

**English Women Landholders and Conquest
in Eastern England: c. 1050-c. 1090**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Although theories of women's power have progressed to more nuanced discussions of agency and strategy, the historiographical divide between Anglo-Saxon England and Anglo-Norman England has remained. This has resulted in a lacuna in the study of English women who lived through a pivotal moment in English history. An even more remarkable omission when one considers the availability of one of the most detailed sources. Domesday Book has not been used for English women, nor for their survival across the Norman Conquest. This thesis draws primarily on Domesday, adopting a more woman-aware approach to identify the English. A prosopographical database of all the English women in the six Domesday shires of East Anglia and the Fens suggests that there were many more English women in Domesday Book than has been previously thought. Using a combination of Domesday Book and other sources this thesis uses case studies to identify women survivors and contextualised their experiences of conquest.

The central chapter of this thesis is allocated to Eadgifu the Fair whose study exemplifies many of the problems encountered when using Domesday Book for the English, and more particularly for English women. Further case studies identify interesting, but ostensibly less important women; they contrast women whose backgrounds were firmly rooted in Anglo-Saxon England and who survived across conquest with 'new' women who thrived in the Anglo-Norman world. They reveal the existence of a surprising number of English urban women and compare their experience of conquest with those of rural women and they highlight four previously unnoticed English women who remarkably held as tenants-in-chief in 1086. By exploiting the obvious source, Domesday Book, and working through the problems inherent in using it, this thesis highlights English women who survived the Conquest, and outlines the mechanisms by which they did so.

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List of Abbreviations

- Alecto *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, ed. by Ann Williams and Geoffrey Martin (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1992)
- ANS *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ed. by R. Allen Brown and others (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1978-)
- ASC *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, trans. and ed. by Michael Swanton, new edn (London: Phoenix Press, 2000)
- BAR British Archaeological Reports
- Bates, *Regesta* *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I 1066-1087*, ed. by David Bates (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), cited by number
- CG Continental Germanic
- CUHB *Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600-1540*, ed. by D. M. Palliser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Danelaw* *Documents Illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw*, ed. by F. M. Stenton, The British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1920), v
- DB plus county *Domesday Book*, ed. by John Morris, 34 vols (Chichester: Phillimore, 1974-1986); *Domesday Book 12: Hertfordshire*, ed. by John Morris (1976); *Domesday Book 18: Cambridgeshire*, ed. by Alexander Rumble (1981); *Domesday Book 19: Huntingdonshire*, ed. by Sally Harvey (1975); *Domesday Book 30: Worcestershire*, ed. by Caroline and Frank Thorn; *Domesday Book, 31: Lincolnshire*, ed. by Philip Morgan and Caroline Thorn, 2 vols (1986); *Domesday Book 32: Essex*, ed. by Alexander Rumble (1983); *Domesday Book 33: Norfolk*, ed. by Philippa Brown, 2 vols (1984); *Domesday Book 34: Suffolk*, ed. by Alexander Rumble, 2 vols (1986)
- DP K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166, 1: Domesday Book* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999)
- ECE *The Early Charters of Essex*, ed. by Cyril R. Hart; Department of English Local Occasional Papers, 10, rev. edn (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971)
- EHR *English Historical Review*
- EYC *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vols I-III, ed. by W. Farrer (Edinburgh: Ballantyne Hanson, 1914-16); *Index* (to vols I-III), ed. by C. T. Clay and E. M. Clay Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record

Ser., Extra Ser., 4 (Wakefield: West Yorkshire Printing, 1942); vols IV-XII, ed. by C. T. Clay, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Ser., Extra Ser., 1-3 & 5-10 (Wakefield: West Yorkshire Printing, 1935-1965)

- FD* *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. by D. C. Douglas, The British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1932), VIII
- Fei.* Olof von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book*, *Nomina Germanica: Arkiv för Germansk Namnforskning* Utgivet av Jöran Sahlgren, 3 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1937)
- GDB* Domesday Book Record Commission, I, ed. by Abraham Farley (London: Record Commission, 1783), cited by folio and column, a-d
- ICC* *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* [Inquest of the County of Cambridge], *Subjicitur Inquisitio Eliensis*, ed. by N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London: Royal Society of Literature, 1876), 1-96
- IE* *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis, Subjicitur Inquisitio Eliensis* [Inquest of Ely], ed. by N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London: Royal Society for Literature, 1876), 97-195
- Jen.* Gillian Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire*, *Navnestudier* udgivet af Institut for Navneforskning, 7 (Copenhagen: I kommission nos Akademisk forlag, 1968)
- LDB* Domesday Book Record Commission, vol. II, ed. by Abraham Farley (London: Record Commission, 1783), cited by folio a-b
- LE* *Liber Eliensis*, ed. by E. O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 92 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), Book II
- Lindsey Survey* The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey, trans. and ed. by C. W. Foster and Thomas Longley (Lincoln: Lincoln Record Society, 1957; repr. 1971)
- Mon. Ang.* Sir William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. by J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols in 8 (London: Longman, Lackington, and Harding, 1817-30)
- nn.* no name
- ODan* Old Danish
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 1 September 2019]

OE	Old English
OFr	Old French
OHG	Old High German
Okasha	Elisabeth Okasha, <i>Women's Names in Old English</i> (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011)
ON	Old Norse
OSc	Old Scandinavian
OSw	Old Swedish
OV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> , ed. and trans. by Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-80), vol. IV, unless otherwise stated
PASE	Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, 2: Domesday < http://www.pase.ac.uk > [accessed September 2019]
S.	<i>Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography</i> , ed. by Peter Sawyer, RHS Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), now updated and online as <i>Electronic Sawyer</i> < http://www.esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk > [accessed 1 October 2019], cited by number
Sc	Scandinavian
<i>Sheriffs</i>	Judith Green, <i>English Sheriffs to 1154</i> , Public Record Office Handbooks, 24 (London: HMSO, 1990)
Taxatio	<i>Taxatio</i> , ed. by Jeff Denton and others (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2014) http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/taxatio [accessed 15 October 2019]
ThLV	<i>The Thorney Liber Vitae (London, British Library, Additional MS 40,000, fos 12r): Edition, Facsimile and Study</i> , ed. by Lynda Rollason (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015)
TRE	<i>tempore regis Eadwardi</i> , ‘in King Edward’s time’, before 1066
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
TRW	<i>tempore regis Willelmi</i> , ‘in King William’s time’, before 1086
VCH	Victoria County History, University of London (Oxford and Woodbridge: Institute of Historical Research, 1933-)

- W. *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, trans. and ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, pbk edn (Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), cited by number
- WP *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. and tr. by R. H. C. Davis and M. Chibnall, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), cited by page

For Duarte, my deorc helm

But of the lights that cherish household cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that dares
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that ensnares!

William Wordsworth

xxxii *The Norman Conquest*

Chapter 1 Introduction

There can be no doubt that the events and battles of 1066, culminating in the Norman Conquest, were catastrophic to the English population. However, the enormity of this defeat has rarely been discussed in terms of its physical reality. Elisabeth van Houts is one historian who has never minimized its dramatic effects on the English.¹ Not only has she estimated that the number of noble English men would have been reduced by as much as 50 or 75 percent, but she has also pointed out that this number would also have been exacerbated by lesser skirmishes, subsequent resistance, and, in some cases, exile. It is, therefore, surprising that no-one has directly asked how this affected the English women left behind happened. All the more so when one considers that such an emasculation offers the historian a rare opportunity to study a group of women who, to all intents and purposes, were compelled to act, to a greater or lesser extent, without recourse to men.

It is unfortunately true that women, as much today as ever, are at the mercy of a conquering army and there is nothing to suggest in historic sources that English women were immune from violence at the hands of the Norman soldiers. The Bayeux Tapestry itself highlights the fate of English women in a panel which depicts a woman and child fleeing from a burning building. It has even been suggested, perhaps wishfully, that this panel may be a representation of Harold's wife, Edith Swan Neck, holding the hand of one of their younger children – the richness of the woman's home and clothes do, in

¹ Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Trauma of 1066', *History Today*, 46:10 (1996), 9-15; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Invasion and Migration', in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, ed. by Julia Crick and Elisabeth van Houts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 208-34; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Intermarriage', in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, ed. by Crick and van Houts, pp. 247-55.

fact, indicate that she was a noble woman.² Is violence to women in the aftermath of war so commonplace that scholars have refrained from its discussion in connection with 1066? Certainly the majority of English sources are quiet on the subject, probably as suggested by van Houts, shocked in to silence, but why, over a thousand years later, are we? Near contemporaneous chronicles on both sides of the conflict, as well as those of interested foreign observers, agreed that English women were subjected to rape and forced marriage; a fact that is also confirmed by the avoidance tactics employed by English women to survive.³

It is usual practice amongst Anglo-Norman scholars to discuss the *survival* of the English after the Norman Conquest, referring in fact to political rather than physical survival. In this thesis political survival is marked by a continuity of landholding. Scholars of this this time period are extremely fortunate to have recourse to one of England's most iconic historical sources, Domesday Book, which opportunely records land ownership in England from 1066 and 1086. Using data taken from Domesday, it is possible to recognize English women who still held land in 1086 and had, therefore, survived at least politically.

This thesis set out to ask what happened to English women across the Conquest, ostensibly for the forty-year period from 1050 to 1090 but, most specifically, the twenty year period which immediately followed the events of 1066 and which is covered by Domesday Book. In order to answer this initial question, this thesis carefully investigated Domesday Book, applying a new woman-aware approach to painstakingly

² Gale Owen-Crocker, pers. comm.

³ Elisabeth van Houts, 'Intermarriage in Eleventh-Century England' in *Normandy and Its Neighbours, 900-1250: Essays for David Bates*, ed. by David Crouch and Kathleen Thompson, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 237-70; Marc Morris, *The Norman Conquest* (London: Windmill Books, 2013), pp. 206-07, 263, 332-33. For examples, see OV, II, pp. 170-71, 202-03; WP, pp. 158-59; *Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik*, ed. by Franz Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), p. 78.

identify English women recorded in its pages. In order to allow for the restrictions of a PhD thesis it became necessary to restrict the geographical area of research to a manageable size and the six counties of East Anglia and the Fens were selected primarily based on the relative wealth of other local sources.

The women identified were collated in a prosopographical database which facilitated group analysis from which rates of survival could be estimated. But could this information be used to demonstrate if and how they survived, and whether the threats to women's landholding, at the best of times vulnerable to male predation, were strengthened by the events of 1066. Could Domesday Book be used to contextualize the experience of English women? And if so, how? It was proposed that case studies and mini-biographies might highlight not only the stories of individual women, but also the common experience of groups of women, and the mechanisms by which they survived, and in some instances, thrived.

1.1 Historiography

One must turn to the historiography of the Norman Conquest to attempt to explain how the English women who lived through such a critical time in our history have come to be so overlooked and why it is now opportune to recover their stories. Multi-disciplinary work on the Conquest has recently swept away the notion of the 'Norman yoke' and changed the focus of many of the traditional debates, from feudalism to lordship, and empire to colonialism; battle lines are no longer drawn between scholars arguing for continuity or change.⁴ According to David Bates, it is now time for the study of the Norman Conquest to distinguish between the Norman Conquest, an event,

⁴ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 221-49; David Bates, 'Introduction', in *1066 in Perspective*, ed. by David Bates (Leeds: Royal Armouries Museum, 2018), pp. 1-6. For the historiography of the Norman Conquest pre-1990, see Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*; for the last decade of the twentieth century to 2008, see Hugh M. Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England after William the Conqueror* (Lanham MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

and the Norman Conquest, a process.⁵ Perhaps this is why he now refers to it as the ‘so-called Norman Conquest’. The perception amongst scholars that we are now charting a process is surely reflected in the wide adoption of the term ‘1066’ to refer to what we would have previously called the Norman Conquest. The study of 1066 has recently been boosted by two influential conferences and their respective publications: the first marked the 950th centenary of the Battle of Hastings, and celebrated the multi-disciplinary approach of recent years: *1066 in Perspective*.⁶ The second was the 2017 conference of the Society for Medieval Archaeology at which attention, probably overdue, was focused on the archaeology of the Norman Conquest.⁷ It is anticipated that with increased co-operation between the two disciplines, a much better understanding of the lived experience of 1066 might be gained.⁸

Meanwhile, general interest in the Norman Conquest has remained undiminished, and new books have been released by George Garnett, Teresa Cole, and Marc Morris.⁹ The experience of the English, long neglected, has recently been brought to the forefront of discussion by Ann Williams and Hugh Thomas.¹⁰ It is possible to estimate the rate of survival amongst the English by comparing those holding land in Domesday Book in 1066 and 1086. Thomas has conservatively estimated that by 1086 only 1,000 or so surviving individuals held just over six per cent of the recorded land whilst Williams argues that political survival may have been at a higher rate than that suggested by Domesday figures alone, or at least amongst those ‘lesser men,’ who

⁵ Bates, ‘Introduction’.

⁶ *1066 in Perspective*, ed. by Bates.

⁷ *The Archaeology of the Eleventh Century: Continuities and Transformations*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Christopher Dyer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

⁸ Bates, ‘Introduction’.

⁹ George Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066-1166* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Morris, *The Norman Conquest*; Teresa Cole, *The Norman Conquest* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016).

¹⁰ Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995; repr. 2000).

commended themselves and their administrative abilities to the Normans.¹¹ Two studies of English survival concern the geographical area of this thesis: a short case study by Williams on Cambridgeshire, and David Roffe's analysis of surviving English lords in Lincolnshire. Roffe concurred that a higher number of the English survived than had previously been thought, and discussed the variety of strategies that they had employed to do so.¹² In general, however, the survival of the eastern English, a regional population which included a large element of Anglo-Scandinavians, has been, as for other areas, understudied. Two essays by Lucy Marten have proved an exception: both have acknowledged the unique influence on this region of a series of local rebellions.¹³ The distinctiveness of this area and experience has been recently demonstrated in a collection of essays which focused on the role that the North Sea World played in shaping the characteristics of medieval East Anglia.¹⁴

Whilst these works have added to the historiography, the study of English women and the Norman Conquest has remained comparatively neglected. Conquest studies have been dominated by traditional historiographical debates and influenced by contemporary values and issues. When historians of the nineteenth century placed the 'gentler sex' upon a pedestal, they effectively, but paradoxically, devalued the status of those same women. They saw Anglo-Saxon England as a Golden Age for women, as

¹¹ Hugh M. Thomas, 'The Significance and Fate of the Native English Landholders of 1086', *EHR*, 118 (April 2003), 303-33 (pp. 306-07); Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 71-125.

¹² Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 86-89; David Roffe, 'Hidden Lives: English Lands in Post-Conquest Lincolnshire and Beyond', in *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. by David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp. 205-28. For the unique responses of the monastery of Bury St Edmunds to the Conquest, *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. by Tom Licence (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014). For a study of the regional aristocracy in East Anglia across the whole of the tenth and eleventh centuries, Andrew Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005).

¹³ Lucy Marten, 'The Impact of Rebellion on Little Domesday', *ANS*, 27 (2004), 132-50; Lucy Marten, 'The Rebellion of 1075 and Its Impact on East Anglia', in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), pp. 168-82.

¹⁴ *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. by David Bates and Robert Liddiard (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).

demonstrated by their alleged legal and property rights, one that was rudely and abruptly terminated by the coming of the Normans.¹⁵ This opinion proved pervasive and has been adept at reinventing itself to conform to twentieth-century movements.

It was natural for early generations of women university students to write about their historical counterparts. Of these initial women's studies Doris Stenton's was the most influential. In *The English Woman in History* published in 1957 whilst she stayed faithful to the paradigm of the Anglo-Saxon Golden Age, she also engaged with the contemporary interest with feudalism.¹⁶ It is curious that the wife of the leading Anglo-Saxon historian of his generation, who was ideally placed to collate plenty of detail on both the pre- and post-1066 periods, largely omitted the interval between 1066 and the end of the reign of Henry II. A quarter of a century later, this same divide was replicated in the collaborative work of Christine Fell, Cecily Clark, and Elizabeth Williams. In *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, Fell, the principal author, was responsible for the pre-Conquest chapters whilst Cecily Clark, of whom more will be said below, and Elizabeth Williams were ostensibly expected to cover the 'impact' of the Norman Conquest itself.¹⁷ However, Clark's chapter, introduced by Fell as containing the factual evidence of a deterioration in women's status from immediately after the Conquest, focused on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁸ It is ironic that the cataclysmic event which marked the end of a so-called Golden Age, was to prove so disruptive that the fall-out around it can still create academic silence.

¹⁵ For early historiography refer to Pauline Stafford and her treatment of this question and of Golden Ages in general in Pauline Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 4 (1994), 221-49.

¹⁶ Doris Mary Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1957; repr. London: Schocken Books, 1977).

¹⁷ Christine Fell, Cecily Clark, and Elizabeth Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 1984; repr. 1986).

¹⁸ Cecily Clark and Elizabeth Williams, 'The Impact of 1066', in *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Fell, pp. 148-93.

The theory of a Golden Age theory was only emphasized by trends in a historiography which was fixated with a post-Conquest England built on structures of land-tenure. This perspective was to some extent a natural consequence of an influential pedagogy which favoured constitutional history; an approach, which, by the middle of the twentieth century, had become conventional, and which had a corresponding influence on what were considered appropriate historical sources. The result was a reliance on legal documents, whose objectivity would, in theory, ‘transcend the partiality of viewpoint’.¹⁹ But a dependence on these same documents was to prove responsible for a subjective misconception. A handful of women’s Old English wills from the tenth and eleventh centuries, which could illuminate the nature of women’s landholding at this time, were used instead to give credence to a surprising amount of female testamentary freedom. This freedom has latterly been the subject of much revision by a group of female scholars.²⁰ By contrast, historians working on sources for twelfth-century women, overwhelmed by their very abundance, have been forced to concentrate on relatively small selections.²¹ The divergence between these two resource pools has resulted in a lasting impression of a serious diminution in the rights of women, and one that has been laid at the door of the Norman Conquest.

¹⁹ Michael Bentley, *Modernising England’s Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁰ Fell, Clark, and Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*; Christine G. Clark, ‘Women’s Rights in Early England’, *BYU L. Review*, 207 (1995), 1-30; Julia Crick, ‘Women, Posthumous Benefaction, and Family Strategy in Pre-Conquest England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 38 (1999), 399-422; Victoria Thompson, ‘Women, Power and Protection in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England’ in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. by Noel James Menuge (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. 1-18; Linda Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2011); Julie Mumby, ‘The Descent of Family Land in Later Anglo-Saxon England’, *Historical Research*, 84 (2011), 399-415; Julie Mumby, ‘Property Rights in Anglo-Saxon Wills: A Synoptic View’, in *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. by Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds and Susan M. Johns (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), pp. 159-74.

²¹ For example, Susan M. Johns’s study of the charters of the women of the Munteni family to St Mary’s, Clerkenwell in Susan M. Johns, *Noble Women, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm*, pbk edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 152-64.

Moreover, historians who studied twelfth-century charters, as, for instance J. Horace Round, did not study Old English wills, nor strangely did F. M. Stenton, whose range of linguistic competence and historical and onomastic knowledge would have made him ideally suited to study them. Thus, document-focused research not only aided a deep-seated and long-held belief in an Anglo-Saxon Golden Age for women but it also drew attention to an Anglo-Norman twelfth century which saw a proliferation of legal records, and thereby women of the late eleventh century were overlooked.

Fortunately recent historiographical trends have called for a more nuanced approach to sources, in which sources previously assumed to be ‘neutral’, such as charters and wills, are now read with a wider consideration of their documentary provenance, and their social and political contexts. This new methodology has encouraged the rereading of many sources and has resulted in a fresh perspective for women’s history. For this period this has perhaps been best represented by the work of David Bates using Anglo-Norman charters, in particular his study of Queen Matilda, wife of William I, in Kimberley LoPrete’s study of Adela of Blois, and in Lois Honeycutt’s book on Edith/Matilda, wife of Henry I.²² Through contextual analysis of Anglo-Norman royal charters, Bates redefined queenly activity and agency, whilst LoPrete, who cross-examined Adela’s charters with various narrative sources, portrayed contemporary female lordship. In a similar vein, Susan Johns has highlighted not just the contextual complexity of women’s twelfth-century land charters but also the socio-cultural significance of women’s witnessing.²³ Happily the corpus of Old English wills has also benefited from such contextualization: Julie Mumby has highlighted how their public

²² David Bates, ‘The Representation of Queens and Queenship in Anglo-Norman Royal Charters’ in *Frankland: The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Dame Jinty Nelson*, ed. by Paul Fouracre and David Ganz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 285-303; Kimberley A. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord (c. 1067-1137)* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); Lois L. Honeycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003).

²³ Johns, *Noble Women*.

declaration determined their textual content.²⁴ She also demonstrated how these wills which had been hailed as evidence of unsurpassed legal freedoms for Anglo-Saxon women, could, with a different reading, reveal prohibitions on both men and women to bequeath freely.²⁵

This is not to say that the study of documents does not matter: indeed much of my own approach is built on work which has its origins with Maitland. Nevertheless, we must allow that the 1066-1100 period is tricky for the document-specialists because of the acute shortage of routine charter material.²⁶ Richard Mortimer's seminal work on lay charters that survive from this period, is exceptional.²⁷ However, there is one single dominant source for this period, Domesday Book, but which, having no exact parallel, has been difficult to interpret, an issue which has led to it being less well understood and less fully exploited than one would expect. Domesday Book will be discussed in greater detail below.

A natural dependence on the available sources has led to landholding and inheritance remaining the central themes of the general historiography concerning 1066 and women. It is therefore unsurprising that land tenure, and its relationship with legal rights, have shaped women's history for this period. In 1997 James Holt, primarily responding to Georges Duby's study of family structure, argued that the feudal transformation brought about by the Norman Conquest was responsible for changes in English family structure.²⁸ Although the work of both historians had influential effects

²⁴ Julie Mumby, 'The Descent of Family Land in Later Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research*, 84 (2011), 399-415.

