all the more indisputable.

Notwithstanding, the significance of the quaestership is still uncertain. The German scholar deals very cautiously with it: as he knows that the headings of poems are the preferred objects of interpolators and are usually supported by the least authority, he does not claim the authenticity of the words *Deprecatio in Alethium quaestorem* to be a premise to his argument but, on the contrary, regards them as a due conclusion. This accounts for the need to explain how the interpolator knew about Alethius' position at court. Although I cannot exclude this view with certainty, I have difficulties with it: why should Claudian mention the rank of Alethius, whom his audience at court would surely have recognised even without this piece of information? On the other hand, there is no further reference in the subsequent verses that makes an additional point in this regard.

It is important to note that Claudian regularly neglected the titles of the persons named in the headings of his poems, and the few exceptions are strongly suspect of interpolation, as revealed by an analysis of the manuscript tradition. [11] However, it is not only the word *quaestor* which arouses suspicion: how can the poem be called a *deprecatio*, if it is not directly addressed to Alethius, who never appears in the second person (in particular in v. 6 and 19f.). In this regard, it differs from the preceding *Deprecatio ad Hadrianum* (carm. min. 22) which, in spite of its humorous tone, is in fact apologetic and reveals the social inferiority of Claudian. [12] Taking the similarity of subject into consideration, the interpolator might have extended the heading, although his attempt to denote the literary genre was not very successful, and he may have felt the need to express Alethius' superiority more clearly at the same time, thus inserting the inept distich.

As far as the posthumous edition of Claudian's works is concerned, Cameron draws a noteworthy conclusion (p. 418): 'I would suggest then that the *carmina minora* are a clumsily edited collection of everything that could be found in Claudian's notebooks (finished or unfinished), published in honour of Stilico in 404, or very soon after.' For very different reasons, Gnlika claims that the most significant interpolations date from a very early stage within the history of the textual transmission, and I assume that Claudian's texts had already undergone such redactions by the editor as described above. He probably found many of the poems either without any heading at all or accompanied by something like *Ad Alethium* or even *De Alethio* in the case of *carm. min. 23*. Only half a century later, any redactor would have had great difficulties in identifying Gennadius as *ex proconsule* (although he might still have been in office, while receiving *carm. min. 19*), Hadrianus as *praefectus praetorio* (which he was but only shortly after the aforesaid *deprecatio* was addressed to him), Palladius as *tribunus et notarius* (namely the same position that Claudian held: 25.3-8) and the *dux Iabobus* as *magister equitum* (who sank into oblivion soon after the revolt against Stilico in 408: 50.2,14). [13] The additions of the titles were meant to supply background information that would serve to situate the poems at the court of Honorius. Thus, they betray the hand of someone who wished to conserve the literary bequest but was less mindful of the language of an author who tended to avoid such prosaic additions.

In the case of Alethius, there can be no doubt that the editor knew a *quaestor* of this name and, according to the examples offered above, he was in all likelihood in office in the year of publication (404/5) but less probably at the time of the composition. [14] Thus the discussion of *carm. min. 23* could stop at this point, but I venture to go one step further. As indicated above, considering Alethius as *quaestor* necessitates the interpretation that v. 6 alludes either to his former status as *grammaticus* or that, in the literary circle of Claudian, he figured as 'the *grammaticus*', if not 'the *grammaticus iratus*'. Neither understanding can be ruled out nor are they so obvious as to exclude other hypotheses. Is it impossible to take the *grammaticus* simply as someone teaching grammar, be it in Rome or Milan at some time in the 390s? Once the interpolations are left aside, there is no hint at all that the grammarian mentioned in the poem held any other post than that of a grammarian, and there is nothing at all to link him with the court.

To conclude: I suggest that *carm. min. 23* provides evidence of *two* different Alethii: one *grammaticus*, active probably in Rome early in the 390s and upset by the young Claudian's criticisms of his verses (*ca 370*), and another Alethius who was *quaestor* to Honorius, probably around 404/5.

Altay Coskun  
Wolfson College, Oxford  
altaycoskun@yahoo.co.uk

## NOTES

[1] For a brief account of his life and works, see S. Doepp, 'Claudianus', in *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, edd. Doepp and W. Geerlings (Freiburg, 2nd. ed. 1999), pp. 127f., with bibliography; more detailed is M. von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 2 vols (Munich, 2nd. ed., 1997), pp. 1060-71. Claudian's poems are edited in J.B. Hall, *Claudii Claudiani Carmina* (Leipzig, 1985).