²⁵ Mumby, 'Property Rights in Anglo-Saxon Wills'.

²⁶ Other notable exceptions include several articles by Richard Sharpe on writs that include discussion of this period, and Julia Barrow, 'What Happened to Ecclesiastical Charters in England 1066-c.1100?', in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. by Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 229-48.

²⁷ Richard Mortimer, 'Anglo-Norman Lay Charters 1066-c.1100', *ANS*, 25 (2003), 153-75.

²⁸ J. C. Holt, *Colonial England, 1066-1215* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), pp. 114 and 236. Refer to Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983)

on studies of the impact of the Conquest, women themselves remained shrouded within the family. Furthermore, as the changes to family structure were seen as having adversely affected the rights of women they were still associated with the end of the Anglo-Saxon Golden Age.

These studies gave prominence to the twelfth century and its determining factors, when, as they concur, female landholding was in a state of fluidity and instability. Whilst they can still be pertinent to adjacent periods their reticence on the early post-Conquest period suggests that any frameworks here were harder to discern. Indeed during the upheaval immediately after 1066 it is likely that women's tenure was open to wide interpretation and manipulation. Recently John Hudson concluded that it was simply inevitable for changes to landholding across 1066 to have affected women through their marriages, inheritance, and widowhoods. He traced the progress of the customary land grants that were used to cement marriage at this time – Anglo-Saxon morning-gift, Norman dower, morning gift, and *maritagium*, and highlighted how inconsistent their use was.²⁹

In the last quarter of the twentieth century an increasing social and cultural awareness pervaded some areas of women's history: Fell used semantics to re-examine the evidence for the status of women in Anglo-Saxon England and Clark applied onomastics to her research on women as 'name-bearers' who channelled Anglo-Saxon culture through their own survival.³⁰ Clark's study of the intermarriage between

for his theory, based on French sources, that the restructure of family in Early Medieval France occurred as a result of a perceived diminution in the value of kin as opposed to lineage but note his work is now largely critiqued in that changes to family structure cannot be so prescribed. For the historiographical debate since Duby, refer to Elisabeth van Houts, *Married Life in the Middle Ages, 900-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 15-18.

²⁹ John Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II: 871-1216, pp. 238-40, 446-51, 489-908, 857.

³⁰ Fell, Clark, and Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*; Christine E. Fell, 'Words and Women in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Lastworda Betst: Essays in Memory of Christine E. Fell with Her Unpublished Writings*, ed. by Carole Hough and Kathryn A. Lowe (Donington: Tyas, 2002), pp. 198-215; Cecily Clark, 'Women's Name's in Post-Conquest

Norman men and English women opened up questions of cultural assimilation and identity, which are still relevant today.³¹ In Marjorie Chibnall's study of the Anglo-Norman kingdom, although ostensibly an analysis of power and administration, she nevertheless approached the interaction of English and Normans through a new cultural framework.³² However, with the debate on feudalism still prevailing, there is a sense that women were included only in order to demonstrate their loss of legal rights.

With the revival of women's history, and in the wider context of feminism, in the 1970s women scholars, such as Fell, began to look beyond the restraints of the legal framework. Some took a feminist stance and approached questions of relevance to second-generation feminism, power, female networks, and the public/private division. These were easier to approach, in the first instance, for time frames other than the period across 1066.³³ Alongside this movement, and to some extent overlapping it, was a more straightforward women's history, whose main aim was to recover women from the obscurity in which mainstream history had left them. Additionally, it was recognized that there were problems inherent in studying women in isolation; it was perceived that 'woman' had no meaning without 'man', and vice versa, and, moreover, that the classification, 'man/men', was itself a gendered category and could not be substituted for 'human'. Literary scholars were the first to make great strides in the field of gender studies and the rereading of sources from a gendered perspective became

England: Observations and Speculations', in *Words, Names and History: Selected Writings of Cecily Clark*, ed. by Peter Jackson (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 117-43; Cecily Clark, 'English Personal Names c. 650-1300: Some Prosopographical Bearings', in *Studies on the Personal Name in Later Medieval England and Wales*, ed. by David Postles and Joel T. Rosenthal, *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 44 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006), pp. 7-28.

³¹ Clark, 'Women's Names'.

³² Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986; repr. 1996).

³³ *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-18.

popular.³⁴ A notable example of this, and one which, moreover, is directly relevant to the 1066 debate was Pauline Stafford's study of the roles of women at the Conquest, as portrayed by Chronicle D of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and especially within the entry for 1067.³⁵

Around this time Stafford and other women's historians, were becoming especially interested in the power of queens.³⁶ But Stafford's foundational work on the eleventh-century Queens Edith and Emma has yet to be followed by an equally in-depth study on Matilda, the first post-Conquest queen, and as William Rufus never married, there was no queen from the final decade of the century to be studied.³⁷

The old debates of continuity or change, around land tenure and feudalism, and those introduced by twentieth-century feminism have led to study focused on both the period before and after the Norman Conquest; whilst there have been books on Anglo-Saxon England and books on Anglo-Norman England, between the two there has been a widening divide, which even general books on medieval women have skipped over. In

³⁴ Influential examples include: E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³⁵ Pauline Stafford, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and Women: Gendering Conquest in Eleventh-Century England', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. by Simon Keynes and Alfred P. Smythe (Chippenham: Rowe, 2006), pp. 208-23; Stafford, 'Reading Women in Annals: Eadburg, Cuthburg, Cwenburg and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles', in *Agire da Donna: Modelli e Pratiche di Rappresentazione (secoli VI-X)*, ed. by Christina La Rocca (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2007), pp. 269-89.

³⁶ Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983; repr. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1998); Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2001); Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century', in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London, April 1995*, ed. by Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1997), pp. 3-26.

³⁷ However, two articles by Elisabeth van Houts have given important insight on Matilda: Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources: Duchess Matilda, Her Daughters and the Enigma of the Golden Child', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History, Proceedings of the Cerisy Colloquium (1990)*, ed. by Pierre Bouet, François Neveux and Brian Levy (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2004); Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Shiplist of William the Conqueror', *ANS*, 10 (1987), 159-83.

addition books which cover ostensibly the period 1066-1200, in fact concentrate on the period 1100-1200. In consequence the pivotal period which immediately followed the Norman Conquest has been, with one or two notable exceptions, neglected by historians studying women in England. Although this can be partially explained by the lack of easily accessible and convenient compilations of suitable source material for the latter quarter of the eleventh century, such as exist for the earlier Anglo-Saxon decades, the under-exploitation of Domesday remains difficult to explain.³⁸

Apart from historical overviews of the Anglo-Norman period or of medieval women, there has been more some writing on women and 1066, which has been incidental to wider studies which had not directly set out to address women's history.³⁹ Whilst some of it has remained within the parameters set by the traditional debates concerning the Norman Conquest, some has moved into new areas, as mentioned above, but others will now be discussed in more detail.

1.1.1 Scholars and Approaches: 'What's her story?'

This next section considers those scholars and approaches that have contributed either directly or indirectly to our understanding of women's experience of 1066 but will firstly discuss the wider debates within women's history which have affected our viewpoint of the women of late Anglo-Saxon England and their survival. Secondly it

³⁸ For example, *Sawyer's Handlist*, Peter Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968). For a rare application of Domesday Book to demonstrate survival, Lucy Marten, 'Meet the Swarts: Tracing a Thegnly Family in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The English and their Legacy: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. by Roffe, pp. 17-32.

³⁹ For instance, *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066-1500*, trans. and ed. by Jennifer Ward (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Johns, *Noble Women*; Johns, 'Introduction', in *Gender and Historiography*, ed. by Nelson, Reynolds and Johns, pp. 1-8; Judith A. Green, 'Aristocratic Women in Early Twelfth-Century England', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Proceedings of the Borcard Conference on Anglo-Norman History*, ed. by Charles W. Hollister (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 59-82.

will address the traditional themes which have been employed to discuss these women, and thirdly the specific types of study which have already been undertaken.

For any study of eleventh-century English women the work of Pauline Stafford is essential reading.⁴⁰ In many ways she has been the originator of meaningful study of the women of 1066 itself. As early as 1989 she bemoaned how the old preoccupations with Golden Ages and feudalism had eclipsed the careers of English women and obscured the evidence of them which might otherwise have been noticed in sources such as the Domesday Book.⁴¹ Always an advocate of continuity, in 1984 she brought to account the age-old Golden Age theory, and at the same time, called for the lives of women from across the Conquest to be restored to them.⁴² She suggested that a wider framework be adopted within which the continuities for these women could be recognized. Like Bates above, she sensed that the study of the Conquest as an event had relegated the experiences, in other words the process, of those who had lived through it to 'secondary status'.⁴³ Stafford began the 'recovery' of their history. In 1989 in 'Women in Domesday' she applied a model based on a domestic cycle to the lives of late Anglo-Saxon women and demonstrated how their status and power were affected by their position in that cycle. By 2001, in her seminal study of the two eleventh-century queens, Emma and Edith, she had expanded her model to a fuller lifecycle framework through which she observed her protagonists, and explained the fluctuations in their power.⁴⁴ Over the last few years claims of female power have been subjected to more vigorous scrutiny. LoPrete has shown how women's 'power' usually requires an

⁴⁰ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday', in *Reading Medieval Studies*, 15, ed. by Keith Bate and others (Reading: University of Reading, 1989), pp. 75-94; Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest'; Stafford, 'Chronicle D'.

⁴¹ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday' (p. 91).

⁴² Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest' (pp. 245-49).

⁴³ Bates, 'Introduction'; Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest'.

⁴⁴ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* and for a similar application of lifecycle theory to the use of twelfth-century noblewomen's seals, Johns, *Noblewomen*, pp. 124-40.

element of qualification, although the question of how qualified remains a matter of debate. This unresolved issue has led to an avoidance of the term ‘power’.⁴⁵ Although scholars currently prefer to talk of female ‘agency’, many have stressed its limitations.⁴⁶ One scholar who has addressed female agency with reference to the immediate post-Conquest period is the literary scholar Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, who defines agency from the perspective of cultural critique. In her recent study of agency and identity in the texts of later Anglo-Saxon England it was important for her to consider ‘the imbrications of individuals in their historical, cultural circumstances’.⁴⁷ Her narrative of Gunnhild, a daughter of Harold Godwinson and Edith Swanneck, who successfully negotiated her drastically altered circumstances, and thrived after the Conquest, is of particular interest to this thesis.⁴⁸

In the latest debate concerning women’s power gender historians are now deliberating how to move beyond the current paradigm, namely that any medieval woman who had power or agency was somehow outside the norm, or ‘exceptional’. This is an issue that was recognized by Stafford when she described these lone archetypes as the ‘historical equivalent of witches on the blasted heath, who loom up at us, figures of power in their very isolation’.⁴⁹ Following the ‘Beyond Exceptionalism’ conference held at Ohio State University in 2015, a group of scholars led by Heather Tanner are now arguing for a new framework through which to discuss elite women’s power, authority and agency, one in which women with power are ‘expected, accepted,

⁴⁵LoPrete, *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord*; Kimberley A. LoPrete, ‘Public Aspects of Lordly Women’s Domestic Activities in France c. 1050-1200’, in *Gender and Historiography*, ed. by Nelson, Reynolds and Johns, pp. 145-58.

⁴⁶ Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, ‘A New Economy of Power Relationships: Female Agency in the Middle Ages’, in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 11.

⁴⁸ O’Keefe, *Stealing Obedience*, pp. 185-209.

⁴⁹ Stafford, ‘Women and the Norman Conquest’ (p. 241).

and routine'.⁵⁰ As part of this current movement Ragna deAragn, looking at elite women in post-Conquest England, has demonstrated their possession of the resources required for power and concluded that it was time to move beyond the simple identification or description of women's power and agency and 'address overtly how research challenges the standard meta-narrative'.⁵¹

1.1.2 Applying Traditional Strategies to English Women's Responses to the Norman Conquest

Redefining women's power has focused attention on the strategies women, like men, could employ. As Stafford eloquently expressed it – to have power is to be able to have a strategy.⁵² A scholar whose output has been noticeably different when discussing English women and the Conquest, is Elisabeth van Houts. For some time she has allowed these women more agency than other scholars. From her initial output as an historian of medieval historical writing, in the first instance Norman, she became very interested in Anglo-Norman relations after the Conquest. A natural progression of this was her study of how memory fed into historical writing and the particular part that women played in the formation of memorial traditions.⁵³ In her works which have approached women and 1066, she has never played down the realities of the Conquest for English women: she has acknowledged how the male population had been decimated by the battles of 1066, and how these women feared not only the loss of their lands and homes, but the very real prospect of rape, and forced marriage.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100-1400: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate*, ed. by Heather J. Tanner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 2.

⁵¹ Ragna C. DeAragn, 'Power and Agency in Post-Conquest England: Elite Women and the Transformations of the Twelfth Century', in *Medieval Elite Women*, ed. by Tanner, p. 35.

⁵² Stafford, 'Emma'.

⁵³ Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200*, Explorations in Medieval Culture and Society, ed. by Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999).

⁵⁴ van Houts, 'The Trauma of 1066'; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Women and Fear in 1066', in *1066 in Perspective*, ed. by Bates, pp. 176-86.

The responses of English women to these threats are the subject of this second section; the meta-narrative of the Norman Conquest has gathered them into four themes. It is of course overly simplistic to qualify women's variety of experience thus as they give no allowance for any multi-faceted manoeuvrability and agency. I must stress that these are not my own categories, rather those that have been historiographically popular, and I use them now only as a guide to illuminating recognized areas of study. However, I will be regarding these choices, however constrained, as strategies which I will discuss in turn – religion, intermarriage, concubinage, and flight.⁵⁵

The large body of work on the topic of seeking security in religion is perhaps due to the greater amount of source material available to scholars of women religious or simply because this option is the most frequently quoted, primarily due to its being the subject of a letter of Archbishop Lanfranc written in the last quarter of the eleventh century.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there has been some exemplary research on religious women at this time. In Barbara Yorke's seminal study of the histories of the prestigious royal Anglo-Saxon nunneries she observed that these houses remained the wealthiest even to the time of the Dissolution, but did not expand on their experiences across 1066.⁵⁷ Sarah Foot described the rich variety of congregations of religious women in late Anglo-Saxon England in a detailed typology. However, for this thesis perhaps of most importance are those independent religious women who she found defied any simple categorisation, especially the solitary *moniales* and religious widows who we find in charters and Old English wills, and later in Domesday. Foot concluded that these

⁵⁵ Pauline Stafford, 'Writing the Biography of Eleventh-Century Queens', in *Writing Medieval Biography*, ed. by David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 90-110.

⁵⁶ Lanfranc, *Ep. 5 The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. by Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson, trans. by Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For dating see Richard Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter', *Haskins Society Journal*, 19 (2007), 1-27.

⁵⁷ Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 195.

women could not ‘contribute to our understanding of religious women in late Anglo-Saxon England’.⁵⁸ Sally Thompson, who picked up the history of female institutions after 1100 in her study of the foundation of Anglo-Norman nunneries, also made reference to groups of women whose congregations were ‘of a more indefinable nature’.⁵⁹ Perhaps research undertaken in this area could identify the variety of religious responses to the Conquest available to English women, and help close the historiographical divide still apparent in these studies.⁶⁰ Similarly elusive, the recluses and hermits of eleventh-century England have been the subject of a book by Tom Licence.⁶¹ Although his work spans the 1066 divide, he deliberately refrained from paying much attention to the Norman Conquest, in order to highlight the long-held Anglo-Saxon tradition for hermits, and its place within the rise in eremitism that took place throughout the whole of Europe during the long eleventh century. Nevertheless, he concedes that it was likely that the Conquest was, at least for some anchorites, a deciding factor in their adoption of this way of life.

Although English women’s religious life has been the subject of generous study compared with other areas of women’s experience in early medieval England, it should be noted that, even here, the divide created by the Norman Conquest appears to have formed two separate chronologies. It is generally fair to say that only individual histories of certain influential women’s houses, such as Shaftesbury, Wilton and

⁵⁸ Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women*, ed. by Nicholas Brooks, *Studies in Early Medieval Britain*, 2 vols, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), I: *The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 179-88 (p. 188).

⁵⁹ Sally Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991; repr. for Sandpiper Books, 1996), pp. 194-95.

⁶⁰ In this field mention should also be made of Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 1998; repr. 2011), in which she undertook an extensive overview of patronage in England for the period 1066 to 1135, but was more concerned with patterns of patronage amongst the conquerors than the conquered.

⁶¹ Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society 950-1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Barking, have covered the cross-Conquest period.⁶² Wilton Abbey has been at the centre of studies undertaken by Elizabeth M. Tyler. She has argued that a Latin culture was centred on the English court, advanced by courtly women, and extending to other courts across Europe.⁶³ As part of this, she placed the royal nunnery at Wilton as central to a literary culture that existed between England, the Loire, and Normandy, in the eleventh century. Recently and pertinently has explored the position and influence of Wilton on elite English women across 1066, a time when many young English women from the highest families would have been enrolled at Wilton for their education and upbringing.⁶⁴ They would have been literate in several European languages and Latin, and through this, in contact with nunneries across Europe. One of these women was the recluse Eve, on whom there has been excellent recent work, including a piece in which O’Keeffe places her amongst the young women who were entrusted to Wilton for safe-keeping after 1066.⁶⁵ Wilton was a very open community and it is inevitable that there

⁶² *Charters and Custumals of Shaftesbury Abbey, 1089-1216*, ed. by N. E. Stacy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); ‘Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin’s Legend of Edith and *Liber confortatorius*’, ed. by Stephanie Hollis and William Barnes, *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts*, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004); *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community*, ed. by Jennifer Nancy Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell (York: York Medieval Press, 2012); Casey Beaumont, ‘Monastic Autonomy, Episcopal Authority and the Norman Conquest: The Records of Barking Abbey’, in *ANS*, 38 (2015) 35-50.

⁶³ Elizabeth M. Tyler, ‘Crossing Conquests: Polyglot Royal Women and Literary Culture in Eleventh-Century England’, in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800-c. 1250*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 171-196; see also Elizabeth M. Tyler, ‘The *Vita Ædwardi*: The Politics of Poetry at Wilton Abbey’, *ANS*, 31 (2008), 135-156.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth M. Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c.1000-c.1150*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 23 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

⁶⁵ Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Goscelin and the Consecration of Eve’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 35, 251-70. Note, however, that Eve was actually the daughter of a Lotharingian mother and an Anglo-Danish father. See also Stephanie Hollis, ‘Strategies of Employment and Displacement: St Edith and the Wilton Community in Goscelin’s Legend of Edith and *Liber Confortatorius*’, in *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. by Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2006), pp. 133-50; Sara Harris, ‘Structures of Prayer in Goscelin of Saint-Bertin’s *Liber Confortatorius*’, *Medieval Studies*, 60 (2016), 31-58; *Goscelin of St. Bertin: The Book of Encouragement and Consolation (Liber Confortatorius), the Letter of Goscelin to the Recluse Eva*, trans. by Monika C. Otter and ed. by Jane Chance (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004).

was opportunity there for contact with the new Norman élite. These young English women would have been highly educated and politically astute, with incomparable levels of mobility and agency. Tyler goes so far as to say that the Anglo-Saxon élite, in effect ‘the politically dead’, remained, through these women, ‘at the heart of twelfth-century literary culture’.⁶⁶ There is little known about learned women’s correspondence and epistolary networks at this time, although there are glimpses of it in the letters of Lanfranc and of Anselm. There have been a couple of incidental studies of the female survivors of the Godwineson family, including Gunnhild, who was one of Anselm’s correspondents.⁶⁷ As both Gunnhild and her aunt Queen Edith were an integral part of the Wilton congregation it is difficult to imagine that they did not have recourse to literary networks and connections not just at a local or national level, but international.

Gunnhild’s experience of the Norman Conquest does not merely raise questions of personal power and agency. As an Anglo-Saxon woman ‘married’ to one of the conquerors, she is frequently employed as an example of intermarriage – an issue that has been contentious in discussions of women and 1066. An influential article by Eleanor Searle in 1989 claimed that Anglo-Saxon women had indirectly legitimized Norman claims to land by their intermarriage with the conquerors.⁶⁸ Over the intervening years the few well-attested examples have been used to suggest widely varying numbers of such exogamous relationships.⁶⁹ But J. S. Moore, and more recently, Hugh Thomas, and van Houts, have tried to find a more reliable estimation.⁷⁰ It

⁶⁶ Tyler, *England in Europe*, p. 365.

⁶⁷ Emma Mason, *The House of Godwine: The History of a Dynasty* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), pp. 177-202; Frank Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002; repr. 2003), pp. 156-73.

⁶⁸ Eleanor Searle, ‘Women and the Legitimization of Succession at the Norman Conquest’, *ANS*, 3 (1980), 159-70

⁶⁹ For differing views refer to *DP*, p. 28; Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 198-201; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, pp. 146-59.

⁷⁰ John S. Moore, ‘Family-Entries in English *Libri Vitae*: c.1050-c.1530’, *Nomina*, 18 (1995), 77-117; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*; Elisabeth van Houts, ‘Intermarriage in Eleventh-Century England’, in *Normandy and Its Neighbours, 900-1250: Essays for David*

appears that there is ‘surprisingly limited evidence for actual cases’ and that cumulative figures are only suggestive of a relatively small incidence of intermarriage.⁷¹ As part of those wider historiographical shifts into the study of the Norman Conquest, concern with intermarriage has been taken up within studies of the process of integration between the conquered and the conquerors. Today, the intermarriage debate is not simply about numbers, important as that is, but more about the wider role of English women in assimilation; a process which has been of particular interest to Ann Williams and Hugh Thomas.⁷² Williams has investigated the mechanics of ‘intermixture’ between the two English and the Normans, whereas Thomas has approached their assimilation, applying theories of identity and ethnicity. In William’s 2016 study of the surviving English she particularly followed the effects of the Conquest on the lower ranks of the English aristocracy and concluded that it was at this social level that most intermarriages would have occurred.⁷³

Another method of racial ‘intermixture’ might have been concubinage, a topic that has floated about at the periphery of academic discussion on 1066 and women, but, as far as I am aware, not been looked at with regard to this particular group of conquered women, or this Conquest, other than in a somewhat simplistic article by Margaret Clunies-Ross.⁷⁴ This is an area that would benefit from some remedial research which might move it beyond misplaced misogynistic rhetoric. Such a study would need to allow for a broader consideration of what constituted or was accepted as marriage at this time. There has obviously been scholarly interest in the nature of relationships of two

Bates, ed. by David Crouch and Kathleen Thompson, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 237-70.