[2] *Law in the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 1998) is the product of T. Honoré's investigations over the past four decades.

[3] Similarly, both A.H.M. Jones (PLRE, I, 39 no. 1) and Robert Kaster, *Guardians of Language. The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Calif., 1988), p. 383 (no. 183) do not regard Alethius as a *grammaticus*. But note that Jones does not relate v. 6 to Palladas: PLRE, I, 657f. Jones' interpretation has been accepted by Martindale (PLRE, II, 55 no. 1).

[4] Besides Honoré (as note 2), see also my contribution, 'Ausonius und die spaetantike Quaestur', forthcoming in *S.Z.*, 118 (2001).

[5] In his addenda (pp. 651f.), Gnilka criticises Kaster for rejecting his view without explanation. For the *cursus honorum* of Ausonius, see my new analysis in the forthcoming monograph *Die gens Ausoniana an der Macht*, to be published soon, probably as *Historia Einzelschrift*.

[6] Aug. Conf. 1.14f., commented on by J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine. Confessions*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992), pp. 61-65: violence and bad humour of *grammatici* were considered proverbial: Aug. Sermones Guelferbytani 1.11 *ferulas et virgas grammaticorum*; further, Prud. praef. 7f.; Aus. Protr. 12-15; Sid. epist. 8.11.4; and, Alan D. Booth, 'The image of the professor in ancient society', in *Classical News and Views*, 20 (1976), 1-10 with many other references.

[7] Can this interpretation be supported by prosopographical arguments? Alethius' name seems to link him with a Bordelaise family renowned for its literacy: he could well be a descendant of either Latinus Alcimus Alethius or Tiberius Minervius, both professors at the Aquitanian capital – the latter had even held chairs at Rome and Constantinople. Jones suggests Alethius was a descendant of the former (PLRE, I, 39 no. 1-2 with reference to Aus. Prof. 2); but note that the son of Tiberius Minervius (Aus. Prof. 1) was called Alethius Minervius (Aus. Prof. 6), cf. PLRE, I, 603f. no. 3-4; all of them could thus be related to each other. With regard to the rare name, it is even possible that they were ancestors of the aristocrat mentioned by Sid. epist. 2.7, the literary figure commemorated in CIL 12.2660 (born around 422, if not much earlier; I assume he was a pagan) (both of whom are identified in PLRE, II, 55 no. 2), and remembered by Fredegar, Chron. 4.44 A.D. 613 (PLRE, III, 41). On the other hand, there are also some Alet(h)ii, Alet(h)ei, and the like evidenced at Rome, cf. CIL 12292, 12346, 16066, 16750, 27840, 31867. To claim kinship between Claudian's Alethius and one of the Roman or Gallic name-bearers would thus be pure guesswork.

[8] PLRE, I, 39: 'The tone of the poem suggests that he was a man with authority.'

[9] It would not be convincing to contradict Gnilka, with poetic licence, by reading *neuter* as a trochee; he rightly contends that the word order could have been changed easily into *quaestor enim neuter*. The writer of v. 16 appears to have been simply insensitive to the sophisticated demands of Latin prosody.

[10] Vita Verg. 1, ed. Diehl 1911, 13; for further sources, see Gnilka, p. 52.

[11] Contrary to what one might expect, headings in general were that part of a text most prone to deliberate changes (interpolations, abbreviations, total rejections, superseding by or amalgamating with a short summary), not only in the case of Claudian. Particularly the titles of persons addressed or dealt with in the subsequent poems very often lack the authority of the poet himself, which emerges of Hall's apparatus; cf. in particular *carm. min.* 1, 2, 14, 21, 30, 31, 40, 41, 43, 46-48, appendix 4 and 5. Only in the cases of 19, 22, 23, 25, and 50, the magistracies mentioned are (dubiously or sufficiently) backed by the manuscripts, although in all of these instances except for 23, the office is at least alluded to in the poem itself; for more details see notes 12 and 13. With regard to the posthumous edition, I am suspicious of interpolation in these cases as well: see below. For a comparison, see Aus. Parent. and Prof., commented on by R.P.H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius* (Oxford, 1991), pp.

298ff.; further discussions are to be found in my forthcoming book, referred to in note 3 above; or Prudentius and the account by L. Rivero García, *La poesía de Prudencio* (Huelva, 1996), pp. 29ff.

[12] Carm. min. 21, probably titled *De Theodoro et Hadriano*, is an invective against two of Honorius' leading magistrates: the former ('Mallius' in v. 1) is accused of somnolence, the latter (according to his Egyptian origin, named *Pharius* in v.2) of greed. As Hadrianus was capable of a successful reply (22.9 *paribus concurrere telis*), Claudian implores his pardon in the humorous apology; his relation to Hadrianus is revealed in v. 23f. (*gratia fluxit, sequitur feralis egestas / desolata domus, caris spoliatur amicis*) and v. 33f. (*iamiam supplicii fessos humilesque serenus / respice: quid tanta dignaris mole clientem*). For a concise interpretation, see Cameron, pp. 394-401; the only shortcoming is that he does not appreciate sufficiently the difference in tone between *carm. min.* 21-23, 43f., 50. For the offices held by Theodorus and Hadrianus, see note 13 below.

[13] *Carm. min.* 19.3f. allude to an office in Egypt and Greece: *Graicorum populis et nostro cognite Nilo / utraque gens fasces horret amatque tuos*. Gennadius Torquatus is evidenced as *praefectus Augustalis* by CTh 14.27.1 (5.2.396); while E. Groag, *Dissertationes Pannonicae*, 1.14, 1946, 64f. (followed by Cameron, p. 394) suggests the office first mentioned to have preceded, Martindale (PLRE, II, 1124) is quite right to state that the *proconsulatus Achaetae* ranked above the administration of Egypt; hence he dates the *proconsulatus* only approximately 396/404. *Carm. min.* 22 is headed *ad hadrianum pp* only in three manuscripts (Parisinus Latinus 18552 saec. xii/xiii; Baltimorensis 437 saec. xv; Ravennas Classensis 120 saec. xv) and 'some older editions' according to the apparatus of Hall, who rejects the title. With regard to *carm. min.* 21 (for which see note 12), one formerly supposed that both addressees held the praetorian prefecture at the time of composition; Cameron, pp. 394-7 (who does not consider the titles transmitted in the aforesaid codes), convincingly argues that the poems were written around spring 397, when Theodorus was already *ppo* (397-99), but Hadrianus still *comes sacrarum largitionum*, an office referred to with the word *sacra* (21.2); significantly, the latter held the praetorian prefecture in 401-5, thus at the time of publication! The name Palladius was extremely widespread, and when the edition was under preparation, various Palladii held distinguished posts at the court: PLRE, I, 658-62 (28 nos.) and 2.819-24 (20 nos.). Claudian's office is also attested in CIL 6.1710. In the case of Jacob, the manuscripts either call him *magister*, *magister equitum*, or *magister militum*, which does not necessarily denote a material difference: see A. Demandt, 'Magister militum', *RE Suppl.*, 12 (1970), 553-790 (pp. 614f.) on the terminology (Jacob is ignored by him!). As Stilico was *magister peditum*, Jacob in fact seems to have been the *mag. eq.*, who could, however, less precisely and more respectfully, be addressed as *mag. mil.*; thus, it appears that the manuscript tradition had split already in the fifth century, because such a deliberate change would be difficult to understand at a later stage. For the interpretation of *carm. min.* 50, see Cameron, pp. 224-6, who soundly suggests the date 402. PLRE, II, 581f. (following Cameron and G. Brunner, 'Wer war Jacobus?', in *BZ*, 65 (1972), 539-52) convincingly identifies him with the *Iacobus vir illustris* responsible for the transportation of relics to Constantinople during the episcopate of John Chrysostom (until 404); it is erroneous, however, to infer that he resigned from office between 402-404; the sources (cited in PLRE) neither state that he went to the East himself (on the contrary, *per Iacobum* implies that something was done *by his authority*) nor do they say that he in fact resigned his office. It is therefore probable that he remained in office until the revolt against Stilico took place in 408.

[14] Honoré (as note 2), 221-25, suggests the identification of Alethius with the imperial draftsman of 397-99, who was obviously a literary figure; the period 401-7 remains unassigned in his examination (pp. 216, 229).