⁷¹ In ‘Intermarriage in Eleventh-Century England’ van Houts found only ten recorded cases of English women marrying French men from 1067-1086.

⁷² Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*.

⁷³ Ann Williams, ‘1066 and the English’, in *1066 in Perspective*, ed. by Bates, pp. 123-32.

⁷⁴ Margaret Clunies-Ross, ‘Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Past and Present*, 108 (1985), 3-34.

well-known Norman prelates, Ranulf Flambard and Roger of Salisbury, but little, if any, corresponding work has been undertaken on their English ‘mistresses’.⁷⁵

Although there is no actual evidence of forced marriages after the Conquest the fear of this, and worse, led some women to take the drastic action of flight. The female members of Edgar the Ætheling’s family accepted sanctuary from Malcolm III in Scotland, whilst it is generally believed that Ealdgyth, Harold’s second wife, may have fled to the court of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó (*d.* 1072), king of Leinster, in Dublin.⁷⁶ Some of the Godwineson women, led by the matriarch Gytha, escaped to Flanders accompanied by the ‘wives of many good men’.⁷⁷ Another contingent of nobles from East Anglia, led by Abbot Æthelwold of St Benet’s at Holme, who had been entrusted with the defence of the eastern coast, ‘fled’ to Denmark and safety at the court of the Danish King Svein.⁷⁸ Unfortunately we do not know if this party included wives and children but it is quite probable since another group of exiles, possibly as large as several thousand strong, which did include families journeyed as far as Constantinople.⁷⁹ There are also a small number of instances where smaller family groups and single women of whom we learn incidentally, made similar intrepid trips.

⁷⁵ R. I. Moore, ‘Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate’, in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), pp. 138-42; B. R. Kemp, ‘Roger of Salisbury’ (*d.* 1139), *ODNB*; Stephen Marritt, ‘Coincidences of Names: Anglo-Scottish Connections and Anglo-Saxon Society in the Late Eleventh-Century West Country’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 83, 150-70; S. L. Thrupp, *Change in Medieval Society: Europe North of the Alps, 1050-1500* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 53, 69.

⁷⁶ G. W. S. Barrow, ‘Companions of the Ætheling’, *ANS*, 25 (2002), 35-45; Ad F. J van Kempen, ‘Mercian Connection, Harold Godwineson’s Ambitions, Diplomacy and Channel-Crossing’, *History*, 94/313 (2009), 2-19.

⁷⁷ ASC ‘D’ 1067; Barlow, *The Godwins*; Mason, *The House of Godwine*.

⁷⁸ David M. Wilson, ‘Danish Kings and England in the Late Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries: Economic Implications’, *ANS*, 3 (1980), 172-88; F. M. Stenton, ‘St. Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest’, *EHR*, 37/146 (1922), 225-35.

⁷⁹ B. Hudson, ‘The Family of Harold Godwinson and the Irish Sea Province’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquarians*, 109 (1979), 92-100.

Conclusions

These four strategies have all been somewhat romanticized and each of them can be used to infer an element of victimhood; there is much work that needs to be done to take them beyond the merely apocryphal. However, first and foremost, it is essential to look rather at those women who, on first impressions, are less ‘interesting,’ those who have so far evaded study – that is the English women who may just have survived and/or thrived in a conquered England. It is apparent from the preceding discussion that despite advances in study, the Norman Conquest has still the ability to divide historians, and the casualties of that divide have been English women. Any work that has been undertaken across that divide has tended to concentrate on men, and the families of men.

There has been a long tradition of Anglo-Norman family studies, most of which have been specifically Norman, reflecting to some extent the preoccupation of the English nobility with their Norman credentials.⁸⁰ By contrast, there have been relatively few studies of surviving English families: rare exceptions have been Marten’s on the Swarts and the Dots by Chris Lewis.⁸¹ It is no coincidence that both these families boast a surname, an identifying attribute generally non-existent amongst the English at this time.⁸² Although women were included in these studies, they were included only as part of a wider kinship group and not as individuals. However, it is inconceivable that women’s experience would have been the same as men’s or that their strategies would have chimed in accord with those of their families, either natal or marital. Neither

⁸⁰ Notable examples include Richard Mortimer, ‘The Beginnings of the Honour of Clare’, in *ANS*, 3 (1980), 119-42; Cyril R. Hart, ‘William Malet and His Family’, *ANS*, 19 (1996), 123-65, and more recently Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, ‘A Question of Identity: Domesday Prosopography and the Formation of the Honour of Richmond’, in *Domesday Now: New Approaches to the Inquest and the Book*, ed. by David Roffe and Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016), pp. 169-96.

⁸¹ Marten, ‘Meet the Swarts’; C. P. Lewis, ‘Joining the Dots: A Methodology for Identifying the English in Domesday Book’, in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: A Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 69-88.

⁸² Hugh M. Thomas, ‘A Yorkshire Thegn and His Descendants after the Conquest’, *Medieval Prosopography*, 8 (1987), 1-22.

should it be forgotten that at least some of these women would have been women without husbands.

Studies of 1066 and women have focused, albeit not exclusively, on those of high status whose lives were better documented. It is refreshing, therefore, to note how Domesday Book includes tantalising glimpses of named English women, who plied trades and skills, and whose occupations were as varied as jesters, embroideresses, milkmaids and thieves.⁸³ So why, a quarter of a century after Pauline Stafford wrote that Domesday had been ‘surprisingly little used to illuminate the experience of the Conquest by the women who lived through it’, does it still remain underexploited and more especially so for the understudied women of the lesser nobility?⁸⁴ Perhaps some of this reticence is understandable – Domesday can repel the researcher with its contractions, formulaic expressions, and clunky semantics, which project an aura of impenetrability that is not quite dispersed by the Domesday text books.

However, Domesday’s internal dates 1066 and 1086 span those ‘critical decades of the Norman Conquest’ and give us the perfect opportunity not only to recover the history of these neglected women, but also to observe how they were affected by the

⁸³ Williams has postulated that anyone mentioned by name in Domesday would have been ‘upper class’; David A. E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Medieval England: From the Reign of Alfred until the Twelfth Century*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 7 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 203-04; Oliver Padel has recently studied the text of the Bodmin Manumissions (c.950-1100) as a source for Cornish history in Oliver Padel, *Slavery in Anglo-Saxon Cornwall: The Bodmin Manumissions*, Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lectures, 7 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Celtic, 2009) However, the rich corpora of manumissions that exist, particularly for southwest England, have been little used to date to explore female experience, though this may soon be remedied.

⁸⁴ Stafford, ‘Women and the Norman Conquest’ (p. 244); Stafford, ‘Women in Domesday’; there are two notable exceptions by Marc Meyer on the pre-Conquest period: Marc A. Meyer, ‘Women’s Estates in Later Anglo-Saxon England: The Politics of Possession’, *The Haskins Society Journal*, 3 (1991), 111-30, and Marc A. Meyer, ‘The Queen’s ‘Demesne’ in Later Anglo-Saxon England’, in *The Culture of Christendom. Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethel* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 75-114. For a recent demographic survey of a group of lay women at Bury St Edmunds which addressed the effects of the Norman Conquest on women directly, Elisabeth van Houts, ‘The Women of Bury St Edmunds’, in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. by Tom Licence (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), pp. 53-73.

process of the Conquest.⁸⁵ There is no doubt that Domesday lends itself to prosopographical research – some prosopographical studies, including some of Domesday, have enabled research on groups of women; RaGena DeAragon conducted the first such major study of women in England for the period 1069-1230, in an investigation of fifty-eight dowager countesses.⁸⁶ The Domesday Book has also lent itself to larger-scale prosopographical studies: Katharine Keats-Rohan has created extensive catalogue of Domesday personæ, even if there is a definite bias towards the Norman male.⁸⁷ Fortunately, this has been more than counterbalanced by the comprehensive on-going project that is PASE, an online database of all English individuals listed in Domesday, which has opened up exciting opportunities for further study.⁸⁸

And so, I consider that the time to restore the lives of English women who lived through and beyond the Conquest is well overdue.⁸⁹ It is the aim of this thesis, through the contextualisation of Domesday Book, to answer Stafford's call, and using case studies illuminate the lives of these women. My preliminary survey of the scope of the evidence suggested that there were actually many more women in Domesday Book than had been previously thought. As a result, the geographical research area of this thesis was reduced to East Anglia and the Fens which, at the same time, would allow study of both volumes of Domesday – Great and Little (henceforth GDB and LDB respectively) – the latter, being one of the more detailed circuit returns, could potentially provide more information on women. Furthermore, it would provide an excellent opportunity to observe any differences between GDB and LDB in their reporting of women. At the

⁸⁵ Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest' (p. 244).

⁸⁶ Ragena C. DeAragon, 'Dowager Countesses, 1069-1230', *ANS*, 17 (1995), 87-100.

⁸⁷ *DP*.

⁸⁸ PASE.

⁸⁹ Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest' (p. 249); Thomas echoed Stafford: 'further research is needed to provide a more nuanced picture of the effects of the Conquest on women in English society', Thomas, *The Norman Conquest*, p. 105.

heart of this investigation lies an extensive database of all the English women from the Domesday returns of the six Eastern counties of Cambridgeshire, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk. How this has been used to suggest both individual women and groups of women suitable for further study is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Sources

In *Women and the Norman Conquest* Pauline Stafford wrote that ‘any move towards a greater understanding of women’s situation between the tenth and twelfth centuries – ‘the divide’ – must begin with a rigorous scrutiny of the late Anglo-Saxon documents and as full a restoration of their context as possible’.¹ She illustrated her point with reference to the experience of two late Anglo-Saxon women at the centre of a land-dispute involving the church at Hereford, contrasting their apparent ability to hold land and act independently with the situation as presented in Domesday Book for 1066. She looked both at Domesday and the period preceding it. In a study of the survival of the English Swart family Lucy Marten acknowledged the tendency of Domesday to draw one backwards in time.² Yet, on the other hand, Domesday can also point forward as in Andrew Wareham’s study of the East Anglian aristocracy in the years which immediately followed the Conquest.³ In a similar vein Hugh Thomas’ catalogue of surviving English families moves from Domesday in 1086 forwards into the twelfth century.⁴ In all these cases, Domesday Book was the central source, but contextualized and discussed with reference to other sources. However, few scholars, with the notable exception of Ann Williams, have looked at survivors of the Conquest, with reference to the full complement of available sources from periods both before and after.⁵ Moreover, as far as I am aware, the question of survival of English women, as distinct from that of English men, nor merely as part of the survival of a family or kinship group, has

¹ Stafford, ‘Women and the Norman Conquest’ (p. 241).

² Marten, ‘Meet the Swarts’ (p. 17).

³ Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, pp. 139-54.

⁴ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, pp. 400-06.

⁵ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*.

benefitted from this comprehensive approach. This is the aim of this thesis, and in this chapter the sources available to pursue it will be considered in more detail.

Domesday Book is central to this study, not only as the primary source, but also in how it steers the research across 1066. An example of this approach is given by Julia Barrow in her forthcoming article on the royal minster of St Guthlac's at Hereford, in which she looks at 'Domesday and Beyond,' in order to create a contextually rich history of St Guthlac's.⁶ Although Domesday Book will occupy by far the greatest part of this chapter, this discussion will begin with sources other than Domesday which, although a minor part of the whole, will furnish a large contribution to the context.

2.1 Charters

The second most valuable resource for this thesis will be charter material.⁷ For much of the last century charter scholarship was dominated by the need to prove the authenticity or level of authenticity within individual charters.⁸ This is an especial concern as much of the charter material from the eleventh century, both pre- and post-Conquest, is of a particularly dubious nature. It is of paramount importance to work out whether charters are genuine or not; then, once their validity has been ascertained, it is possible to date them and divine their purpose. They may then be used, including any inauthentic ones which may provide evidence for the views of those who forged them. Only royal writs were sealed; other Anglo-Saxon charters relied on other forms of authentication, such as witness lists, religious formulæ, symbols and sanctions.⁹

⁶ Julia Barrow, 'St Guthlac's Minster in Hereford: Domesday and Beyond', *Guthlac and Crowland: Celebrating 1300 Years*, 2014; Barrow, like Stafford, illustrates her article with reference to the Herefordshire land dispute and Leofflæd wife of Thurkil White.

⁷ David Bates, 'Charters and Historians in Britain and Ireland: Problems and Possibilities', in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Marie Therese Flanagan and Judith Green (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-14. This paragraph owes much to David Bates's introductory chapter to this book.

⁸ Nicholas Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters: The Work of the Last Twenty Years', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 211-33.

⁹ Julia Barrow, pers. comm.

This thesis will use charters from the late tenth century to around 1150 to facilitate the identification of English women and their estates; *pro anima* clauses and witness lists will be used in reconstruction of both their families and wider kinship groups, and the dating of charters will, in some cases, enable the plotting of an individual's chronology. The next section will look in more detail at charters, and will adopt the conventional structure whereby charters are divided into pre- and post-1066. This schema simply reflects the different treatment of the two *corpora* by editors, compilers, interpreters, and publishers, and is not intended to entrench the 1066 divide. Whilst there is no denying the advances in scholarship which have been made as a result of the publication of the British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charter series, the divide still affects how and why charters are used.

2.1.1 Anglo-Saxon Charters and Wills

A broad definition of charters would include royal diplomas, writs, and private charters of, for example, bishops and nobles, and even arguably leases and wills. In fact, the term 'charters' can be loosely applied to all documents which record the transmission of land or the holding of land, and/or the rights over it. The study of Anglo-Saxon charters has proved useful in many subject areas, and their historic importance is undeniable, not least because their dating can present a chronology of Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they have mainly been used to illuminate the various forms of Anglo-Saxon landholding and to identify relevant estates.¹¹ Several notable academic achievements have been instrumental in facilitating their use, including the publication in 1968 of Sawyer's Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon charters, an annotated list of all extant

¹⁰ Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters'; Richard Sharpe, 'The Use of Writs in the Eleventh Century', *Anglo-Saxon England* (2003), 247-9; Simon Keynes, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters: Lost and Found', in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. by Andrew Wareham and Julia Barrow (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 45-66.

¹¹ Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters' (pp. 223-27).

charters, now revised, updated, and searchable as the database, known as the Electronic Sawyer, and the series of pre-Conquest charter hand-lists collated by county by Herbert Finberg and Cyril Hart.¹² For Eastern England Hart's editions for Essex and the Eastern counties are invaluable; the Essex edition was in many ways a pioneer work as it unusually combined pre- and post-Conquest material in one volume across 1066. Since the 1970s the British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charters committee has been publishing a definitive edition of the entire corpus of Anglo-Saxon Charters, organized according to medieval archives. To date nineteen volumes have been published including the charters of the Fenland abbey of Peterborough.¹³

Chapter One briefly mentioned how feminists had used charters in early women's history studies, arguably appropriating them as evidence of deleterious changes to women's rights and status as a consequence of the Norman Conquest. Excepting this, it is regrettable how little charters have been used for the history of Anglo-Saxon women. One notable exception was Pauline Stafford's study of the late charters of Æthelred II, the so-called discursive charters, and what they could tell us about the political debates of the 990s.¹⁴ She found that, although they were written at a time of great political and

¹² Peter Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), now online as *Electronic Sawyer* <<http://www.esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk>> [accessed 01 October 2019]; *The Early Charters of Devon and Cornwall*, ed. by H. P. R. Finberg, Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 2 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1953); *The Early Charters of the West Midlands*, ed. by H. P. R. Finberg, Studies in Early English History, 2 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961); *The Early Charters of Wessex*, ed. by Herbert P. R. Finberg, Studies in Early English History, 3 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1964); *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. by Cyril R. Hart, Studies in Early English History Studies in Early English History, 5 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966); *The Early Charters of Essex*, ed. by Cyril R. Hart; Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 1st ser., 10 (rev. edn) (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971).

¹³ For fuller details of the work of the B.A.A.S.C. committee, refer to Nicholas Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church, 400-1066' (London: Hambledon Press, 2000); *Charters of Peterborough Abbey*, ed. by Susan E. Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2009).

¹⁴ Pauline Stafford, 'Political Ideas in Late Tenth-Century England: Charters as Evidence', in *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, ed. by Janet L. Nelson, Jane Martindale and Pauline Stafford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 68-83 (p. 77); Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

ecclesiastical upheaval, at their heart remained a stress on kinship and family inheritance. Moreover, several charters, rather like Domesday, concerned ‘a remarkable number of cases involving women, in particular widows.’

In general charter scholarship has followed two paths, one the study of the documents as and of themselves, usually referred to as diplomatic, an area in which Pierre Chaplais, Nicholas Brooks, and Simon Keynes have done work of fundamental importance and secondly, an interpretative approach which has risen in popularity over the last few decades.¹⁵ Whilst there has still been good work undertaken in the diplomatic field, of which a fine example is Susan Thompson’s recent study of the palaeography of Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas, on the interpretative side, Anglo-Saxonists like Rumble, inspired by Michael Clanchy’s *Memory to Written Record*, have sought evidence of memory in the Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁶ In addition to historians using genuine charters to reconstruct memory and hidden narratives, historians have become aware that even forged charters create narratives of their own, and can present a different view of the past.¹⁷

The pre-Conquest archive of the abbey of Bury St Edmund’s is exceptionally full: ‘an armoury of charters’ was amassed and wielded by Abbot Baldwin to thwart the ambitions of Herfast, bishop of East Anglia (1070-84/5), whose eyes were set on Bury for his episcopal seat. The Bury archive is unique in two respects – not only does it contain more surviving medieval cartularies than any other English abbey but it also

¹⁵ Brooks, ‘Anglo-Saxon Charters’; Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Charters’; Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003).

¹⁶ Susan D. Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas: A Palaeography* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006); Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 3rd edn (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Alexander R. Rumble, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Archives: Their Nature, Extent, Survival and Loss’, in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), pp. 185-200.

¹⁷ Sarah Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record or Story?’, in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Ross Balzaretti and Elizabeth M. Tyler, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 16 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2006), pp. 39-65; Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Charters’.

holds a remarkable number of pre-Conquest vernacular documents, including seventeen wills from the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹⁸ Although these Old English wills were in fact another type of charter, distinctive in that they were drawn up to record how issuers wished their land and moveable wealth to be distributed after their deaths, they are generally referred to by modern scholars as wills. Students of this period can fortunately rely on Dorothy Whitelock's edition of these Anglo-Saxon wills which was first printed in 1930.¹⁹ The corpus has been added to twice since: in 1939 by the *Will of Æthelgifu* which Whitelock published in a separate edition in 1939, and more recently by two male wills, all, incidentally, from St Albans.²⁰ Anglo-Saxon wills have previously been used as source material for studies around the inheritance strategies of aristocratic families.²¹ Wareham, in particular, has demonstrated how several prominent East Anglian families used the transmission of land to strengthen existing kinship bonds and to create new alliances.²²

However, several late Anglo-Saxon wills can be used specifically to identify English women across 1066 and look at issues around their survival. They provide a wealth of detail not usually found in charters, about individuals, their families, and estates, along with additional and helpful context. This thesis is fortunate that eastern England has not

¹⁸ Sarah Foot, 'The Abbey's Armoury of Charters', in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. by Licence, pp. 31-52.

¹⁹ *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, trans. and ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, pbk edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁰ For an up to date catalogue of Anglo-Saxon wills, see Linda Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2011), app. 1, pp. 285-88; Dorothy Whitelock and Neil R. Ker, *The Will of Æthelgifu: A Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Manuscript and Analyses of the Properties, Livestock and Chattels Concerned* (London: Roxburghe Club, 1968)

²¹ As for example Patrick Wormald, 'On þa Wæpnedhealfe: Kingship and Royal Property from Æthelwulf to Edward the Elder', in *Edward the Elder*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David Hill (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), pp. 264-77; Ann Williams, 'Principes Merciorum Gentis: The Family, Career and Connections of Ælfhere, Ealdorman of the Mercians', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 10 (1981), 143-72.

²² Andrew Wareham, 'St Oswald's Family and Kin', in *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 46-63; Andrew Wareham, 'The Transformation of Kinship and the Family in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 10 (2001), 375-99; Wareham, *Lords and Communities*.

only a higher percentage of Old English wills preserved intact, but that it also benefits from several Latin abstracts of other wills which were copied into the *Liber Eliensis*, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Perhaps it is the seemingly high percentage of women who left written wills – just under a third of all sixty-eight Anglo-Saxon wills had a female testator, either acting alone or as part of a couple – and the large number of women beneficiaries named within them that has encouraged their use in another a research area. Since the year 2000 several women scholars, following Stafford’s round debunking of the Anglo-Saxon Golden Age, have analysed women’s wills more critically.²³ Julia Crick concluded that Anglo-Saxon women’s rights to land had only ever been of a temporary nature, and that their apparent ability to bequeath land is illusory, with beneficiaries pre-determined by male family members.²⁴ Tollerton suggested that women might have been subject to a significant amount of duress on the part of their male relatives to follow their directives.²⁵ And Mumby has shown how vernacular wills were written up rather than just publicized orally, only when it was necessary to record how and when family land was transferred in a manner outside of what would have been expected and customary.²⁶ These three studies confirm that the paramount importance of women’s wills was to channel and re-channel family land back to the kinship group.²⁷ But as we shall see, the Norman Conquest altered the *status quo* and after 1066 male relatives were no longer, even if still alive, in any position to inherit.