### **The Foresters of Cannock in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries**

In the preface to his *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* C.R. Young observed that English forests and their custodians have been curiously neglected. [1] This paper is a brief study of the early keepers of Cannock Forest (Staffs).

It is generally accepted that forests in the sense of areas subject to special legislation were introduced into England after the Norman Conquest, although there were hunting grounds in England prior to the Conquest and Cannock may well have been one of them. [2] Cannock Forest seems to have been in existence by the 1080s, when the Staffordshire folios of Domesday Book make passing reference to a forester and to woodland in royal hands. William Rufus and Henry I both visited Cannock, where there was a hunting lodge, and presumably hunted whilst they were there. [3] At its greatest extent Cannock Forest covered around one hundred square miles, encompassing the uplands now known as the Cannock Hills and the area surrounding the cathedral centre of Lichfield. During the period under consideration rivers formed the boundary on three sides, the Trent to the north, the Penk to the west and the Tame to the east respectively. To the south, where a natural barrier is lacking, the boundary of the Forest was not permanently fixed; it apparently retreated northwards during the reign of Stephen but was restored or even extended southwards under Henry II. [4] The soils within the area of the forest are mostly poor and Domesday Book indicates that the locality was thinly settled and extensively wooded in 1086. [5] However, in the twelfth century the expansion of arable cultivation was clearly considerable, as the grant of fifteen hundred acres of assarts in the forest to the Bishop of Coventry in 1155 shows. [6] Even so much woodland remained from which deer and timber could be taken in the thirteenth century. [7]

The first reference to the post of Forester of Cannock is in the Pipe Roll for 1130. The incumbent, Walter Croc, was heavily fined for several different misdemeanours. The Pipe Roll also shows that Walter's predecessor was Richard the Hunter. [8] In 1270 a later Forester claimed that the manor of Chesterton (Warks) had been granted to Richard the Hunter to be held in serjeanty by virtue of his office as forester in the time of King Edward the Confessor. [9] Whilst Domesday Book shows that Richard the Hunter, alias Richard the Forester, was a serjeant and held Chesterton there is no definite evidence that he was custodian of Cannock before 1066. [10] Richard was probably the anonymous Staffordshire forester mentioned in Domesday Book. [11] Walter Croc married Richard's daughter Margery. Walter was presumably related to the Croc the Huntsman mentioned in late eleventh century sources and to other twelfth century foresters with the same surname, but it is not known how. [12] Walter and Margery produced two sons, William who had succeeded his father before *ca* 1150 and Robert. [13] William married Rachilda and died before 1164 leaving a son also called William and a daughter called Margery. The forest was then in the hands of the sheriff for some years, presumably because the younger William was a minor. [14] The younger William was hanged for his part in the murder of Gilbert Butler, another Staffordshire forester, in 1175 [15] and the office passed to Robert de Brok who married his sister Margery. [16] Robert died in 1196 without a male heir the office of Forester passed to Hugh de Loges who married Robert's daughter Margery. [17]

Of the foresters who followed Robert the Hunter only Robert de Brok was more than a simple keeper. He had been a member of King Henry II's household and, with his kinsman Rannulf, had been deeply implicated in the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170. [18] His appointment as keeper of Cannock was probably part of Henry's policy of centralising forest administration, and he was subsequently appointed to conduct Forest Eyres during the reign of Richard I. [19] Virtually nothing is recorded about the Foresters' official activities during the twelfth century, but their principal duty was undoubtedly enforcement of Forest Law, summarised in the Assize of the Forest of 1184. [20] Of the operation of this at Cannock there is little mention other than references to illegally withheld fines and impounded stock in 1130, and regular mention of pannage in the later twelfth century. [21] We do know that records were kept by Robert de Brok, which were sufficiently important for his successor Hugh de Loges to pay a fine to recover them from Robert's kinsman. [22] Thirteenth-century evidence shows that the Foresters presided over a swanimote court, presenting pleas of vert and of venison, and Robert's records may have related to this. [23] In 1130 Walter Croc owed a *cesse* (*censa*) of ten marks, or around £6, [24] for his office and lands and this figure remained fixed for the rest of the period covered here.