²³ Stafford, ‘Women and the Norman Conquest’.

²⁴ Julia Crick, ‘Women, Posthumous Benefaction, and Family Strategy’ (pp. 416-18). See also Julia Crick, *Women, Wills and Moveable Wealth in Pre-Conquest England*, ed. by M. Donald and L. Hurcombe (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 2000).

²⁵ Tollerton, *Wills*.

²⁶ Mumby, ‘The Descent of Family Land’.

²⁷ For a new direction in the study of female Anglo-Saxon wills, Mary Louise Fellow connects them with the spiritual literature of the time, and more especially saint’s lives; she reads Æthelgifu’s will as the profession of a life *imitatio Christi*, in Mary Louise Fellows, ‘Æthelgifu’s Will as Hagiography’, in *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 82-102.

2.1.2 Post-1066 Charters

The status and standing of the Anglo-Saxon population in England was not the only thing affected by the events of 1066: the production of charters themselves appears to have been temporarily arrested. Between 1066 and the mid-1070s almost no charters were issued by anyone other than William I and there were only a few more between the 1070s and 1086.²⁸ David Bates' magisterial edition of William I's charters is an invaluable resource and his meticulously researched dating of individual charters is essential for plotting the chronology of some of the major Anglo-Norman families.²⁹ After the completion of Domesday Book there was a noticeable and countrywide rise in charter production, as if a grand ground plan had been laid down – but of these, very few charters were written for women, or even referred to women. After 1100 the number of charters increased so dramatically that it becomes possible to study in isolation those from a specific region. The richness of charter material from Eastern England, and the county of Lincolnshire in particular, is amply demonstrated in Frank Stenton's edition of the Danelaw Charters.³⁰ Cyril Hart's cross-Conquest *Early Charters of Essex* remains useful.³¹

Whilst Anglo-Saxon charters have remained an underused source for women there have been some recent achievements using Anglo-Norman charters, notably by Susan Johns and Judith Green, although these both focused on the twelfth century.³² However, it is also possible to use twelfth-century charters for women of the early Norman period; occasionally land transactions can refer to a piece of land as it was held by a named English woman of the previous century and these can be exceptionally helpful in the identification of individual women, their family, and lands.

²⁸ Julia Barrow, pers. comm.

²⁹ Bates, *Regesta*.

³⁰ *Danelaw*.

³¹ *ECE*.

³² Johns, *Noble Women*; Green, 'Aristocratic Women in Early Twelfth-Century England'.

2.2 Cartularies and Cartulary-Chronicles

A few Anglo-Saxon charters survive as original single sheet copies, but most survive as later copies, sometimes included within other legal documents. Those single sheet copies that survived (Sawyer lists over 200) were generally preserved in the archives of religious institutions which collected them to keep records of their crucial titles to land. Most pre- and many post-Conquest charters, however, survive as copies made as part of compilations of muniments or title deeds and are referred to as cartularies. These usually took book form and were generally kept for the in-house use of beneficiaries rather than for public legal use. The earliest English cartularies come from the Cathedral Priory of Worcester, one from the early eleventh century, another largely missing and now represented by a lone fragment from the mid-eleventh century, and a third from the cusp of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which we know as *Hemming's Cartulary*.³³ Most other cartularies, including those from Eastern England, date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³⁴

Some twelfth-century monasteries interspersed their house narrative with Latin copies of their more important Anglo-Saxon charters forming historical compilations

³³ G. R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue* (London: Longmans, 1958), pp. 123-24. For more discussion on cartularies in general, see Trevor Foulds, 'Medieval Cartularies', *Archives: The Journal of the British Record Association*, 18 (1987), 3-35. For a discussion of Worcester's early manuscripts, see Francesca Tinti, 'From Episcopal Conception to Monastic Compilation: Hemming's Cartulary in Context', *Early Medieval Europe*, 11 (2002), 223-61, and Francesca Tinti, 'The Reuse of Charters at Worcester from the Eighth to the Eleventh Century: A Case-Study', *Midland History*, 37 (2012), 127-41.

³⁴ Including some of those from pre-Conquest foundations which are consulted below: St Benet of Holme (1275-1302): 'Register of the Abbey of St Benet of Holme' in *St Benet of Holme, 1020-1210*, 2 vols, Norfolk Record Society, 2-3 (London: Miller, Son & Co., Wyman & Sons, 1932); several from Lincoln including the *Registrum Antiquissimum* (c. 1225), *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln*, ed. by C.W. Foster and K. Major, Lincoln Record Society, 27-29, 32, 34, 41, 42, 46, 51, 62, 67, 68 (Hereford: Hereford Times for the Lincoln Record Society, 1931-1973) and from Ramsey, the *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia* (late fourteenth century), *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, ed. by W. H. Hart and P. A. Lyons, Rolls Series, 79, 3 vols (1884-1889). For cartularies from post-Conquest foundations, refer Stoke-by-Clare (post 1250), *Stoke-by-Clare Cartulary: BL Cotton Appx.Xxi*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill and Richard Mortimer, Suffolk Record Society, 3 vols (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1982); Swavesey, now untraced, but found in *Mon Ang.*, VI, pp. 1001-02.

which are usually referred to as cartulary-chronicles, akin to a ‘a modern source-book’.³⁵ Davis lists St Augustine’s Canterbury and Abingdon as outstanding representations of the genre. An example taken from the East of England is the *Liber Eliensis* or *History of the Isle of Ely*. Sometime between 1109 and 1131 a Latin translation of an early vernacular cartulary, the *Libellus Æthelwoldi*, was commissioned by Bishop Hervey of Ely.³⁶ The *libellus*, amongst other things, relates how Ely’s estate was accumulated by its founder Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester (963-84).³⁷ This Latin translation was primarily a response to Domesday Book, and what Ely perceived as Norman encroachments on the abbey’s estates and rights. However, it was subsequently collated with other vernacular documents to become the source material for Book II of the *Liber Eliensis*.³⁸ This composite history of Ely and its surroundings for a period from the seventh to the twelfth centuries is invaluable for the historical detail it provides for Anglo-Saxon East Anglia, and especially for the reconstruction of Ely Abbey’s patron families and their wider kinship groups. After the Conquest, the *LE* relates Ely’s role in the rebellion of Hereward the Wake, c. 1070. Other Fenland abbeys which had cartulary-chronicles include Peterborough’s *Liber Niger* (mid-1130’s) and the *Chronicon Abbatiae* of Ramsey Abbey (c. 1170).³⁹

³⁵ Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record or Story?’ (p. 44); Elisabeth van Houts, ‘Historical Writing’, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 103-22; Davis, *Medieval Cartularies*, p. xiii; *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, trans. by Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005).

³⁶ *LE*.

³⁷ A. Kennedy, ‘Law and Litigation in the *Libellus Æthelwoldi* Episcopi’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 24 (1995), 131-83.

⁴⁰ See *LE* and Fairweather, *Liber Eliensis*.

³⁹ van Houts, ‘Historical Writing’, (pp. 103, 115-16), Robin Fleming, ‘Christ Church Canterbury’s Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance; Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History, 1995*, ed. by C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 83-156; *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis a Saec. X. usque ad an. circiter 1200*, ed. by W. Dunn Macray (London: Rolls Series, 1886).

2.3 Thorney *Liber Vitæ*

Single sheet charters, cartulary copies and the mixture of narrative and charters in cartulary chronicles are obvious sources but, at first glance, liturgical sources might not seem the most promising place to start looking for women after 1066. However, there is one exceptional liturgical source for women in Eastern England at this time, where women have a significant presence, and that is the Thorney *Liber Vitæ*.⁴⁰

England has only three surviving examples of *libri vitæ*, books of confraternity that were kept by medieval religious institutions, although more are extant in Continental Europe.⁴¹ *Libri vitæ* contain the names of members of a monastery, both religious and lay, who had entered into confraternity agreements, along with the names of those who wished to be remembered with them. *Libri vitæ* were not dissimilar to martyrologies or necrologies, in that their objective was memorialisation. However, the names in a martyrology were entered after death and ran chronologically by date of death, allowing commemoration to be anniversarial, but the names in a *liber vitæ* could equally have belonged to those alive or dead, and were commemorated in a daily mass.⁴² The three surviving English *libri vitæ* were those preserved at Newminster Abbey (later Hyde Abbey) in Winchester, at Durham Cathedral Priory, and at Thorney Abbey. In 2015, spurred on by their successful 2007 edition of the Durham *Liber Vitæ*, Lynda Rollason and a team of established scholars published a complete edition of the Thorney *Liber Vitæ*.⁴³ The value of these two editions to modern study of English *libri vitæ* is immeasurable. Moreover, the Thorney edition preserves at its heart, both Feilitzen's

⁴⁰ Moore estimates 182 men to 100 women.

⁴¹ Moore, 'Family-Entries in English *Libri Vitæ*'.

⁴² Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Introduction to the Prosopographical Study of the Thorney *Liber Vitæ*', in *The Thorney Liber Vitæ*, ed. by Lynda Rollason (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), pp. 57-76 (p.57).

⁴³ *The Thorney Liber Vitæ (London, British Library, Additional MS 40,000, Fols 1-12r): Edition, Facsimile and Study*, ed. by Lynda Rollason (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015).

original onomasticon, Clark's edition, and a division of stints by Neil Ker, all safely conserved and published here posthumously.⁴⁴

Thorney in Cambridgeshire was one of the lesser Fenland houses, and sited, like Ely, on an island, albeit a considerably smaller one. Thorney's *liber vitæ*, henceforth ThLV, is the only one of the three surviving *libri vitæ* to have been written up on additional folia inserted into an earlier continental Gospel Book.⁴⁵ Both the Durham and Newminster *libri vitæ* remained in use as late as the 1530s, whereas, by contrast, the ThLV was written up over a one hundred year period from the late eleventh century, during which it recorded the names of those men, women and children who visited the abbey. It is, therefore, directly relevant in both time and space to this thesis. Within the ThLV names of confrères and their families or retainers, in a ratio of roughly 1:2 male to female, were entered in stints of discrete groups.⁴⁶ As they were neither dated nor put in any chronological order, dating is mainly derived from palaeography combined with evidence taken from other source materials.

The English *libri vitæ* have not been fully exploited by historians even as liturgical documents. However, work from the last century has indicated their value as historical sources to the fields of onomastics, prosopography, and historical demography.⁴⁷ Thorney, in particular, offers an insight into a time period for which not much other source material exists, including for the vital early years after the Conquest. At his death in 1976 Olof von Feilitzen left a nearly completed onomasticon of the ThLV. Cecily Clark, who had used the ThLV to identify Thorney's 'catchment-area', had also been

⁴⁴ von Feilitzen and Insley, 'The Onomasticon', in *The Thorney Liber Vitæ*, ed. by Rollason, pp. 125-210.

⁴⁵ London, BL, Additional MS. 40,000. For an in-depth historical analysis, Lynda Rollason, 'Historical Introduction', in *The Thorney Liber Vitæ*, ed. by Rollason, pp. 1-19.

⁴⁶ Moore, 'Prosopographical Problems'.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

working on an edition of the *LV*.⁴⁸ Clark, van Houts, and J. S. Moore have all studied the female names in the *ThLV* to plot the process of Conquest and assimilation through intermarriage.⁴⁹ However, the *ThLV* has not been used as a source for the women themselves, or for English women's survival. In this thesis it will be used to help the identification of individual women and their families. Von Feilitzen's onomasticon which has been updated by John Insley will be an essential reference for its latest etymological and anthroponymical research.⁵⁰

2.4 Domesday

This thesis concerns English women and their survival across 1066, with specific reference to a group of Eastern shires. Domesday, compiled within a generation of 1066, and apparently giving information for both 1066 and 1086, is its key source. It is primarily a source concerned with landholding and will therefore be of use for questions of women's survival as landholders but it also contains other incidental information. However, in spite of its obvious utility, Domesday is not an easy source to use or interpret. Its making, how its evidence was compiled, and what factors determined inclusion or exclusion, are still very much subjects of debate. There are major problems in identifying individuals across the survey. The information it provides is not consistent across different Domesday texts, different shires, nor for the two dates it purports to cover, which makes statistical analysis problematic and comparisons difficult. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that, although Pauline Stafford commented as long ago as 1994 that Domesday Book had been 'surprisingly little used

⁴⁸ Cecily Clark, 'The Liber Vitae of Thorney Abbey and Its Catchment Area', in *Words, Names, and History: Selected Writings of Cecily Clark*, ed. by Peter Jackson (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 301-50 (pp. 320-38).

⁴⁹ Clark, 'Women's Names'; Cecily Clark, 'A Witness to Post-Conquest English Cultural Patterns: The *Liber Vitae* of Thorney Abbey'; in *Words, Names and History*, ed. by Clark and Jackson; Moore, 'Prosopographical Problems' (pp. 183-86); van Houts, 'Intermarriage'.

⁵⁰ von Feilitzen and Insley, 'The Onomasticon'.

to illuminate the experience of the Conquest by the women who lived through it', this is still the case.⁵¹

There can be no doubt that Domesday was a colossal undertaking, or that, in its turn, it has spawned an ocean of secondary material. In 1985 David Bates's bibliography for Domesday studies listed 1847 publications; it is conceivable that this total is now hundreds more.⁵² The brief resumé that follows aims to highlight the issues which are pertinent to this thesis. This summary owes much to the recent work of scholars such as Stephen Baxter, Sally Harvey, and David Roffe, but it acknowledges the debt owed to earlier Domesday pioneers whose achievements underpin all our work.

2.4.1 The Domesday Survey

The term 'domesday' does not simply refer to the extremely large book of landholding records now preserved at The National Archives at Kew, London, but rather to the process of a project which according to the 'E' version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle began at a royal council held at Gloucester over Christmas 1086. William I, in his late fifties, was not only losing his hold over his barons, but was facing a threat of imminent invasion by Danish forces. His needs were threefold: he was desperate to prove the legitimacy of his Conquest, to demand loyalty from his chief men, and receive the total submission of the English.⁵³ In answer,

Then he [King William] sent his men all over England into every shire and had them ascertain how many hundreds of hides there were in the shire, or what land and livestock the king himself had in the land, or what dues he ought to have in twelve months from the shire. Also he had it recorded how much land his

⁵¹ Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest' (p. 244).

⁵² David Bates, *A Bibliography of Domesday Book* (Woodbridge: Boydell for the Royal Historical Society, 1986); David Roffe, 'Introduction', in *Domesday Now: New Approaches to the Inquest and the Book*, ed. by David Roffe and K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, pbk edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), pp.7-60 (p.1).

⁵³ For a full historical background, see Sally Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 271-326.

archbishops had, and his diocesan bishops, and his abbots and his earls, and – though I tell it at too great length – what or how each man had who was occupying land here in England.⁵⁴

Commissioners were duly appointed and sent out across all England south of the River Tees to oversee William's grand survey, gathering data from the great and the good, from the people of the shires and the hundreds. It is generally accepted that the terms of reference for this 'census' were framed in a series of questions recorded in the preface to the *Inquest of Ely*, a draft version of the Domesday survey for Cambridgeshire:⁵⁵

What is the name of the manor? Who held it in the time of King Edward? Who holds it now? How many hides? How many ploughs in demesne – of the tenants? How many villeins – cottars – slaves? How many freemen – sokemen? How much wood – meadow – pasture? How many mills – fisheries? How much has been added or taken away? How much was the whole worth? How much now? How much had or has each freeman, sokeman? All this to be given thrice: that is, in the time of King Edward, and when King William gave it, and at the present time. And, if more can be had than is now had.⁵⁶

In seeking the answers to William's questions the country was divided into seven administrative circuits, most of which held five shires, and to which commissioners were appointed. The circuits relevant to the counties of East Anglia and the Fenlands are three, six and seven. Cambridgeshire was within circuit three which, with Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire, covered the central counties. Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire were within circuit six, probably the largest circuit, which also covered the whole of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and

⁵⁴ ASC E 1086.

⁵⁵ *IE*, 97; Harvey, *Domesday*, p 1.

Rutland. The East Anglian counties of Norfolk and Suffolk were joined with Essex to make up circuit seven.

The estates of the royal demesne, and dues appertaining, were not exempt from this inquiry but it is generally thought that they were probably written up as a separate exercise to include a geld acquisition, for which royal officials would have been able to make use of earlier documents, such as geld lists, and surveys of towns and estates.⁵⁷ The major landholders of each circuit, both ecclesiastic and lay, who held land of the king in chief, were required to produce their own written returns. Some, like the church, probably had the information easily enough to hand in some previous documentary form, but others may well have had to call on the skills of their clerical staff to draw them up. Each tenant-in-chief would have been given a date on which to attend the commissioners, where they would have handed over their testimony for scrutiny by local juries at inquests held across the country.

These inquests took the form of extraordinary meetings of the shire court, presided over by the sheriff. These would have been huge multilingual affairs attended by the bishops, abbots, and all the leading ‘men’ of the shire. Before the commissioners, and other tenants-in-chief, and in front of the local juries, landholders would have presented their oral testimony under their sworn oath, in response to a series of verbal questions.⁵⁸ This would then have been deliberated over by juries from each hundred, presided over by the reeve of the hundred, who was attended by the men of the hundred, as well as by deputations from each vill, consisting of the priest, the reeve, and six men.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Stephen Baxter, ‘The Making of Domesday Book and the Languages of Lordship’, in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c.800-c.1250* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 271-308 (p. 279).

⁵⁸ Robin Fleming, ‘Oral Testimony and the Domesday Inquest’, *ANS*, 17 (1992), 101-22.

⁵⁹ Lists of jurors for the hundreds of Cambridgeshire are given in *ICC*. Juries were made up of 50:50 Norman:English. Although none of the Cambridgeshire jurors appear to be female, there is, however, a question over the gender of Godlieve of Longstanton. Possibly the moneyer Godleof of Thetford, but it is noteworthy that the name has both male and female antecedents.

It seems inevitable that these gatherings would have been largely male affairs, but it is probable that women landholders must have attended, not only as part of the audience, but, in some instances, to present their own returns, not least of course the influential abbesses of the Anglo-Saxon nunneries. This might explain the return of the Abbey of Chatteris.⁶⁰ Can we read anything other than stylistic variation in the listing of estates held variously by the abbess, the church, and the nuns?⁶¹ Can we hear the abbess's own voice telling us that she holds Foxton directly from the King?⁶² Even a few smaller women landholders may have given their own testimony, such as Bothild who held twenty acres at Bricett, Suffolk, in 1086 and who called on Hugh of Houdain to vouch for her.⁶³ Unfortunately, Hugh had very recently been placed under arrest and could not reply; her land was duly confiscated and given to Wulfmær the reeve to hold in the King's hand. Domesday Book frequently refers to the testimony of groups of people, the men of the hundred, and other interested parties including burgesses, freemen, king's thegns, and many others.⁶⁴ It would be wise not to exclude women by definition from those groups.

The regional inquests sound like 'organized chaos' – hundreds of people, a cacophony of voices and languages, but somehow this mammoth task was completed in six months.⁶⁵ The commissioners and their scribes collated the results and drew up their reports, and by August 1086 were able to present their findings to William I at Salisbury where he had summoned his nobles to pay him homage before he left England for

⁶⁰ Chatteris was one of only two Anglo-Saxon nunneries outside of the southern counties; compared to Barking Abbey in Essex it was non-royal, less affluent, and relatively young. For Chatteris see *The Cartulary of Chatteris Abbey*, ed. by Claire Breay (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999).

⁶¹ GDB fol. 193a.

⁶² Foxton was the main part of the original endowment of family land which had been left to the daughter and first abbess, Ælfwen, by Ælthelstan Mannesune; she belonged to an East Anglian family of hereditary priests. Hereditary abbesses too?

⁶³ LDB fol. 448b.

⁶⁴ For a list of interested parties, see Baxter, 'The Making of Domesday Book' (p. 285).

⁶⁵ Please note that here I am following the Stephen Baxter, Sally Harvey and Julia Crick school.

Normandy. They were then compelled to bend their knees and in return symbolically receive from their sovereign lord the lands for which they had accounted in their inquest returns. It was to be William's last act on English soil – he was never to return to England, succumbing to an internal injury received at the siege of Mantes, just over a year later.

2.4.2 Domesday Book

But the Domesday process that William had started did not stop with his death. The Domesday Book, or books if we include Little Domesday, are its results. But the relationship of survey and text, and the dating of the latter are still areas of much debate. For example, it was accepted until very recently that Domesday Book was simply the natural end-product of the Domesday process, the writing-up of the results of the survey. This is no longer the accepted view: Roffe has gone as far as to split the two elements apart, whereas Baxter still sees the book as part of the whole, if only the last piece in the jigsaw.⁶⁶

Slightly less controversial but nevertheless stimulating, has been the academic 'kick about' over the identity of the so-called mastermind behind the book; scholars are ranged behind various candidates.⁶⁷ Baxter favours William de St Calais, bishop of Durham from 1080 to 1096, but perhaps the strongest candidate is Ranulf Flambard,

⁶⁶ Part of his argument is the date – he suggests a controversial late date of 1088-90, something previously mooted by Chris Lewis, but this seems unlikely, David Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pbk edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), pp. 105-08; David Roffe, 'Domesday: The Inquest and the Book' in *Domesday*, ed. by Hallam and Bates (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), pp. 25-36; Stephen D. Church, 'Ann Williams: A Personal Appreciation', in *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. by David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp. 1-4; Stephen Baxter, 'Review of Domesday: The Inquest and the Book (Review No 16)', *Reviews in History* (2001) <<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review216>> [accessed 1st March 2016]; Stephen Baxter, 'Domesday Book: The Most Important Document in English History?', *BBC History Magazine*, August 2010.