The real value of the office lay in the lands that came with it. In 1086 Richard the Hunter held eleven properties in Warwickshire valued in excess of £14 and eleven in Staffordshire valued at rather less than £3. After his death ten of the Staffordshire holdings and three in Warwickshire passed into other hands with a loss of revenue exceeding £6. [25] One of the Staffordshire holdings, Huntington, passed to a subordinate official of Cannock Forest who paid a rent to the foresters for it. [26] The loss of royal demesne land at Kenilworth (Warks) leased by Richard the Hunter in 1086 may have been compensated with a grant of land in Great Wyrley (Staffs) which was certainly held by his grandson William. [27] Two more properties in Cannock Forest, Fradley and Hopwas, were acquired by the foresters after 1086. Both were very small. [28] The Foresters' demesne manors were at Chesterton and Rodbaston (Staffs). Both were adjacent to major Roman roads, the Fosse Way and Watling Street respectively. At Rodbaston a manor house was recorded in 1195, the moated site of which is still visible. [29] Substantial and deliberate development of this estate is suggested by the Domesday Book entry, which records that it was entirely demesne and had grown in value from 2s. to 15s. [30] The Foresters also had a messuage in Warwick in 1086 that they continued to hold until 1200 when it was sold and became the site of a gaol. [31]

In theory land held in serjeanty was indivisible and inalienable; [32] however, all of the foresters from Walter Croc onwards alienated and divided their estates freely. Hugh de Loges had a prolonged dispute with a Gilbert Croc regarding Grandborough and part of Walsgrave-on-Sowe (Warks) that the latter held for a rent of 10s. and his service as a serjeant. [33] Other tenancies had been created by Walter Croc's grant of part of Hillmorton (Warwicks) to William of Morton as 1/5th of a knight's fee; and William Croc the elder's grant of Ettington to Frederick of Bishopton for the service of keeping his dog. [34] Much less substantial were Robert de Brok's grants of half virgates at Walsgrave to his servants Everard and Robert de Codsall for a rent of two arrows and 2s. respectively. [35] Various religious houses benefited from the foresters' piety; the elder William Croc was particularly generous. In *ca* 1153 he granted his lands at Wyrley to Radmore Abbey, a Cistercian house that grew out of a hermitage established in the Forest. However, the monks relocated to Stoneleigh in Warwickshire after 1155 because of 'molestation' by the foresters. This

seems to have taken the form of disruption of devotions rather than despoliation, and William himself seems to have regarded the house fondly enough to wish to be buried there. [36] He also granted the church of Chesterton to Kenilworth Priory, confirmed a gift to the Templars of four virgates in the same vill, and gave half a virgate there to the Hospitallers. [37] William's grant of Wyrley to Radmore lapsed and Robert de Brok gave all the land held of him there by Hamo of Wyrley to Lilleshall Abbey (Salop) some years later. [38] Robert also made a very modest grant to Stoneleigh of half a virgate and a messuage at Radway (Warks), perhaps in compensation. [39]

Subordinate foresters at Cannock are alluded to in the Pipe Roll of 1130 and in a royal charter of 1155, and five of them are named in *Testa de Neville* of 1198. [40] These officials had custody of hays, or subdivisions of the Forest, for which they paid dues totalling four and a half marks. [41] Reginald de Puys had custody of Rugeley Hay, where he held 25 acres of land for a rent of 3s. His nephew Richard de Puys held a quarter of a carrucate worth 4s. and paid half a mark to the Forester annually perhaps sharing responsibility for the hay. [42] Roger of Bentley held Bentley Hay and paid one mark annually. [43] Henry de Brok held Teddesley Hay and had a carrucate of land at Huntington, worth 10s. for which he paid two marks. Henry was the husband of Constance, the daughter of Geoffrey Brown. Geoffrey, also known simply as Brown, held a hide of land from William Croc at Chesterton which he gave to the Knights Templar. [44] Jordan of Cannock, who held a quarter of a carrucate of land worth 2s. in Cannock in 1198, seems to have had custody of Cheslyn Hay. It is possible that his predecessors can be traced back to the 1090s. Purported charters of William Rufus confirmed Cheslyn to one Leofwine and subsequently to his son Trumwine. A Robert Trumwyn had charge of Cheslyn Hay in 1236, although the relationship of the Trumwyns to Jordan of Cannock is unclear. [45] The remaining hays of Alrewas, Gailey, Ogle and Hopwas were all in the hands of Hugh de Loges in 1198, and may always have been held by the foresters themselves. Thirteenth-century records show that the Forester and his subordinates enjoyed similar privileges in the forest; mainly hunting, underwood and pannage rights which were probably of long standing. [46]