⁶⁷ See Harvey, *Domesday*, for a full discussion of the merits of each candidate, pp. 107-32.

later bishop of Durham, 1099-1128, preferred by Harvey.⁶⁸ This is not to say that the book was not created, in the first place, for the King's own use. And surely that King is William I, not simply because of the volume of references which identify him in Domesday, but because of a few incidental references to his sons, and one to a daughter, with the most persuasive being that to 'W. the King's son'.⁶⁹

More contentious has been the debate around the date of the book, even if the general consensus is that it was written up over the period commencing in the summer of 1086 and continuing into 1088. The purpose of the book has been even more controversial – the terms of reference of the survey would suggest that the collection of geld was the ultimate purpose of the exercise, but the presentation of the data in the book is set out by landholder rather than by area, making it 'a spectacularly unhelpful guide to the logistics of taxation'.⁷⁰ It is likely that between the survey and the book, the objectives of the process could have changed. Roffe generalizes that the book was an administrative tool, perhaps even multi-purpose, but Baxter considers that its seigniorial layout points to its being a means of political control.⁷¹ Its overriding principle is how all land was held from the king and in what manner. Later both William II and Henry I found it extremely useful in the generation of profit from 'feudal incidents', such as the marrying of heiresses to the highest bidder. Baxter's solution is to marry the two variant purposes: the collection of data at the survey was initially for geld purposes but the writing up was ordered so as to tackle the power of the nobility and manage any potentially advantageous feudal incidents.

⁶⁸ Also known for his exogamous affair with Ælfgifu, an English lady of Huntingdon, and aunt of Christina of Markyate.

⁶⁹ GDB fol. 77a.

⁷⁰ Baxter, 'The Most Important Document in English History?'

⁷¹ Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, p. 27; *Decoding Domesday* is in itself a re-evaluation of the purposes of Domesday.

For the conquered population of England, the hundreds of named and anonymous English in Domesday Book, it sealed their destiny and the fate of the land in one fell swoop; at the same time as it recorded their losses, it legitimated them, and gave an official stamp to their transfer. Domesday engendered awe amongst the population and carried with it the unspoken threat of judgement, which was symbolized and preserved in perpetuity in writing.⁷² The book closed the door on Anglo-Saxon England. William had wielded a powerful political tool, in its way as successful as the military force employed at Hastings. The Domesday scribe calls it the ‘Book of Winchester,’ suggesting that Winchester was the likely site of its collation, preparation and storage.⁷³ For the English the book held in the *domus dei* came to represent their *domes dæg*, their day of judgement.

2.5 Using Domesday as a Source

In pursuit of English women in Domesday Book, the general problems of using Domesday as a source will apply, and the specific problems of using it as a source for the identification of individuals. In addition there are problems specific to using it as a source for the English, as a source for women, and as a source for English women. The three main problems which arise when using Domesday as a source are firstly, the disparate nature of the data presented in the two different volumes, secondly, the fact that the data from the two entry dates of 1066 and 1086 is not always directly comparable, and thirdly, that the data is incomplete.

2.5.1 Great Domesday Book, Little Domesday Book, and the Domesday Satellites

What we refer to as Domesday Book actually consists of two volumes – Great Domesday Book (hereafter GDB) which covers the data provided for circuits one to six

⁷² Harvey, *Domesday*, pp. 19, 271 and 328.

⁷³ GDB fol. 332c.

and Little Domesday Book (hereafter LDB) which covers the data from the East Anglian counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. However, this is a gross oversimplification and behind the two texts there is an amalgamation of an estimated thirty-three texts and counting.⁷⁴ It is apparent that although GDB and LDB were written up in quite different ways, they were both completed under some strict time constraints. Allowing for a few corrections, GDB was written up by a single talented scribe, with a few tiny corrections by a second scribe, LDB by seven; GDB is laid out geographically by shire and then seigneurially within each shire whereas LDB is also divided geographically into hundreds. Usefully LDB is dated in its own colophon to 1086. Why it was never collated into GDB remains a matter of some conjecture: it may be that work was halted by the death of William I in September 1087, or by the rebellion of leading Normans in 1088, one consequence of which was the exile of William de St Calais, possible mastermind behind the book. Another theory is that the task of including the greater detailed LDB was just too onerous to contemplate; the long list of English freeholders per hundred have caused Harvey to wonder whether this might not have been a small act of resistance on the part of members of the English scriptorium at Waltham Holy Cross, Essex.⁷⁵

Alternatively, Ian Taylor has recently contended that LDB might have been a totally ‘separate enterprise’ from GDB, one that particularly sought to ‘inform a re-assessment of service with the ultimate aim of stabilizing East Anglia’ after the upheavals of the East Anglian rebellions of Earl Ralph in 1075 and Roger Bigod in 1088.⁷⁶ Uniquely, the three counties of LDB record time points connected to the 1075-1076 rebellion and entries frequently include phrases related to the forfeiture of Earl Ralph or Walter de

⁷⁴ Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, p. 29.

⁷⁵ Harvey, *Domesday*, p. 94.

⁷⁶ Ian Taylor, ‘Domesday Books? Little Domesday Reconsidered’ in *Domesday Now: New Approaches to the Inquest and the Book*, ed. by Roffe and Keats-Rohan, pp. 137-54.

Dol.⁷⁷ Marten first drew attention to LDB's frequent concern with dates between GDB's *termini* 1066 and 1086, with so-called 'third values' which reflected the wholesale 'redistribution of land in the aftermath of insurrection and rebellion and of the tenurial insecurity that this engendered'.⁷⁸

There are several considerable problems when working with Domesday as a source, the most significant perhaps being the variability of the information held within the book. It differs in detail not only between the two volumes themselves, GDB and LDB, but also between the circuits travelled by the Domesday commissioners and sometimes even between the counties within those circuits, not to mention between the various satellite manuscripts. It has become usual to refer to the several smaller texts which are subsidiary to GDB and LDB as 'satellites'. In a practical article Howard Clarke defined them as texts which represented 'primarily a stage in the production' of the book.⁷⁹ There are three major satellites, the largest of which, Exon Domesday, was an original return written at Old Sarum for the south western circuit; the other two, the *Inquisitio Eliensis* (usually referred to as *IE*) and *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* (referred to as *ICC*), are both copies of Domesday drafts produced in the second half of the twelfth century. The latter two are of particular relevance to this thesis: the *ICC* is an extensive *descriptio* of Cambridgeshire arranged by hundreds; the *IE*, an account of the fief of the Abbey of Ely. The *ICC*, in particular, provides considerably more detail than can be found in the pages of the Cambridgeshire Domesday.

There are several more minor surveys from Eastern England, and although they were excluded by Clarke on the grounds that they were post-Domesday, they will, for the purpose of this thesis, be included under the general heading of 'satellites'.⁸⁰ They

⁷⁷ For an example see LDB fol. 321b.

⁷⁸ Marten, 'The Impact of Rebellion', p.132.

⁷⁹ Howard Clarke, 'The Domesday Satellites', in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. by Peter Sawyer (London: Arnold, 1985), pp. 50-70 (pp. 50-51).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (pp. 56-57).

include the Crowland Domesday, the Lindsey Survey, and the *Feudal Book of Abbot Baldwin*.⁸¹ Crowland and the *Feudal Book* are descriptions of the fees respectively of the Abbeys of Crowland and Bury St Edmunds, whereas the Lindsey Survey is arranged by ridings and wapentakes. Relevant satellites can provide further details on English female landholders and their families, and aid in their identification.

2.5.2 *Tempore Regis Ædwardi and Tempore Regis Willelmi*

Whilst Domesday Book appears to directly contrast the details of tenure and values for two dates, TRE, the time of King Edward (1066), and TRW, the time of King William (1086), it is not always easy to differentiate which data belongs to which time point. Even once a fairly firm identification has been made, Domesday Book can be vague as to which individual held what at what time, making collation of data under the two headings of 1066 and 1086 difficult. As already mentioned, not only LDB but two GDB circuits sometimes provide a third time point most frequently signified by *postea* (later or afterwards).⁸² Whereas LDB tends to provide more information for the time points, TRE and TRW, some counties in GDB often have no specific TRE entry but a simple *olim* or *valuit*, which may not necessarily refer to the time when King Edward was still actually alive, although this does not seem to generally be the case for the Fenland counties of Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire and Cambridge. Nevertheless many entries are still problematic. In an example taken from Stratton in Suffolk twelve freemen, including Modgifu of Colcarr, were added to this manor: should they be ascribed to 1066 or 1086?⁸³ Other entries are simply quiet about time, for instance ‘In Nortuna (Norton Subcourse, Norfolk) una libera femina XVI ac(ras) t(er)ræ’ from Godric the

⁸¹ Crowland Domesday, *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres*, ed. by W. Fulman (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1684), I, 80-82; *FD*, pp. 1-44.

⁸² Marten, ‘The Impact of Rebellion’ (p. 133).

⁸³ LDB fol. 314b.

Sheriff, gives no detail of whether she is holding *nunc* or TRE.⁸⁴ Some even refer to a time before 1066, as the entry for Menliofu who had given her land at Mellis, Suffolk to Bury St Edmund's before 1066.⁸⁵ Many urban entries, as in the case of Colchester, just list the 1086 burgesses, with no reference to whether they had also held in 1066. However, some of the Colchester entries are picked out for a separate entry that includes both a time reference and a change in ownership; in 1086 Otto the Goldsmith was holding three houses which Countess Ælfgifu used to hold.⁸⁶ It would appear that these are specific instances picked out for special attention, not to emphasize any change in ownership, but a change in the services due for the properties which 'reddebant consuetudine regis et modo non reddunt'.

2.5.3 Omissions in Data

A major issue which needs to be borne in mind when using Domesday as a source is the scrappy nature of the data. There are unexplained anomalies throughout the text – simply put, not everyone is in Domesday whom we would expect to be. It was Round who first noticed such anomalies, observing that several well-known Norman tenants-in-chief were missing; Kapelle called these 'significant omissions'.⁸⁷ If prominent men can be unrepresented in the data, what about women? Stafford observed that there were gaps in the distribution of women throughout the text and concluded that the under-recording of women made it difficult to assess the state of women's landholding in 1086.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ LDB fol. 203b.

⁸⁵ LDB fol. 419a. For a detailed discussion of the Colchester entry, see Section 7.3.1.

⁸⁶ LDB fol. 106b.

⁸⁷ J. H. Round, *Feudal England* (London: Sonnenschein, 1895), pp. 163-64; Kapelle, 'The Purpose of Domesday Book: A Quandary', *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association*, 9 (1992), 55-65.

⁸⁸ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday' (pp. 79-89).

2.5.4 Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration

In order to locate the English within Domesday Book, it is first necessary to be aware how the personal names in Domesday, essential to a project which depends on the identification of individuals, would have been transcribed quasi-phonetically. Although it is probable that some popular English name elements would have been recognized, others certainly were not. To some extent all the problems raised so far could apply to anyone trying to use Domesday as a source, including for the English, for women, and for English women. However, there are some problems which arise for English women alone, and one of these is that female names were not always recognized as such by commissioners or scribes. Furthermore, as the gender of any given individual is not necessarily remarked upon in Domesday, it can become extremely difficult to recognize women, even when they are named. To compound the situation the scribe sometimes applied the wrong Latin gender inflexion to personal names.

Conclusions

It is evident that there are many problems when using Domesday Book in general – for overall figures, for its omissions, for the difficulty of assigning information to dates, and the differences between GDB and LDB, and between circuits, which make comparison and Domesday-wide study difficult. This thesis will proceed with caution, reading and assessing all Domesday Book data very carefully. It will be ready, where necessary to admit to and accept where necessary the dead ends and points at which nothing more can be said with any certainty. However, it is still the fact that Domesday is the largest and most valuable source for this period and yet remains under-utilized for women. When used in conjunction with other sources, Domesday Book could have much to tell us of the survival of English women. The problems of identifying the English, and English women in particular, will be considered in the next chapter which considers how Domesday has been tackled by those who have tried to use it for survival.

Chapter 3 The Evidence of Domesday Shires

3.1 Domesday Methodology

3.1.1 Using Domesday for English Survival

Consideration of the problems to be borne in mind when using Domesday can tend to make one forget what a wonderful source it is. It is above all an unparalleled source for landholding both before and after the Norman Conquest and as such it provides the names of many people who held land and also quite a lot of information about many anonymous people who worked the land. Historically Domesday has tended to be used for family and genealogical studies, but only a few scholars have used it for the survival of the English.

This is not surprising when one considers the size and complexity of Domesday and the amount of time that is required to locate all the English within its pages. In this respect the work of both Ann Williams and Hugh Thomas has been influential. Williams identified all the English in Domesday who held of the king and, for the counties of Dorset, Kent, Cambridgeshire, and Shropshire, all the surviving lesser tenants. By combining Domesday data with a full range of sources, from charters and other legal documents, to saints' lives, and romances, she painstakingly reconstructed many surviving English families.¹ In Thomas's investigation of the fate of the surviving English in Domesday Book, he acknowledged the paramount importance of names when working on Domesday for the English, pointing out that frequently the ethnicity of a Domesday individual can only be an assumption based on the origin of their name.²

¹ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 71-97, 98-125; Ann Williams, 'Little Domesday and the English: The Hundred of Colneis in Suffolk' in *Domesday Book*, ed. by Hallam and Bates, pp. 103-20; Ann Williams, 'Meet the Antecessores: Lords and Land in Eleventh-Century Suffolk' in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. by Simon Keynes and Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), pp. 275-87.

² Thomas, *The English and the Normans*; Thomas, 'Significance and Fate'.

It was the complication of names which was the catalyst for the publication by Chris Lewis of a general methodology for the identification and recovery of the English in Domesday, which has since been followed to a greater or lesser extent by most historians. Lewis's methodology is based around 'nominal linkage, a painstaking sifting through each name in search of connections which might identify individuals possessing several manors, and of absences of connection which might serve to indicate that they were different men [and women] who happened to be namesakes'.³ This process is then combined with an analysis of an individual's estates, looking for similarities in size, provenance, and geographical proximity, to support the identification.

3.1.2 Using Domesday for Prosopography

Katharine Keats-Rohan has commented that 'Domesday prosopography is the basis of a real understanding of the nature of Conquest and post-Conquest society', but most of her work has focused upon the Normans in Domesday Book.⁴ More recently she completed a detailed prosopographical study of the English antecessors of the honour of Richmond, in which she traced individuals through the links between landholdings within the honour.⁵ Although the PASE database of the English population found in sources from 597-1042 was launched online in 2005, it was not until 2009 that, in a second phase of publication, prosopographical data from 1043-c.1100, and specifically from Domesday, were added.⁶ This has made the process of identifying pre-Conquest landholders in Domesday Book easier than ever before. Nevertheless, Keats-Rohan has criticized large online databases which lack a basic biographical framework for

³ C. P. Lewis, 'Joining the Dots: A Methodology for Identifying the English in Domesday Book', in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: A Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 69-88.

⁴ Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Portrait of a People: Norman Barons Revisited', in *Domesday Book*, ed. by Hallam and Bates (p. 140).

⁵ Keats-Rohan, 'A Question of Identity'.

⁶ PASE.

individuals and has suggested that meaningful prosopography should highlight relationships, reconstruct families, and recreate networks. An example of a scholar who has used this approach is Lucy Marten, who followed the fortunes of the Anglo-Scandinavian family of Azur Swart across the two Conquests of the eleventh century, and, in particular, observed the strategies they employed to survive throughout this turbulent period.⁷ Using primarily Domesday, but with additional evidence taken from attestations and charters, and reinforced with a detailed analysis of their landholding patterns, Marten traced the Swart estates down three generations. The Anglo-Scandinavian Swarts had followed a policy of intermarriage with English women, and Eadgifu, the widow of Edward, son of Swein Swart, was still holding land in 1086.⁸

3.1.3 Using Domesday to Look at the Survival of English Women

The example of Eadgifu underlines how curious it is that, with the exception of Stafford, no one, as far as can be ascertained, has asked what Domesday Book might mean for the survival of women. There are in fact two distinct questions to be asked of Domesday – how it can be used as a source for *women*, and, as here, as a source for *English* women. The number of women in Domesday is comparatively small and, as many more women can be observed in the more detailed regional texts such as LDB and Exon, it would appear that many must have been omitted. It is important here to mention that, perhaps against intuition, Norman women, other than those closely related to William I, are nearly non-existent in Domesday Book. This is probably due to the fact that there simply had not been enough time for the methods in which women generally receive land, as inheritance and dower, to have taken effect. This does, however, remind us of the necessity of remaining alert to the reasons why some women are in, but others out. It has been suggested that the temporary nature of women's

⁷ Marten, 'Meet the Swarts'.

⁸ See Section 8.4.

holding, and especially of English women, may have had much to do with why a Norman tenant-in-chief may have been unwilling to admit to an English woman antecessor. But in other cases it seems to have been important to stress the same relationship. Perhaps the most acute question for this thesis is why the women who are in Domesday, are in at all. Stafford saw the inclusion of women as a direct corollary of the criteria and purposes of the survey – where their landholding had implications for royal rights or Norman title, or where it had had significance to the previous Anglo-Saxon administration, this is not to say of Harold Godwineson but rather that of Edward the Confessor.⁹ One of William I's reasons for the Domesday survey was to stress his legitimacy as the legal successor of Edward and as such he was duty-bound to respect the women, especially widows, whose fathers, or husbands, had held office in the Edwardian regime. So women tend to appear where they have some connection to the royal household, either through their lands or family service. They appear in relation to the activities or landholdings of sheriffs, one of whose roles was to receive confiscated lands into the hands of the King. Lastly we see women, English women, frequently as the dispossessed litigants in the disputes sections of Domesday shires. Whilst many of the reasons for inclusion in Domesday are the same for both men and women, it is evident when considering the temporary nature of women's holdings and the vulnerability of women without men, whose holdings were recorded in Domesday Book by men for men, that they are more true for women, and especially English women.

Thus, when using Domesday for women, all the problems of using Domesday Book as a source apply, plus those specific to women. Moreover, when using Domesday Book as a source for English women all the problems of using Domesday Book for the English apply, such as underreporting, omissions, and confused naming, but are compounded by the general problems of using it for women, and the more specific

⁹ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday'.

problems of using it for English women. Nevertheless, there have been a few notable works which have successfully used Domesday for English women. Some narrowly defined case-studies have illuminated smaller aspects of women's history as van Houts's study of the English female tenants of Bury St Edmunds in *The Feudal Book of Baldwin*.¹⁰ By contrasting Domesday and Baldwin's *Feudal Book*, she showed a substantial decline in the peasant population after 1066. Casey Beaumont's doctoral thesis employed Domesday data and charter evidence to plot the diminution of the estates of the Anglo-Saxon nunnery of Barking between the eighth and twelfth-centuries and the contexts of that loss.¹¹ And Sarah Foot made extensive use of Domesday Book in her study of female monasticism and, in particular, her research on the disappearance of English nuns.¹² These niche projects suggest the suitability of Domesday to explore the experience of English women across 1066, and that a prosopographical study of the English women in Domesday Book, which made use of complementary sources, and pulled together family and networks, could be applied to illuminate the nature of their political survival after the Conquest.

3.1.4 Identifying Women: Names and Gender

As alluded to already the most problematic issue for studies of the English in Domesday has always been one of identification, but we are now fortunate to have recourse to a clear methodology as presented by Lewis and outlined above, as well as the immense benefit of the PASE Domesday database. The first hurdle to the successful identification of individuals in Domesday has always been the identification of names. This would be an enormous task even if the names in Domesday had been recorded faithfully, but it is

¹⁰ van Houts, 'The Women of Bury St Edmunds', in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. by Licence, pp. 53-73.

¹¹ Casey J. Beaumont, 'Sanctity, Reform and Conquest at Barking Abbey c. 950-1100' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 2011).

¹² Foot, *Veiled Women*.

necessary to remember that Domesday names were ‘recorded and then written out several times over by scribes whose first language and form of script [was] a mystery, perhaps from dictation in any of three languages, and obscured – potentially – by “mishearing, mispronunciation, misreading and miscopying.bad and indifferent readers, writers, speakers, hearers and copyists.deafness and poor dentition”’.¹³ These opportunities for error are compounded by two further areas of confusion, that most English personal names were neither qualified by a surname or cognomen, and that the stock of English names in the eleventh century had become particularly narrow. All of this makes the identification of English individuals in Domesday extremely difficult.¹⁴ This problem is true for both men and women and exemplified in the Essex returns which show multiple instances of the same names. For example, within the Borough of Colchester are recorded 34 entries for women with English names, but with a total of only fourteen different names between them. Even this total is open to interpretation – was the single *Godgyth* (*Godid*) recorded knowingly as a distinct name from the two instances of *Godgifu* (*Godeua*), *Wulfgyth* (*Vued*) from *Wulfgifu* (*Vlueua*)?¹⁵ And how many individuals are referred to in the six instances of burgesses called *Goda* (*Goda*)?¹⁶

The identification of gender is especially a problem for women, but given the mechanics of Domesday Book and its scribes and their knowledge of names, especially a problem for English women. Some names, as *Goda* above, have been read as both masculine and feminine. Von Feilitzen, with specific reference to *Goda*, commented

¹³ Lewis, ‘Joining the Dots’ (p. 73), citing John Dodgson, ‘Domesday Book: Place-Names and Personal Names’, *Domesday Studies*, ed. by J. C. Holt, pbk edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 121-38 (pp. 123-24).

¹⁴ James Chetwood, ‘Re-evaluating English Personal Naming on the Eve of Conquest’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 26 (2018), 518-47 demonstrates how dithematic Anglo-Saxon names began to be less diverse in their mixture of name forms.

¹⁵ LDB fols 105b, 106a.