The subsequent history of the forest is one of slow decay. The extent of the forest was much reduced after 1230 when the manors of Rugeley and Cannock were granted to the Bishop of Coventry and thereafter treated as exempted from Forest Law. Over the next few years more of the forest was illegally annexed to these manors and the Hay of Rugeley passed out of royal control. In 1246 Hugh de Loges' son was deprived of his post of Forester but was allowed to retain most of his lands. Later foresters were for the most part minor local landowners. [47] For all practical purposes the forest ceased to exist by the end of the sixteenth century when the remaining woodland had been cleared to supply charcoal for the emerging Black Country iron industry. The present, and very different, Cannock Forest was established by the Forestry Commission in the 1920s.

Richard Dace  
London, UK.  
richard.dace@virgin.net

## NOTES

[1] C.R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Leicester, 1979), pp. vii-ix. I am grateful to Dr Kath Thompson for comments on an early draft and to Mr Nick Griffiths for providing the map for this article (see Fig.1).



- [2] C. Petit-Dutaillis, 'Les origines franco-normandes de la 'foret' anglaise', in *Melanges d'histoire offerts a M. Charles Bémont* (Paris, 1913), pp. 58-76; D. Hooke, 'Pre-Conquest woodland: its distribution and usage', *Agricultural History Review*, 37 (1989), 113-129.
- [3] *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (1976), fo. 249c; S. Erdeswick, *A Survey of Staffordshire* (London, 1844), p. 199; C. Johnson and H.A. Cronne (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* (Oxford, 1956), II, 56, 116, 278; H.M. Colvin (ed.), *History of the Kings Works*, HMSO, 6 vols (London, 1963-1982), II, 848, 907.
- [4] There was also a small private forest adjoining Cannock to the south, the Earl of Warwick's chase at Sutton (Warks): D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000-1300* (London, 1992), p. 306.
- [5] *V.C.H Staffs*, II (1967), p. 339; H.C. Darby and L.B. Terrett (eds.), *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 197.
- [6] *Staffordshire Historical Collections*, 1924, Salt Soc. (1926), 9.
- [7] *Calendar of Close Rolls 1234-1237*, HMSO (London, 1908), pp. 84, 502.
- [8] J Hunter (ed.), *Pipe Roll 31 Henry I*, Records Office (London, 1833), pp. 106-7.
- [9] *SHC*, IV (1883), pp. 179-180.
- [10] *Domesday Book: Warwickshire* (1976), fo. 244c. Richard has been identified with the thegn called *Chenvin* who held land at Codsall (Staffs) before 1066 but this seems rather dubious. There is no evidence that Richard or his heirs held land here subsequently: *SHC*, IV, 179.
- [11] *DB Staffs* (1976) fo. 238a. The distribution of his lands in Staffordshire suggests Richard was also responsible for Kinver Forest.
- [12] Young, *Royal Forests*, pp. 48-9.
- [13] R. Hilton (ed.), *Ledger Book of Stoneleigh*, Dugdale Soc., 24 (1960), 13.
- [14] *Pipe Roll 14 Henry II*, p. 118.
- [15] Three knights and a serjeant were hanged for the murder. One of the knights was Alan of Coven, a hamlet on the western side of Cannock Forest. The Book of Fees indicates that William was the serjeant concerned: *Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I*, Rolls Series, 2 vols (London, 1867), I, 93; *PR 21 Henry II*, 66, 69; *Book of Fees*, HMSO, 3 vols (1920-31), 1277.
- [16] *PR 21 Henry II*, p. 67; *Book of Fees*, 1275-1277.
- [17] *PR 6 Richard I*, p. 41; *PR 7 Richard I*, p. 255. For the descent of the office see Fig. 2.
- [18] F. Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (1986), p. 301.
- [19] *The Historical Works of Master Ralph de Diceto*, Rolls Series, 2 vols (London, 1876), I, 342-5. Young, *Royal Forests*, 18-32. *PR 1 Richard I*, passim.
- [20] D.C. Douglas and G.W. Greenaway (eds.), *English Historical Documents 1042-1189* (London, 1953), pp. 417-420.
- [21] *PR 31 Henry I*, p. 107; *PR 1 John*, p. 163.
- [22] *PR 2 John*, p. 254
- [23] *SHC*, V(1) (1884), p. 167.
- [24] *PR 31 Henry I*, p. 106.
- [25] *DB Warks*, fo. 244c. *DB Staffs*, fo. 247a..
- [26] See n. 43 below.
- [27] In 1121 Henry I appointed Geoffrey de Clinton sheriff of Warwickshire and gave him Kenilworth, where he built a castle and priory. Wyrley had belonged to the bishop of Chester as a berewick of the cathedral manor of Lichfield in 1086. For a period before 1121 the see – now styled Coventry – was in royal hands, but was later granted to Roger de Clinton, Geoffrey's nephew. Roger seems to have accepted the