¹⁶ LDB fols 105b, 106a and b.

that since ‘masculine and feminine forms coalesce in DB, the gender cannot always be explained’.¹⁷ He listed any examples of *Goda* accompanied by the descriptor *liber homo* as male but in fact Domesday frequently refers to female landholders as *free men* or *sokemen*, like the *free man*, Leofwaru, who has an indisputably female name.¹⁸ Moreover, sometimes Domesday places both men and women together with other landholders into collective groupings, such as *liberi homines*, which signify status rather than actual gender.¹⁹ It is, therefore, quite likely that many more *Godas* in Domesday are female than has been previously assumed.²⁰

Gender is also obscured in Domesday as a result of the latinisation of English names. The name *Leofcild* appears six times in Essex, twice with the Latin superscript abbreviation for the masculine ending *-us*.²¹ However, Elisabeth Okasha cites an example from ThLV of *Leofcild* as a feminine name.²² It is quite possible, therefore, that at least four instances of *Leofcild* in Essex are female, and may be all instances if the scribe was in error when he entered the *-us* superscript. Additionally, it has long been assumed that English monothematic names using a masculine monotheme, such as *Beagu* or di-thematic names with a masculine second element like *Leof-sidu* were automatically male but the work of Okasha has recently turned this on its head.²³ She has observed that the grammatical gender of the second name-element, or of a monothematic name, in Old English personal names ‘is of limited relevance in deciding if a name is male or female’.²⁴ It is consequently quite possible, in fact more than likely, that there are many English women in Domesday who have not yet been identified as

¹⁷ Fei., p. 263.

¹⁸ Leofwaru OE (f); LDB fol. 396b.

¹⁹ As in LDB fol. 314b which has twelve free men including *Goda* and *Modgifu* (*Modgeua*).

²⁰ For *Gode*, see Sections 6.2 and 7.4.1.

²¹ As in LDB fols 43a, 79a, 102a, and for *-us* see LDB fols 41a and 92b.

²² Okasha, p. 42; ThLV, p.167.

²³ From OE *beag* (m) ‘ring’, Okasha, pp. 25, 82, and from OE *sidu* (m) ‘custom’, Okasha, pp. 43, 74.

²⁴ Okasha, p. 122.

female. This recent research adds to the many reasons why a study of Domesday for women would be advantageous at this time.

For other names it is not only the gender that is hard to identify. The origins of some names are simply obscure: the source language of *Agneli*, a name found in one instance in Domesday Norfolk, cannot be readily recognized, and as a result its gender cannot be ascertained.²⁵ However, if re-read with a mind open to the possibility that there may be more females in Domesday than previously thought, could it not be a Latin transcription of OE Hagenilda (f.) or CG Aganilda (f.)? In fact the ThLV has an example of a woman named Aganild, the wife of Ægelmær.²⁶ It is evident that the Norman scribe who could write Eadgifu, one of the most common Anglo-Saxon female names, three different ways on one page – *Eddiue* (nom.), *Eddeua* (nom.), *Eddiua* (nom.) – was most probably not conversant with Anglo-Saxon nomenclature, and certainly not with its gender rules.²⁷ Would he have sometimes needed to guess an individual's sex? For example did *Leofsun* (superscript *-us*) really represent *Leofsunu* (m), or could it have been *Leofsund* (f)?²⁸ Likewise *Goti*, *-us* or *-hild*? *Wihti-us* or *-hild*?²⁹ This was not just confusing for the scribe: modern editors can sometimes vary widely on their transcription and gendering of Domesday names. For example, *Alfi-us* who held a manor at Ingrave in Essex in 1066 is transcribed as *Alfsi* (m.) in Phillimore's edition but *Ælfgyth* (f.) in the Alecto edition.³⁰ The lack of a standardized spelling of names in the various translations of Domesday is also unhelpful. PASE (2) not only uses its own spelling convention but bizarrely lists all English landholders in Domesday as male, and all those entered with

²⁵ LDB fol. 125a.

²⁶ ThLV p. 142.

²⁷ GDB fol. 363a.

²⁸ Compare LDB fols 423a *Leofsunus*, 340b *Leofsuna*, 337a *Leofsune*.

²⁹ Compare LDB fols 55b *Goti(-us)*, *Goti(-us)*, 56a *Gotild*, *Gotil*, 55a *Withi(-us)*.

³⁰ LDB fol. 72a; Alecto, p. 1023.

the same name are swept together as ‘Godgifu 8 (Male) Persons called ‘Godgifu’ in Domesday Book.

In the first instance this thesis will adopt Lewis’s methodology for the identification of the English in Domesday Book, but with all due attention to contextual evidence taken from charters and other sources which will strengthen this approach. It will also take into account the particular problems of using Domesday Book for women in general and for English women in particular. It is hoped that the previous discussion will have convinced the reader that a more ‘gender-aware’ or ‘woman-aware’ approach, which does not take for granted that Domesday Book is almost always talking about men, may be beneficial. Even where it is not possible to have certainty, possibilities of how the evidence *could* be read will be proposed. Above all this will be a work of recovery history – of finding women. That is not to say that it will not be conscious of the implications of gender – English women may differ from English men in their survival.

The next section will provide an overview, possibly the most difficult method of approaching Domesday Book. Exploiting Domesday for statistics poses real problems and is definitely not for the unwary: a necessary starting point nevertheless. An overview of the data collected is essential in order to gain not only a sense of the numbers of English women mentioned in 1066 and 1086, but also an overall view of the changes not just in numbers between the two dates but in personnel – where English women appear in 1086, are they the same ones, are they holding the same land as in 1066, and what was the scale of their holdings? The overview will also give an initial sense of where English women are entered; for example, do they usually appear in a familial context or alone? Does the data suggest particular categories of women, urban or rural, tenants-in-chief or *taini regis* who might present different patterns? Lastly, the overview, engaging with Stafford’s point that English women frequently appear with

reference to disputed land, will provide some preliminary statistics of those women whose landholding appears in relation to disputes.³¹

Although raw figures will be presented for the research area as a whole these will be broken down further, shire by shire, in order to see whether there are any significant differences between shires, circuits, and between GDB and LDB in their recording of women. If so, preliminary thoughts on how that could be explained will be put forward.

3.2 Domesday Overview

The Domesday Book entries for the six shires of the research area were first searched for all possible entries mentioning women, either named or unnamed. Norman and other continental women were then excluded. For the purposes of this research, women have been recognized as English if they either had insular names, for instance Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian, or if they were entered in any way in relation to land or property held prior to 1066. Where an entry speaks of more than one individual, as for example ‘two girls’, this has been counted as two entries or two instances of women. The ethnic identity of all names has been studied and their provenance researched using a combination of the findings of Olof von Feilitzen, Gillian Fellows-Jenson, and Elisabeth Okasha, and the ‘Onomasticon’ in the Rollason edition of *The Thorney Liber Vitæ*. Old English names have been transcribed according to the methodology of Elisabeth Okasha. Where I have recognized that on the balance of probability some names should now be reread as female this process has been noted. On the other hand names which are more contentious, whose gender is more inconclusive, have been recorded and some are further discussed in Appendix 1. These particular names are suggestive of the number of females who may lie undiscovered in Domesday Book. Other names were so popular at the end of the eleventh century that their frequency

³¹ Stafford, ‘Women in Domesday’ (p. 79).

makes it difficult to locate individuals with any certainty. PASE is cautious and rigorous in its methodology and each instance of a given name refers to a separate individual where there is no evidence to the contrary. The identification process adopted here has been more flexible: is it more likely there were three or more female burgesses in Colchester all called Leofgifu, or just one?

All instances of English women, in total 539, were collated and tabulated by county and by each entry, noting what information within the entry referred to 1066 or 1086. The place-name of each Domesday Book entry was recorded. Each entry is accompanied, where relevant, by the size of the landholding in acres, irrespective of the custom of that Domesday shire, allowing for direct comparison; urban entries record the number of plots, and plot size where mentioned.³² The tenurial and lordship relationships, where given, were recorded for both time-points, TRE and TRW. Ancillary detail, such as familial relationships, status, or incidental information, was noted separately.³³

There now follows a statistical overview of the English women recorded in the Domesday counties of East Anglia and the Fens, comparing the data for 1066 and 1086, firstly for the region as a whole, and secondly for each individual shire. Although Domesday entries normally include material for only 1066 and 1086 it is to be noted that entries in both Norfolk and Suffolk frequently refer to an interim date, here defined as 1075. In the shire tables below totalized figures are given under these three dates as applicable. The tables give the total instances of English women who were recorded in

³² Lincolnshire Domesday Book gives the size of estates in terms of carucates and bovates, rather than the hides and virgates found in the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire folios, to which they equate. In order to avoid confusion and to allow for direct comparison, all terms of area in this thesis have been converted into acres. Carucates and hides have been assessed as 120 acres, virgates and bovates as 30 acres.

³³ The database which underpins this thesis holds much more detail than it is practical to include here. It also records where and how women were entered in Domesday Book, whether they were qualified by male relatives or recorded in their own right, and the number who were involved in land disputes or claims. It is hoped that I will be able to return to and contextualize this additional and significant information.

Domesday Book within each shire, the numbers of those who were named, and lastly the estimated number of individual English women who held land in each shire. Each table is accompanied by commentary and a breakdown which itemizes how this last figure was calculated. The estates held by English women have been graded by size (in acres) to give an impression of the amount of land which had been in the hands of English women in 1066, and the decrease in that holding by 1086.

3.2.1 East Anglia and the Fens: 1066/1086

- Numbers of entries in 1066 – 428; preliminary identifications of individuals suggests number of women – 181
- Numbers of entries in 1086 – 114; preliminary identifications of individuals suggests number of women – 42
- Of which same women holding at both dates – 12; new women holding in 1086 – 30
- Size of estates in 1066: size of estates based on preliminary identification of individual women – 93 women with estates of less than 120 acres; 78 women with estates larger than 120 acres
- Size of estates in 1086: size of estates based on preliminary identification of individual women – 24 women with estates of less than 120 acres; 12 women with estates larger than 120 acres³⁴

³⁴ Please note that the holdings of three women were unspecified, and three other women were holding houses only.

3.2.2 Cambridgeshire

Landholders	Instances		Named		Individuals		Size of Holdings	
	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86
Chatteris Abbey	6	7					1,247.5	1,232.5
Eadgifu the Fair	83				1			
Others	19	2	18	2	8	1	4 <120 4 >120	1 <120

Table 3-1 Cambridgeshire Summary

The Cambridgeshire Domesday Book follows the usual organizational structure of GDB: it commences with a description of the borough of Cambridge, followed by the lands of the king and his tenants-in-chief in order of status. The shire of Cambridgeshire benefits from additional details given in two satellite versions: *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* and *Inquisitio Eliensis*.³⁵

The Cambridgeshire table requires further clarification. I have distinguished and separated from the overall figures two significant landholders in the shire. As neither have any equal in the other five shires direct comparison would be difficult without their removal. The first is the Abbey of Chatteris, included here for its English abess and community in 1066, the latter presumably still largely English in 1086.³⁶ Chatteris has been listed separately in the summary table since each instance for the abbey actually refers to an unknown number of women. The second landholder, Eadgifu the Fair, although an individual, had at least 83 entries in Domesday Book, so many that she skews the figures awkwardly, making them hard to interpret.³⁷ The estate of Eadgifu the Fair is exceptionally complex, with numerous tenants and estates of many

³⁵ ICC and IE.

³⁶ GDB fol. 193a; unfortunately we do not know the name of the abess of 1086; the entries for the Abbey of Chatteris specify the holdings of the abess from those of the nuns, and those of the church; this arrangement may simply be stylistic on behalf of the scribe, but may also reflect a deeper significance: it is possible that the income derived from the abbey's different estates had originally been granted for the maintenance of distinct elements and personnel within the abbey.

³⁷ For Eadgifu the Fair, see Chapter 4.

commended men. The next chapter will deal with her alone – merited by her significance and the questions she raises.³⁸

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Ælflæd (GDB fol. 198b):³⁹ 1 entry: 1 individual

Gode (GDB fols 193b and c), Golde (GDB 201a):⁴⁰ 9 entries: 1 individual

Godgifu (GDB fols 194b; 202a): 2 entries: probably 2 individuals

Leofflæd (GDB fol. 195b):⁴¹ 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofgifu (GDB fols 194b; 194d):⁴² 2 entries: 1 individual based on estate size, proximity, a tenant of Eadgifu the Fair, both estates passed to Count Alan of Brittany

nn., almswoman (GDB fol. 201b),⁴³ ICC 113 has *Saloua* (Swealgifu):⁴⁴ 1 entry: 1 individual

Sægifu (GDB fols 196c and d): 3 entries: 1 individual covers all 3 entries

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1086

Wulfgifu (GDB fol. 196c): 2 entries: 1 individual based on proximity, size, and successor – Richard, son of Count Gilbert

³⁸ Please note that these figures do not reconcile with PASE, which used Peter Clarke's otherwise essential table of *Non-Earlish Estates Over £40*, in Clarke, *The English Nobility*, app. 2 (pp. 273-79).

³⁹ Note *ICC*, 58 calls her *Lefleda*, possibly Leofflæd.

⁴⁰ Chapter 6, Section 1.2 gives full details on how a single individual identification for Gode and Golde can be justified.

⁴¹ May also be the freeman referred to in the preceding Domesday entry.

⁴² *ICC* has *Lefhese*.

⁴³ *Una prebendaria*.

⁴⁴ Fei., ON *Sualeva/Svala*, p. 378, Jen., Sc *Svala*, p. 273, not listed in Okasha.

3.2.3 Huntingdonshire

Instances		Named		Individuals		Size of Holdings	
1066	86	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86
9	9	6	6	6	5	4 <120	1 <120
						1 >120	2 >120

Table 3-2 Huntingdonshire Summary⁴⁵

DB Huntingdonshire commences with a description of the Borough of Huntingdon, followed by a list of the county's tenants-in-chief, before moving to the accounts of the land of the king. After the lands of the tenants-in-chief it finishes with a section that distinguishes the *Terra Tainorum Regis* (King's thegns), that is those pre-1066 thegns who were still holding some of their lands in 1086. Unlike Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire below, have separate chapters for the declarations or disputes (*clamores*), here beginning 'dicunt homines qui juraverunt in Hundedune' on a new folio.⁴⁶

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Burhwig⁴⁷ (GDB fol. 295d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Hungifu (*Hunef/Hunneve*)⁴⁸ (GDB fols 203a; 206d; 208a): 3 entries: 1 individual based on proximity, descent of estates to Countess Judith, and her relationship with Gos.

Golde* (GDB fols 206b; 207b): 2 entries: 1 individual based on repeated relationship with her son Wulfric.

Beorhtgifu (GDB fol. 207b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofu (*Leua*) (GDB fol. 207a): 1 entry: 1 individual

⁴⁵ Please note that there is overlap on the types of entries and where they appear in Domesday Book.

⁴⁶ GDB fol. 208a; declarations over disputed holdings were made by Domesday jurors in open court sessions.

⁴⁷ DB Hunts. has *Bului*, Fei. pp. 211-12 suggests OE Burhwig(?); also see below n. 30.

⁴⁸ For Hungifu, see Chapter 7, Section 7.6.

Leofgifu (GDB fol. 208a): 1 entry: individual

*individuals who are mentioned in both 1066 and 1086

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1086

Golde*⁴⁹ (GDB fol. 207c): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., sister of Tosti of Sawtry (GDB fol. 208c): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Ælfric the Sheriff (GDB fol. 203a):⁵⁰ 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., Alwine's wife (GDB fol. 207c): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfwynn⁵¹ (GDB fols 204d; 205b): 5 entries: 1 individual based on rare Domesday

Book name

3.2.4 Lincolnshire

Instances		Named		Individuals		Size of Holdings	
1066	86	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86
34	8	33	3	19	8	3 <120	4 <120
						12 >120	3 >120

Table 3-3 Lincolnshire Summary

The Lincolnshire text itself is very detailed and more similar in the amount of information provided to the unedited LDB accounts of the East Anglian shires than the other counties of GDB. The Lincolnshire DB commences with an account of the City of Lincoln and the boroughs of Stamford and Torksey. It then includes a list of those in Lincolnshire who had sac and soc, toll and theam, in other words full jurisdictional rights, followed by the more usual list of tenants-in-chief. Included amongst the holders of jurisdictional rights are the names of three or four English women, who appear to

⁴⁹ For Golde, see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1.

⁵⁰ Possibly sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Ælfric Godricsone (before 1086) for which see Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 29 and for his wife, Leofgifu, see Section 7.5 below.

⁵¹ DB Hunts. has *Lunen* which I have transcribed as OE (f) Wulfwynn (compare Okasha, p. 54, *Wluuen*); however, it could just as easily represent OE (f) Ealuwynn.

have been the heads of influential families of lagemen (lawmen). After the chapters given for the lands of the King and his tenants-in-chief, the Lincolnshire DB finishes with the lands of the King's thegns. An appendix containing a section on the *clamores* closes the Lincolnshire folios.⁵²

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Ælfgifu (GDB fol. 349d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Æthelgyth⁵³ (GDB fol. 368a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Ælswith the nun (GDB fol. 337d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Beorhtgifu^{54*} (GDB fols 359a; 371a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Bothild (GDB fols 366a; 365d): 1 entry as Bothild, 1 entry as Enar's stepmother:⁵⁵ 1

individual based on shared descent to Odo the Crossbowman

Cwenleofu (GDB fol. 364d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Cwenthryth the nun (GDB fol. 370c): 1 entry: 1 individual

Eadgifu (GDB fols 357a; 363a), identified as Eadgifu the Fair:⁵⁶ 4 entries: 1 individual

Eadgifu (GDB fols 353b; 362b, c): 6 entries: 2 individuals based on descent of estates to

either Erneis de Buron or Ralph Mortimer

Eadgifu mother of Godric (GDB fol. 336a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Edith, Queen (GDB fols 337a, d; 338b, d; 339a): 8 entries: 1 individual

Gytha (GDB fol. 369b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leodflæd (GDB fol. 368c): 1 entry: 1 individual

⁵² GDB fol. 371 has the last of the Lincolnshire tenants, fol. 372 is blank, fols 373a-374a have the Yorkshire *clamores*, fol. 374b is blank. On fol. 375a the Lincolnshire *clamores* begin with 'Clamores quæ sunt in SUDTREDING Lincoiæ'.

⁵³ For Æthelgyth, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁴ For Beorhtgifu, see Chapter 6, Section 6.1.

⁵⁵ Identified as the same individual based on the shared antecessorship for Odo the Crossbowman.

⁵⁶ For Eadgifu the Fair, see Chapter 4.

Leofflæd (GDB fol. 357c): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofgifu (GDB fol. 371c): 1 entry: 1 individual

Skjaldvor mother of Rothulfr (GDB fol. 337a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Swealgifu mother of Azur (GDB fol. 337a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfgifu (GDB fol. 376d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1086

Beorhtgifu* (GDB fol. 371a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofgifu* (GDB fol. 371c): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., mother of Wulfric Wilde's wife (GDB fol. 341a) 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Siward the priest* (GDB fol. 336b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Wulfgeat* (GDB fol. 341a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Wulfric Wilde* (GDB fol. 341a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., Wulfgeat's sister, relative of Arnbiorn (GDB fol. 376d): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfflæd*, mother of Wulfgeat (GDB fol. 376d): 1 entry: 1 individual

3.2.5 Essex

Instances		Named		Individuals		Size of Holdings	
1066	86	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86
72	7	52	7	41	6	19 <120	4 <120
						22 >120	2 >120

Table 3-4 Essex Summary

Instances		Named		Individuals		Size of Holdings	
1066	86	1066	86	1066	86	1066	86
4	30	3	29	4	≥15	2 x 1 <i>domus</i>	5 x 1 <i>domus</i>
						2 x 3 <i>domus</i>	10 x 1+ <i>domus</i>

Table 3-5 Colchester Summary

Most GDB shires begin with the shire town and the lands of the King but LDB Essex has the borough of Colchester at the end and in much more detail.

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Ælfgifu (LDB fols 80a; 100a): 2 entries: 2 individuals

Ælfgyth (LDB fol. 72a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Ælfthryth (LDB fol. 9b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Ælwynn (LDB fol. 42a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Æthelgyth⁵⁷ (LDB fols 30b; 31a; 69a, b; 71a): 5 entries: 1 individual

Beorhtgifu⁵⁸ (LDB fols 42b; 55a): 2 entries: 1 individual

Dove (LDB fols 36a; 102a): 2 entries: 1 individual based on proximity and rare name

Eadgifu (LDB fols 12b; 27b; 31b; 36a): 4 entries: 1 individual

Eadgifu the Fair⁵⁹ (LDB fols 7b; 12b; 35a): 6 entries: 1 individual

Edith, Queen (LDB fols 27a; 54a; 87a): 5 entries: 1 individual

Goddæ (LDB fol. 42b): 1 entry: 1 individual, probably same woman as Goda in

Colchester 1086, based on association with Swein of Essex

Godgyth (LDB fols 13a; 60a): 2 entries: 2 individuals – a common name and nothing to

suggest any link between the two

Godgifu (LDB fol. 102): 1 entry: 1 individual

Goti/Gothild (LDB fols 54b; 55b; 56a): 6 entries: 1 individual based on *Goti* being a

hypocharistic version of *Gothild* and the shared descent of estates

Leofcild (LDB fols 43a; 79a; 102a): 3 entries: but possibly 2 individuals based on an

⁵⁷ For Æthelgyth, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁸ For Beorhtgifu, see Section 6.1.

⁵⁹ For Eadgifu the Fair, see Chapter 4.

unusual name and comparative size of two of the estates; all the estates are in south Essex but are still at some distance, so geographical proximity arguments are not conclusive; however all entries do show involvement by various sheriffs suggesting the vulnerability of all these holdings

Leofdæg⁶⁰ (LDB fol. 57b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofgifu (LDB fols 24a; 40b; 56a; 69a): 4 entries: possibly four individuals based on the name being quite common and all 4 estates descending variously. However, there is still a Leofgifu burgess of Colchester in 1086 and it is to be noted that all these 1066 estates cluster around Colchester.