- abstraction of Wyrley without demure. D. Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton and Roger, Earl of Warwick, new men and magnates in the reign of Henry I', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), passim; *DB Warks*, fo. 244c.
- [28] *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, I, HMSO (London, 1916), p. 74.
- [29] *PR 7 Richard I*, p. 256.
- [30] *DB Staffs*, fo. 250c.
- [31] *DB Warks*, fo. 238a; *PR 2 John*, pp. 176, 250.
- [32] Poole, *Obligations of Society*, pp. 58, 76.
- [33] *Memoranda Roll 10 John*, PRS, N.S. 31 (1957), p. 87; *Curia Regis Rolls*, HMSO, I (London, 1922), 30, 125, II (1925), 278, VII (1935), 340; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, I, Dugdale Society, 11 (1932), 10.
- [34] *Book of Fees*, 1276.
- [35] *Book of Fees*, 1277.
- [36] *Ledger Book*, p. 13.
- [37] *Book of Fees*, 1275-1276.
- [38] *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, II, HMSO (London, 1906), p. 59.
- [39] *Ibid.*, III, HMSO (1908), p. 486.
- [40] *Pipe Roll 31 Hen I*, pp. 106-7; R.W. Eyton, *Court, Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* (Dorchester, 1878), p. 6; *Book of Fees*, p. 7.
- [41] *Book of Fees*, p. 594.
- [42] *Book of Fees*, 7; *SHC*, IV, 36.
- [43] *Book of Fees*, 7, 1277.
- [44] *Book of Fees*, 7. William Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated* (London, 1730), p. 478; B. Lees, *Records of the Templars in England*, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, 9 (1935), p. 29.
- [45] Erdeswick, *Stafffordshire*, p. 199; *Book of Fees*, pp. 7, 594.
- [46] *Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, I, 74; *Rotuli Hundredorum*, II, Records Commission (1818), p. 115.
- [47] Young, *Royal Forests*, pp. 60-73; *V.C.H. Staffs*, II, 343; P.R. Coss, *Lordship, Knighthood and Locality: A Study in English Society c. 1180 – c. 1280* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 291-4.

Figure 1: - The Forest of Cannock c.1200.