Leofgyth (LDB fol. 62a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofhild (LDB fol. 57b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Mærwynn (LDB fol. 94b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., 2 free girls (LDB fol. 81b): 2 individuals

nn., freewomen (LDB fols 22a; 27a; 29a; 36b; 69b; 82a; 103a): 8 entries: 8 individuals

nn., 2 sisters of Wulfwine (LDB fol. 41a): 2 individuals

nn., wife of Scalpi (LDB fol. 59a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tova-hild: (LDB fol. 102b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfgifu* wife of Finn (LDB fol. 98a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1086⁶¹

Ælfgyth* (LDB fol. 45b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Eadgifu, wife of Edward son of Swein⁶² (LDB fol. 98b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Gladgifu⁶³ (LDB fol. 37a): 1 entry: 1 individual

⁶⁰ This name can be m/f; for further discussion see Section 7.3.1.

⁶¹ Colchester identifications in this section are dealt with detail Section 7.3.1.

⁶² For Eadgifu, wife of Edward son of Swein, see Section 8.4.

⁶³ Note that I have transcribed Gladiou as OE Gladgifu.

Leofcild*⁶⁴ (LDB fol. 102a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wigburh⁶⁵ (LDB fol. 82b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfgifu*⁶⁶ wife of Finn: (LDB fols 98a and b): 2 entries: 1 individual

3.2.6 Norfolk

Instances			Named			Individuals			Size of Holdings		
1066	75	86	1066	75	86	1066	75	86	1066	75	86
53	2	11	29	0	3	31	2	11	14 <120	2 <120	6 <120
									17 >120		3 >120

Table 3-6 Norfolk Summary

The Norfolk return follows the usual LDB order, commencing with the lands of the king, succeeded by those of his tenants-in-chief. It concludes with the annexations (*Invasiones*) but these are preceded by two sections for the king's freemen, first in fol. 272a are the 'liberi homines t[empore] e[dwardi] r[egis] ad nullam firma [sic] pertinentes quos Almarus custodit qui additi sunt ad firmam t r W'. Then, fol. 272b '1....sunt homines liberi regis'. The entry for the borough of Norwich and also that for Thetford are included close to the beginning within the king's lands.

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Ælfgifu (LDB fols 160b; 161a, b; 162a; 167a): 5 entries: 1 individual based on shared descent of estates to William de Warenne

Ælflæd (LDB fols 128a; 161a): 2 entries: 2 individuals

⁶⁴ This name can be m/f; I have opted for female in this case because ThLV has two examples of females with this name in East Anglia. The involvement of the sheriff in this individual's estates gives weight to the suggestion that Leofcild may be female.

⁶⁵ *Wibga* probably OE (f) *Wigburg* as in Okasha, p. 51.

⁶⁶ For Wulfgifu, wife of Finn, see Section 8.3.

Æthelgyth⁶⁷ (LDB fols 230b; 250b; 251a; 252a; 263a): 12 entries: 1 individual based on shared descent of estates to Ralph Baynard

Beorhtflæd (LDB fol. 210b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Brode⁶⁸ (LDB fol. 164a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Ealdthryth (LDB fol. 174a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Mærwynn (LDB fol. 247b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Modgifu (LDB fol. 149b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., *femina* (LDB fol. 218a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., freewomen (LDB fols 125a; 126b; 158b; 174b; 177a; 188a; 196; 203b; 229b; 262b; 277b): 13 entries: 10 individuals – some individuals can be presumed by their commendation.

nn., *quædam pauper monial* (LDB fol. 264a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., *quondam/quædam feminae* (LDB fols 137a; 199b; 232a): 3 entries: 3 individuals

nn., Stigand's sister (LDB fol. 116a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Bishop Æthelmær (LDB fol. 195a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Earl Ralph (LDB fols 168a; 217b; 244a): 3 entries: 1 individual

nn., wife of 1 freeman (LDB fol. 278a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Olova (LDB fol. 232a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tove⁶⁹ (LDB fol. 202b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfflæd (LDB fol. 175b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfrun (LDB fol. 267b): 2 entries: 1 individual based on descent of estates to Wulfrun the Crossbowman

⁶⁷ For Æthelgyth, see Chapter 5.

⁶⁸ *brode* is OE (f) for brood, foetus, or hatching, I have, therefore, assumed that this individual is probably a woman.

⁶⁹ DB Norfolk has *Touu*, but compare Okasha, p. 50 Tove (*Toua*) (f).

Initial Identification: 1086

Ealdgyth of Wells⁷⁰ (LDB fol. 271a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Modgifu* (LDB fol. 149): 1 entry: 1 individual

Oia (LDB fol. 128a) 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., daughter of Payne (LDB fol. 264a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., *feminae* (LDB fol. 117a) 2 entries: 2 individuals

nn., freewomen (LDB fols 174b; 203b): 4 entries: 4 individuals

nn., wife of one freeman (LDB fol. 201b): 1 entry: 1 individual

3.2.7 Suffolk

Landholders	Instances			Named			Individuals			Size of Holdings	
	1066	75	86	1066	75	86	1066	75	86	1066	86
	154	1	47	129	1	16	71	1	10	52 <120 19 >120	8 <120 2 <120
Bury nuns			28			0			28		

Table 3-7 Suffolk Summary

The last shire of LDB and hence of the whole Domesday Book is Suffolk. The lands of the king are followed by his tenants-in-chief, after which is a unique section for the vavassors which comes before one for the king's freemen. Finally there is a chapter of annexations (*Invasiones super regem*) but also another specifically for the disputes between the Bishop of Bayeux and Robert Malet's mother (LDB fol. 450a). The major Suffolk borough of Ipswich is entered within the lands of the king

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1066

Ælfgifu (LDB fols 320b; 334b; 335a; 385b): 6 entries: 2 individuals based on same

⁷⁰ For Ealdgyth of Wells, see Section 8.2.

commended lords, Northman and Eadric, and Abbot of Ely, respectively, and descent of estates to Roger Bigod, and Ely

Ælfgyth (LDB fol. 435a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Ælflæd (LDB fols 307a; 309a; 321b; 348a; 350b; 351a; 415b): 9 entries: 3 individuals based on their patronage, and descent of estates to Robert Malet, Roger de Poitou, and Ralph Baynard

Ælfric's mother (LDB fol. 309a): 1 entry: 1 individual but on the basis of very close proximity of estates may be one of the Ælflæds' mentioned above

Ælfwynn (LDB fol. 308b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Æthelgifu, Countess/mother of Earl Morcar: (LDB fols 286b; 373b): 3 entries: 1 individual

Æthelgyth⁷¹ (LDB fols 413b; 415b): 2 entries: 1 individual based on descent of estates to Ralph Baynard

Asmoth: (LDB fols 299b; 312b): 2 entries: 1 individual based on unusual name

Beorhtflæd (LDB fol. 309b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Cwengifu (LDB fols 369b; 424b): 5 entries: 1 individual based rare name, repeated identity of son and descent of estates to Ranulf, brother of Ilger

Eadgifu the Fair⁷² (LDB fols 284b; 285a; 286a; 295a, b; 296a; 397a; 410a; 430b; 431a): 25 entries: 1 individual

Eadhild (LDB fols 296b; 344a): 2 entries: 1 individual based on fairly uncommon name in DB and proximity of estates

Ealdgyth (LDB fols 442a; 446a): 2 entries: 2 individuals with no apparent linkage

Edith, Queen (LDB fols 290a; 332a; 421a; 426a; 433a, b; 448b): 11 entries: 1 individual

Giefu (LDB fol. 325b): 1 entry: 1 individual

⁷¹ For Æthelgyth, see Chapter 5.

⁷² For Eadgifu the Fair, see Chapter 4.

Goda⁷³ (LDB fols 313a; 333b; 334b; 339a; 340a; 341b; 342a, b; 334b; 396a): 13 entries:

2 individuals

Godgifu (LDB fols 340b; 354b; 391b; 443b): 4 entries: 4 individuals

Leofcwen (LDB fol. 419a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofflæd (LDB fols 290b; 342a; 433a): 3 entries: 3 individuals

Leofgifu (LDB fols 372b; 378b; 387a; 411b; 446b): 5 entries: 5 individuals

Leofwaru (LDB fol. 396b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leohtgifu (LDB fol. 383a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Mawa (LDB fol. 419b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Menliofu (LDB fol. 419a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Milde (LDB fol. 419a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Modgifu (LDB fol. 354b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Modgifu of Colcarr (LDB fol. 313a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., freewomen (LDB fols 292a; 326b; 332a; 335a; 347b; 353a; 379b; 386b; 405b;

408a; 448b): 12 entries: 11 individuals – can distinguish one woman from the rest who was under the patronage of the same lord; she may also be

Asmoth above based on the vicinity of estates, her commended lord, Northman, and successor Roger Bigod

nn., wife of Æthelric (LDB fol. 360b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Alsige (LDB fol. 444b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Blæcman (LDB fol. 313a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Eadweald (LDB fol. 347a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Edmund the priest (LDB fol. 431b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wife of Lustwine (LDB fol. 315a): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., wives of freemen (LDB fols 300a; 306b; 309a; 413a): 4 entries: 4 individuals

⁷³ For Æthelgyth, see Chapter 5.

although two wives were under patronage of Halfdane, and may be one and the same

Stanflæd (LDB fol. 341a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tele (LDB fol. 420a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tette⁷⁴ (LDB fol. 322b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tudeflæd⁷⁵ (LDB fol. 297b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfflæd (LDB fol. 395b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfgifu (LDB fols 298a; 321a, b; 322b; 323a, b; 330b; 424a): 18 entries: 4 individuals,
one of whom was Wulfgifu mother of Robert Malet with 14 entries

Wulfwaru (LDB fols 303b; 419a): 2 entries; 1 individual based on fairly uncommon name in DB

Initial Identification of Individuals: 1086

Ælfgyth (LDB fol. 435b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Bothild (LDB fol. 448b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Edith (LDB fol. 446b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofgifu (LDB fol. 446b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Leofsidu (LDB fol. 446b): 1 entry: 1 individual

nn., 2 freewomen (LDB fol. 286a): 2 entries: 2 individuals

nn., 1 wife (LDB fol. 321a): 1 entry: 1 individual

Seaxleofu⁷⁶ (LDB fol. 446b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Tofa-hildr* (LDB fol. 446b): 1 entry: 1 individual

Wulfgifu/mother of Robert Malet (LDB fols 320b; 321a, b; 323b): 9 entries: 1

⁷⁴ DB Suffolk has *Teit*, cf. Okasha, p. 49 Tette.

⁷⁵ DB Suffolk has *Tutplet*, compare Okasha, p. 50 Tudeflæd.

⁷⁶ DB Suffolk has *Saxlef*.

individual (nb. Wulfifu has one other entry which can only be assigned to an interim date, probably *c.* 1075)

3.3 Discussion

There can be no doubt that the raw statistics given above suggest that there was a dramatic but not unsurprising reduction in the numbers of English women holding land from 1066 to 1086. When the figures from the six counties of this thesis are totalled together the instances of English women holding land in Domesday Book reduce by 75% from 1066 to 1086, and although the number of estimated individuals who held land does not reduce as dramatically, there is still a 46% reduction in roughly identifiable individual English women holding land. There is agreement among scholars that Domesday Book probably under-records English landholders. Whilst no-one doubts that there were some catastrophic changes and declines in English landholding at this time, it would be unwise to rely on Domesday evidence to estimate the size of that diminution.⁷⁷ In general the argument has been conducted in a gender-blind way – it has normally been discussed in relation to men, but my own figures which show a comparable collapse, would suggest that we may need to consider the impact of the same factors in relation to women.

Until further work is done across Domesday it is impossible to know how my figures compare with those for other regions of England. However, it is possible to compare and contrast against each other the figures of the six counties within this project. First impressions suggest a major difference between the GDB and LDB counties on

⁷⁷ For the classic discussion, see Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, especially Chapter Four, ‘Survivors’, pp. 71-97, and particularly, pp. 71-76 and p. 96; see also Peter Sawyer, ‘1066-1086: A Tenurial Revolution?’ in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. by Peter Sawyer, and Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th ser., 15, pbk edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 107-44, who both dispute the extent of the tenurial revolution as implied by the figures from Domesday Book; all three consider that Domesday Book actually masks the number of English undertenants in 1086.

numbers of individual women landholders alone: compare Cambridgeshire: 9 in 1066:1 in 1086, Huntingdonshire: 6 in 1066: 5 in 1086, and Lincolnshire 19 in 1066: 8 in 1086, to Essex 45 in 1066: 21 in 1086, Norfolk 31 in 1066: 11 in 1086, and Suffolk 71 in 1066: 38 in 1086. A cursory glance suggests that the difference is found between the forms of record in GDB and LDB. However, the rate at which individual female landholding reduced in GDB Lincolnshire (58%) is comparable with that of LDB Essex (53%), Norfolk (65%) and Suffolk (46%). This correlation may be a reflection of Lincolnshire's similarities, both economic and social, with its fenland neighbours, or it might be an indication that the Lincolnshire return had more in common with the East Anglian circuit than the counties of GDB.⁷⁸ It is of course necessary to factor in the relative size of these counties; Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire are simply much smaller in area than the other four counties of this project, which are amongst the largest.

Overall figures from Domesday are notoriously unreliable but the reduction in individual English women holding land – even for Lincolnshire and LDB an average of 55% – is too great to not be significant. The influence of Domesday's idiosyncrasies on these figures should be acknowledged. These statistics highlight all the problems of identifying the English in Domesday Book and especially those of identifying English women in Domesday Book. There is no doubt that there are more women to be recovered, but the likely number would not be great enough to have any significant bearing on the overall figures which illustrate the decline of the English woman landholder. These statistics also throw up questions about whether Domesday Book gives a full picture of the English landholders, men or women, for 1066, or especially 1086. The low number of women in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire is worrying –

⁷⁸ But note the integration in the record of the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire *clamores* in the final draft of Domesday Book, see above.

but there is considerable evidence in both these counties for the activities of rapacious sheriffs to whom the estates of women were particularly vulnerable. Williams says that whole layers of English society were not considered relevant to the findings of Domesday, or at least to GDB.⁷⁹ It is evident that the LDB counties are unique in the large numbers of freemen that they include – ‘a high percentage’ in Norfolk and ‘a very high percentage’ in Suffolk, though not so many in Essex.⁸⁰ That many of the women who have been collated from these two counties were freemen is a factor of this; would we see many more women throughout DB if other circuits recorded freemen?

These brute statistics hide the complicated procedures which lay behind them. Not least are the ‘messy’ problems around whether names can be identified as female or how to determine the number of women who held the same name. Another area of obfuscation is caused by several women who are included in this research holding land in more than one county. It is necessary to take into account how the county totals above conceal the overlapping of some individuals; because of the nature of Domesday it is customary to work within counties but in reality some women held land across county boundaries, or indeed in several neighbouring counties. For élite English women this is easier to spot but without extensive case studies lesser women who held land across county boundaries can be missed. For example, in the course of this research women with the rare female name Mærwynn appeared in both Norfolk and Essex; although it would seem unlikely to be the same woman holding estates 75 miles apart, can we be sure? PASE would say categorically that there can be no link here but case studies in the second part of this thesis reveal women with land held over great distances.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 80.

⁸⁰ Darby, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England* (pp. 374-75).

⁸¹ ‘Research Methodology’, PASE.

On the face of it, once an English woman is identified it should be easy to work out whether she held land in 1066, 1086, or both. Ostensibly Domesday entries give information for two points, allowing for straightforward comparison. However, as with all things Domesday, this is not always so obvious. There are times when Domesday gives data for 1086, and nothing for 1066, as in many urban entries which only list the burgesses of 1086 irrespective of whether they were the same as those who held in 1066. And of course there is sometimes the corollary – details given for 1066 but not for 1086. Furthermore many LDB entries also refer to interim time points between 1066 and 1086 when holdings have been transferred. These are mainly, but not always connected to the regional upheaval caused by the Rebellion of the Earls. In this respect there are several examples relating to the forfeiture of land by Earl Ralph in 1075. Domesday Book entries which refer to English women holding at some interim point have been listed separately in the county summary tables.

The large number of English women who remain unnamed, or who are grouped together as several freemen or sokemen, makes it usually impossible to tell whether the same women were holding in 1086 as 1066. However, where individuals have been identified, it has been possible to total survivors from 1066 and those whose holdings were created post-1066. Over the whole research area a total of twelve English women from the initial 181 who were holding in 1066 appear to still be holding at least some of their land. The figure of 30 English women who appear as new tenants in 1086 represent to some extent the widows and daughters of the old élite. It is, nonetheless, an important figure, which may indicate that for some English women the aftermath of 1066 provided opportunities and not merely losses. That possibility needs to be further explored.

It is evident that the nuances and significance of many of these raw statistics would benefit from further untangling. The prosperity of an élite few, women like Eadgifu the

Fair, whose estates were so numerous that it became necessary to account for her separately, suggests that they would repay individual research. Those few women who survive with estates intact across 1066, and some into 1086, are intriguing. How did they survive successfully? Were they unique? As well as the more notable and successful individuals, this preliminary research has highlighted interesting groupings and categories of English women in 1086. Who were the many women with urban holdings, not least in the borough of Colchester? What can they tell us about survival in the new Norman towns? And how do they compare with their rural sisters? It has also become apparent that the women of East Anglia and the Fens and their landholding were not just affected by the result of the Battle of Hastings but by the turmoil of a series of rebellions which were felt particularly in this region, as for example the resistance of Hereward the Wake and the Fall of Ely in 1071, the treason of Waltheof Earl of Huntingdon, and the Revolt of the Earls in 1075. Last but not least, the unexpected survival of three English women tenants-in-chief in 1086 in East Anglia makes the exploration of their lives imperative.

For all their problems, the brute statistics which an overview of English women in Domesday reveals raise many questions and suggest many possibilities. They also point up the need for detailed case-studies of individuals to pursue these. The next chapter will focus on Eadgifu the Fair, the major English woman landholder in East Anglia and the Fens, in 1066, if not 1086, and the obvious starting point.

Chapter 4 Eadgifu the Fair¹

There can hardly be a more enigmatic female from the late Anglo-Saxon era than the woman of this first case study, so the fact that she has been little studied is somewhat surprising. It is fair to say that through Domesday Book we know more of Eadgifu the Fair's land-holdings and estates than we do of her as a woman. In 1066 she was the largest female landholder in the eastern counties of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk and, in fact, one of the wealthiest throughout the whole survey. Meyer has calculated that her total estate accounted for almost 36,000 acres of land that stretched across at least five counties.² That Eadgifu the Fair has been selected to be the first case study of this thesis is not of course accidental; in many ways she embodies just the sort of woman we need to know more about in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest.³ I have chosen Eadgifu the Fair as a pivotal case study both to exemplify the problems highlighted in the previous two chapters and to demonstrate how they can be tackled – especially by the means of a case study, which is central to my methodology. Eadgifu the Fair has a considerable presence in Domesday and the analysis of her landholdings demonstrates that she may have been more influential than has hitherto been supposed.

4.1 Identification

4.1.1 Name

This work has already referred to the many problems to be found when trying to identify the English in Domesday: Eadgifu is no different and initial impressions suggest that she might indeed be one of the most difficult cases. The problems begin

¹ Please note that a version of this case study is forthcoming in *Anglo-Saxon Women: A Florilegium*, ed. by Emily Butler, Irina Dumitrescu and Hilary E. Fox.

² Meyer, 'Women's Estates in Later Anglo-Saxon England' (p. 124).

³ Ann Williams, 'Eadgifu [Eddeua] the Fair [the Rich] (fl. 1066)', *ODNB*.

with her name, and the possible confusion of it in Domesday Book. Eadgifu (OE *ead*, neuter noun ‘prosperity’+ OE *giefu*, feminine noun ‘gift’⁴) was not only one of the most popular choices for girls in late Anglo-Saxon England, but it also shared similar sounding elements with two other common female names – *Eadgyth* (OE *ead*, neuter noun ‘prosperity’+ OE *gyð*, presumably OE *guð*, feminine noun ‘battle’⁵) and *Ealdgyth* (OE *eald*, adjective ‘old’ + OE *gyð*, presumably OE *guð*, feminine noun ‘battle’⁶). Fortunately for us, the Domesday scribes do seem to have tried to differentiate the three names.

Nevertheless, the orthography they employed varies and the same name could be spelt several different ways on one page. The three name forms are usually spelt according to a phonetic transcription which generally allows for the right name to be recognized. *Eadgyth* is usually transcribed as disyllabic – with the first element *Ead-*, *Ed-*, or *Edd-* followed by a second element of *-iet*, *-ied*, or *-it*, *-id*. *Ealdgyth* is rendered in a similar way but with the addition of an “l” in the first element, as *Eld-*, *Æld-* or *Ald-*. But, the name Eadgifu is given a trisyllabic rendering, such as *Ædiva*, where the final element *-gifu* is represented by *-eva* or *-iva*.⁷ Thus even though Feilitzen made the point that the names *Eadgyth* and *Eadgifu* could be confused by the scribe, this was, in fact, only occasional, and the reader is usually able to discern the name correctly, and can, therefore, differentiate Eadgifu from contemporaries such as Queen Edith, or Ealdgyth, Harold’s second wife.⁸ Nevertheless, there are many Eadgifus in Domesday – PASE lists as many as twenty-five individuals (although this figure may be on the high

⁴ Okasha, pp. 58 & 64.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For example, usual versions of these three names found in Domesday Book: 1) Ealdgyth in GDB fols 442a: *Al̄deda* and 446a: *Al̄did*; 2) Eadgifu is usually shown as in LDB fol. 12b: *Edeva*, and in GDB fol. 7d: *Eddeva*, but also, as GDB fol. 410a: *Edive*, and 3) Edith, generally as in GDB fol. 8a: *Eddid*, but occasionally seen with an *-ied* or *-iet*, as *Ediet*.