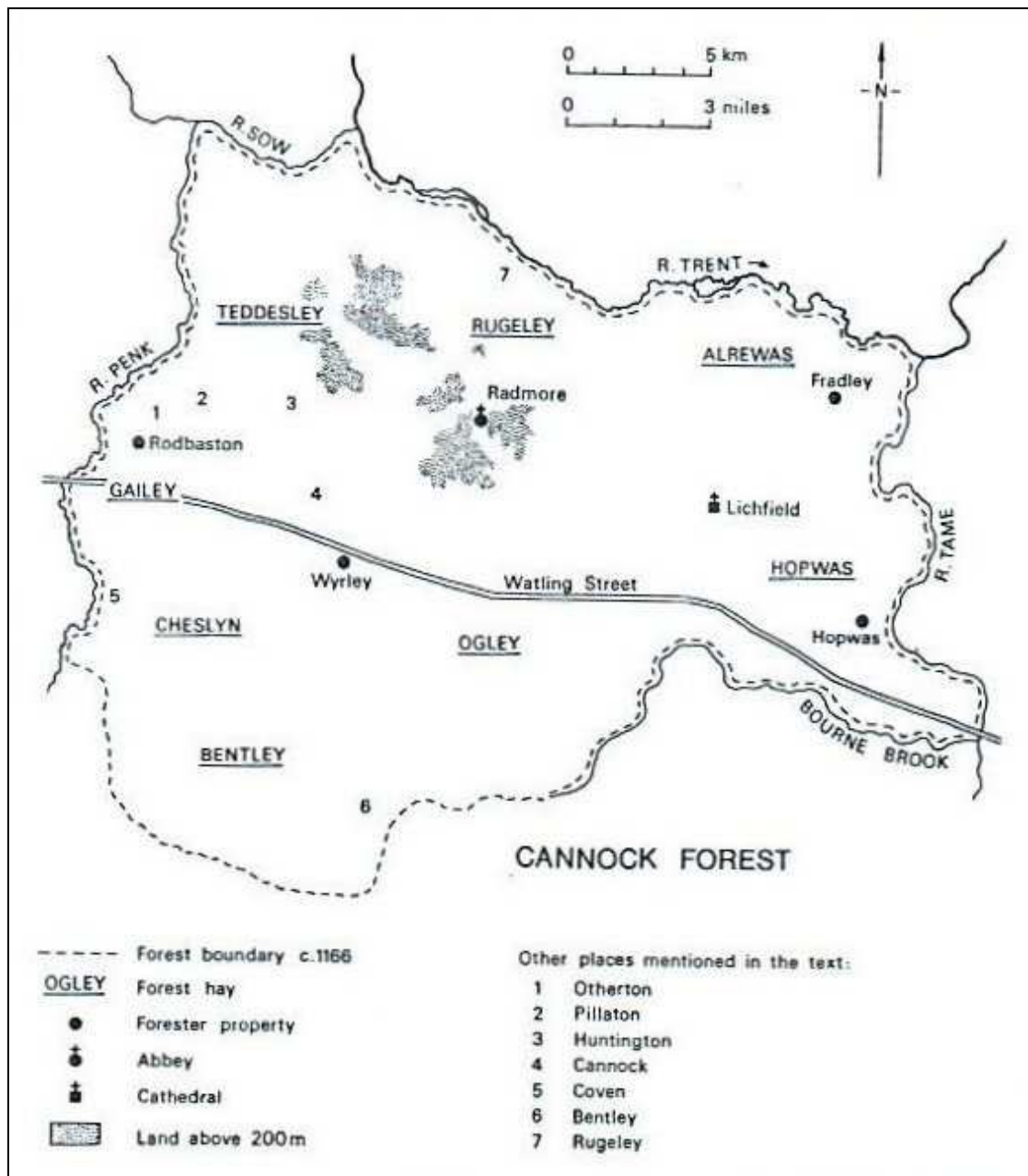
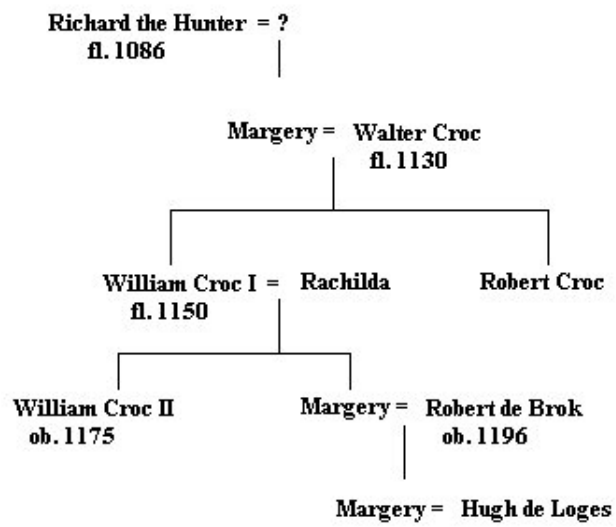
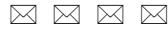


Figure 2: - The descent of the office of Forester of Cannock 1086-1198.



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Submissions should be sent to:

Dr David E. Thornton, Department of History, Bilkent University, 06533 Bilkent, Turkey; *tel.*: ++90 312 2901796; *e-mail*: [tdavid@bilkent.edu.tr](mailto:tdavid@bilkent.edu.tr); or, *fax*: ++90 312 2902820.



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