⁸ Fei., pp. 229-32, 240-41.

side) – which makes the identification of individual women difficult but essential.⁹ In these circumstances all the methods of Domesday identification need to be employed.

4.1.2 Epithets

It is remarkable that, relatively unusually, a number of different epithets or by-names are attached to the name ‘Eadgifu’ in Domesday, including the Latin *pulchra* (beautiful) and its French synonym *bella*, but also the Latin *dives* (rich), and a latinized form of the Old English *fæger*. Is it possible that these could aid the identification process? Can we identify a special Eadgifu or Eadgifu who held these rare Domesday epithets? Let us start with an analysis of where these bynames occur. The counties of Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire are all in Circuit Three, and all contain several examples where a woman called Eadgifu is given the appellation of *pulchra*.

In Buckinghamshire all instances of *Edeva* are accompanied by the epithet *pulchra*, except for two *Edevas* who are identifiable as the wives of Sigeræd and Wulfweard. A similarly clear situation prevails in Hertfordshire where examples of *Edeva* accompanied by the epithet *pulchra* are easily differentiated from other entries which refer to *Edeva* the nun and *Edeva puella*, ‘the man of Stigand’.¹⁰

By contrast, the Domesday returns for the shire of Cambridgeshire are so liberally sprinkled with *Edevas*, many with and some without the appellation *pulchra*, that at first glance it is difficult to discern any rationale. However, one can begin to recognize a recurring pattern whereby *Edeva* is accompanied by the byname *pulchra* in the first entry of a series, or a chapter, to encompass the following entries where no epithets are given, for example, at the head of the King’s Lands, *pulchra* is inserted in a superscript to ensure that *Edeva* in all the subsequent entries is recognized as *Eadgifu pulchra*.¹¹

⁹ PASE, ‘Eadgifu’.

¹⁰ *puella* is possibly used here in the sense of ‘concubine’ or similar.

¹¹ GDB fol. 193b.

Furthermore, many *Edevas* who are given no epithet in the Cambridgeshire Domesday are given the epithet *pulchra*, and in one case *bella*, in their corresponding entries in the *ICC*.¹²

In the Suffolk Domesday returns in LDB there are no examples of *Edeva* with the appellation *pulchra* but there are several entries where *Edeva* is accompanied by the bynames *faira* or *dives*, and their usage appears to be affected by hundred.¹³ If so, it may be that the names written down by the scribe may reflect those given at the hundredal oral inquests.¹⁴ For example, *dives* is used each time an *Edeva* is mentioned with regard to land in Thedwestry Hundred and on the only occasion one is mentioned in Thingoe Hundred; in the King's Lands she is referred to as *dives* in Thedwestry but *faire* in Bosmere and Samford.¹⁵

Although we have observed the use of epithets attached to the name *Edeva* (*Eadgifu*) throughout the GDB counties of circuit three and Suffolk in LDB they are, by no means, with the above exception, applied consistently either across shire or hundreds, making it difficult to know how many women we are dealing with. Or could they – that is all the *Eadgifus* with an epithet – be the same woman? So far I have raised questions of *Eadgifu*'s identification based on naming, and in particular the clues which epithets may or may not provide. The next section aims to identify these *Eadgifus* further by using the other processes of Domesday identification, and first and foremost that of successorship.

¹² GDB fols 193b, 194a and b, 195a, 198a, 200a and b, and 201a; *ICC* 10, 11, 32, 34, 35, 42, 45, 49, 61, 64, 67, 71, 72, 73, 78, 83, 84, 53, 56, 93.

¹³ See Appendix 2.

¹⁴ For the oral testimony of the Domesday Inquests, see Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 11-35, and particularly Fleming, 'Oral Testimony'.

¹⁵ LDB fols 284b, 285a, and 410a.

4.1.3 Successors

In both the Domesday counties of Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire a woman called Eadgifu *pulchra* appears most frequently as the antecessor of Count Alan of Brittany; the *ICC* helpfully names her as Count Alan's predecessor.¹⁶ And so it seems likely that Eadgifu *pulchra* should be equated with Eadgifu *faire*, Count Alan's antecessor in Suffolk. Moreover, as Eadgifu *faire* and Eadgifu *dives* are both antecessors of William I in Suffolk it must be likely that they too are not only one and the same woman, but that they too are also Eadgifu *pulchra*.

4.1.4 One and the same

The range of epithets used to describe Eadgifu are interesting and suggestive in themselves; whatever their significance, there can be no denying that Eadgifu held a special place in the hearts and minds of the English people of Eastern England, one that is not emulated by any other woman in Domesday Book. But what were they trying to convey? Is it possible that they were all an attempt to express a single meaning? If Eadgifu was *fair* to the English-speakers who gave oral evidence in the hundredal and shire courts, then was *faire* an attempt by a Little Domesday scribe to transcribe the Old English word *fæger*, a word which Antoinette di Paolo Healey described as noble, 'a word of great amplitude', 'capturing all that is beautiful to Anglo-Saxon eyes'?¹⁷ Such an enigmatic description would have been hard to translate and scribes and transcribers rendered it variously as *pulchra*, *bella*, *faire*. One can see how *pulchra* could signify *well-favoured* rather than the more obvious *beautiful*. It is, nevertheless, difficult to

¹⁶ *ICC*, 72.

¹⁷ Also see OE Riddle no. 15, l. 31, – *hals is min hwit ond heofod fealo* – my neck is white, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977; repr. 2017), pp. 63-122; Antoinette di Paolo Healey, 'Questions of Fairness: fair, not fair, and foul', in *Unlocking the Wordhoard: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving Jr.*, ed. by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 252-73. (I am grateful to Chris Lewis for this reference).

translate *dives* without its connotation of wealth, and Eadgifu's many Domesday properties leave us with no doubt that she was indeed extremely wealthy.

It is perhaps odd that the cognomen we recognize today, *faira*, is found in only one small section of LDB, that of East Suffolk, and more precisely in the two hundreds of Bosmere and Samford.¹⁸ Although, this epithet derives from Old English *fæger*, the fact that we know her today as Eadgifu the Fair must be due in some part to the practice amongst Victorian scholars of referring to medieval 'heroines' as fair.

4.2 The Domesday Estate of Eadgifu the Fair

As with so many of the English in Domesday Book, the first problem with Eadgifu the Fair was identification, especially deciding whether all bearers of the same Old English name were the same person. By-names and epithets coupled with identification through successor have revealed a single woman holding land throughout Eastern England. The estates of that woman will now be pursued. Those same bynames and successors will now serve as guides.

4.2.1 Count Alan of Brittany

It is immediately apparent that the greatest concentration of Eadgifu the Fair's estates was in Cambridgeshire where both the majority of her holdings and those of her commended men and women transferred almost en masse to Count Alan of Brittany and may have comprised his first acquisitions in England.¹⁹ In Count Alan's return Eadgifu is his antecessor for 69 out of 82 entries, in which, although she is only called *pulchra* in six entries, it is clear that she is the *Edeva* referred to.²⁰ The *ICC* uses the epithet *pulchra* in 23 corresponding entries. Count Alan was also *Edeva pulchra*'s main

¹⁸ LDB fols 285a, 295a and 430b.

¹⁹ Keats-Rohan, 'A Question of Identity'; Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Alan Rufus (*d.* 1093)', *ODNB*.

²⁰ For Count Alan's chapter for Cambridgeshire, see GDB fols 193d-195d; for *ICC* references see note 9 above.

successor in Hertfordshire: in his Domesday chapter for Hertfordshire all his entries except one cover properties which had been held by Eadgifu or her men, including her exceptionally large 2,400-acre manor at Cheshunt.²¹

Although Count Alan received much of Eadgifu's lands in Suffolk and Essex, it was by no means all. In 1086 the majority of her Suffolk holdings were held more or less equally between Count Alan and William I, at thirteen entries each. In Count Alan's first entry for land which had been Eadgifu's she is called *Edeva faire* and thereafter as simply *Edeva*.²² In Essex although she is given no epithet at all she is instantly identifiable through her antecessorship of Count Alan who succeeded to four estates which she had held in demesne and two estates which had been held by some of her men.²³

4.2.2 William I

Eadgifu's largest estate in Cambridgeshire, 1,620 acres at Exning, was held in 1086 by Godric *dapifer* for the King.²⁴ As John of Worcester cites Exning as the site of the ill-fated wedding between Emma de Breteuil and Earl Ralph, the event which supposedly marked the beginning of the revolt of the Earls in 1075, it is clear that Exning must have initially passed to Earl Ralph.²⁵ It was not the only estate of Eadgifu's to be in the King's hands in 1086; in the King's Lands in Suffolk Domesday contains a section entitled the 'LANDS OF EARL RALPH which Godric the Steward keeps in Suffolk, in the King's hand.'²⁶ In this section the first entry is for 36 free men at Tostock who had been under the patronage of Edeva *dives*, thereafter the following thirteen entries refer

²¹ GDB fols 136d-137b.

²² LDB fols 295a and b.

²³ LDB fol. 35a.

²⁴ GDB fol. 189b.

²⁵ *Florentii Wigorniensis monachi Chronicon ex Chronicis*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols (London: English Historical Society, 1853-1868), II, 1075; the instigators of the Revolt of the Three Earls were supposed to have met and plotted their rebellion at a wedding feast held at Exning.

²⁶ LDB fol. 284b.

her as *Edeva*, *Edeva dives*, and *Edeva faira*.²⁷ If there was any doubt which Edeva was intended a final comment makes the identification secure ‘*Ex his omnibus habuit Edeva faira socam et commendatam tre.*’²⁸ In this way we now know that Eadgifu the Fair was the antecessor of Earl Ralph for estates in Suffolk which were TRW under the stewardship of Godric *dapifer*, a later sheriff of Suffolk, for William I.²⁹ Furthermore, each one of these estates had been added to the lands and revenue of the manor of Norton, which occurs twenty-one entries later, and which had been held in 1066 by an *Edied quædam libera femina*, who no doubt can also be identified as Eadgifu the Fair.³⁰

In Essex we come across an entry which relates how ‘Edeva held (Great) Sampford, later Earl Ralph (held it). Now Godric *dapifer* (holds it) as a manor in the King’s hand. The 870-acre demesne manor at Great Sampford is not immediately identifiable as an estate of Eadgifu the Fair but the repetition of the pattern we have already observed in respect to some of her Suffolk holdings, whereby some of her estates passed initially to Earl Ralph and then subsequently into the care of Godric *dapifer*, strongly suggests that it was.³¹

4.2.3 William, Bishop of London

A smaller successor of Eadgifu’s, but no less significant, was William, bishop of London. It would appear that he did not receive all his lands in the same way and that he purchased some separately for his own fief.³² As part of this acquisition he bought in Hertfordshire Eadgifu’s strategic 720-acre manor at (Bishop’s) Stortford, complete with its incumbent priest and two men-at-arms, for his caput. He also bought a smallholding

²⁷ LDB fols 284b and 285a.

²⁸ LDB fol. 285a.

²⁹ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76.

³⁰ LDB fol. 286a: note that Eadgifu the Fair left land at Norton in lænage to Bury. This does appear to be a rare example where the scribe did confuse the names Eadgifu and Edith.

³¹ LDB fol. 7b.

³² GDB fo1. 34a

at Wickham which had previously been held by a man of Eadgifu's, and possibly another small holding at Hallingbury in Essex.³³

4.2.4 Lesser Successors

Eadgifu the Fair had several other lesser successors: in Cambridgeshire some of her estates including a 100-acre manor at Caldecot along with the holdings of six of her men went to Hardwin de Scales.³⁴ It is noteworthy that he also held a small estate at Whaddon of Richard, son of Count Gilbert, which TRE had been held by Sægifu under Eadgifu the Fair but had in the interim been Earl Ralph's.³⁵ Her other Cambridgeshire successors were Guy de Raimbeaucourt who received Eadgifu's manor at Barton and the holding of one of her men; Picot, who was the sheriff of Cambridgeshire from around 1071 until at least 1086, received the small holdings of five of her men, and John son of Waleran had a further three.³⁶

In Hertfordshire two parcels of land, one at Wallington and the other at Berkesdon which had been held by sokemen of Eadgifu's, were TRW in the hands of Gosbert de Beauvais and Hardwin de Scales respectively.³⁷ Although Earl Ralph had been seised of the 24 acres at Wallington according to the Hundred, he was not seized of them on the day of his forfeiture. Fleming believes that Gosbert and Hardwin had probably been holding onto these sokelands of Eadgifu illegally.³⁸ Similarly at Great Munden where Count Alan had succeeded to Eadgifu's manor, Domesday states that Roger de Mussegros had taken away two acres of woodland for 350 pigs after Earl Ralph's

³³ GDB fol. 134a and LDB fol. 12b.

³⁴ Keats-Rohan, 'A Question of Identity' (p. 187); GDB fols 198a and b, and 199a.

³⁵ GDB fol. 196b; as the leader of the force which routed Earl Ralph, Whaddon had special significance to Richard, son of Count Gilbert, thus Hugh de Scales was reduced to subtenant for an estate which normally would have passed to him directly through his antecessor, Eadgifu the Fair.

³⁶ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 29; GDB fols 200a and b, and 201b.

³⁷ GDB fols 140d and 141d.

³⁸ Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law*, pp. 21, 174.

forfeiture.³⁹ It appears likely, therefore, that some, if not all of Eadgifu's Hertfordshire The holdings which passed to Count Alan had, at some point previously, been held by Earl Ralph.

In Buckinghamshire Eadgifu pulchra was succeeded by Earl Hugh of Chester who received Mentmore which was probably her largest Domesday estate, at 2,160 acres. Holdings of her men at Hoggeston (Payne), Soulbury, and Yardley, were acquired by William fitzAnsculf and Jocelyn the Breton.⁴⁰ In Suffolk, the Countess of Aumâle received two manors which had been held by Edeva faira: Harkstead and Gusford.⁴¹ Beyton which had been held in 1066 by a freeman of Edeva *dives* passed into the ownership of Hugh de Montfort. It is difficult to identify the Eadgifu who had held two freemen at Thurlow who TRW were in the hands of Richard, son of Count Gilbert, but as they had evidently passed in the intervening period to Earl Ralph, it is likely that she too was probably Eadgifu the Fair.⁴² This tentative identification becomes more secure when it is seen that Eadgifu the Fair herself had in fact held in 1066 an 840-acre manor at Thurlow.⁴³

4.2.5 A Great Estate and its Working

The estate of Eadgifu the Fair is impressive. In 1066 it was one of the largest lay estates in the country and according to Clarke's calculations it would have been the fourth richest non-*eorlisc* estate.⁴⁴ The next richest female in Clarke's table, in fact in 27th position, was Wulfwynn of Creslow, whose total estate was actually worth less than

³⁹ GDB fol. 137a.

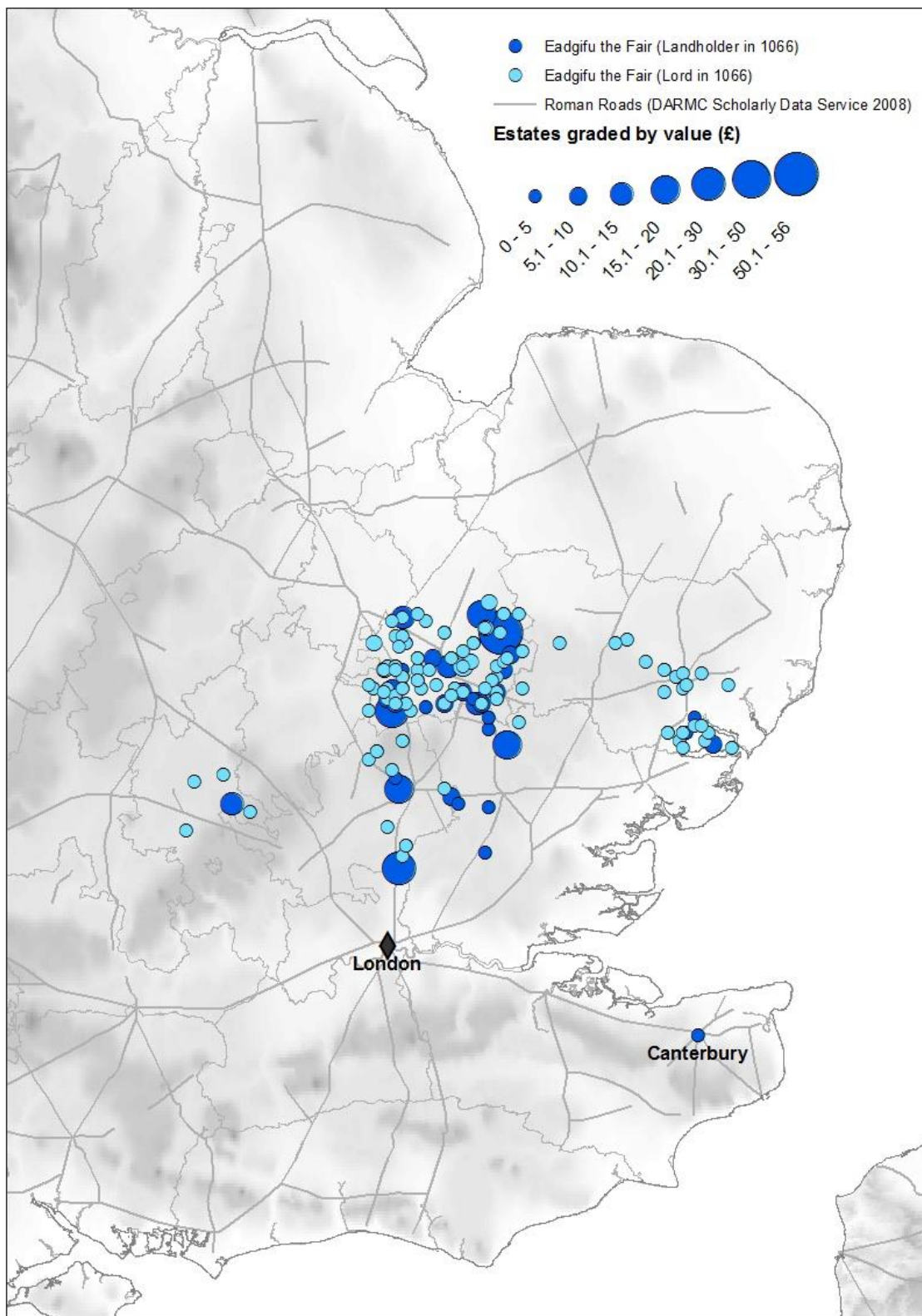
⁴⁰ GDB fols 148b and 152a.

⁴¹ LDB fols 430b and 431a.

⁴² LDB fol. 396a.

⁴³ LDB fol. 286a.

⁴⁴ For Peter Clarke's table, see Peter Clarke, *The English under Edward the Confessor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), app. 2, pp. 227-370. Note that Eadgifu the Fair is normally seen as Edith Swan Neck and, therefore, of, at least, *eorlisc* status.



Map 4-1 Holdings of Eadgifu the Fair

half of Eadgifu's. Three-fifths of Eadgifu's estate lay across much of Cambridgeshire where she held twenty-two manors in lordship. Map 4.1 shows how Eadgifu the Fair's lands were focused in north Cambridgeshire where they were surrounded by those of her commended men with whom she had strong personal bonds. After Cambridgeshire her next highest concentration of holdings was in Suffolk where she held a very localized and compact group of estates on the Shotley Peninsula, which is located between the rivers Stour and Orwell. The two together created an arc of estates extending from the south-west of Suffolk, across the centre, possibly marking a trade-route between her Cambridgeshire lands and the Suffolk ports. Her estates in Essex followed the course of Ermine Street running north from London whilst at the same time her estates in Hertfordshire followed the course of the Great North Road. That she had these routes into Cambridgeshire suggests that she had a sophisticated network for both personal travel and trade, and that her Cambridgeshire estates were central to the whole. She could not only import goods from across the North Sea and sell them at the great East Anglian fairs, but at the same time she had access to the East Anglian sea and river ports, such as Ipswich or Wherstead, from where she could transport her crops grown in the Cambridgeshire bread basket throughout the whole of England. Her lands were rich in resources such as wood, fish, and salt. The route marches between her estates made travel relatively easy throughout her lands and she could quickly reach London and other important administrative centres, as the need arose.

The 1066 estates of Eadgifu the Fair show a very prosperous woman indeed but can we gain a more detailed picture from what is known of the estate which Count Alan and her other successors received? Let us look first at two of her holdings in Hertfordshire, at Stortford and Cheshunt, which appear to have been particularly important manorial centres. At Stortford William I built one of his earliest castles, and here the Bishop of London probably took on a secular, defensive role as well as an ecclesiastical one. The

bishops of London appear to have had a prescriptive right to hold a market at Stortford, suggesting its pre-Conquest origins.⁴⁵ At the same time, Cheshunt and its outlier, Hoddesdon, has passed to Count Alan. It must have been one of Eadgifu's most prestigious estates: its Domesday description lists assets which included 33 ploughs, 41 villagers, a priest, a mill, a fishing weir, and pasture for horses. In 1086 Count Alan also held ten merchants at Cheshunt who presumably plied their trade along the side of Ermine Street which suggests that Cheshunt too was developing urban characteristics.⁴⁶

Besides the usual recording of plough-land and woodland, the Domesday returns for the Fenlands are careful to document the region's fisheries, and in particular, eel stocks; they make specific and detailed reference to fish, fishing weirs, and the rights to fishing-nets, such as at Soham. In particular the size of eel stocks was precisely recorded. Eadgifu naturally shared in this bounty; at Swavesey *de piscaria iiii millia anguillarum CCL minus*, 4,000 less 250 eels, at Exning 7,000 eels; at Soham, which had been held by Ælfsige under Eadgifu, 1,500 eels and a fishing-net in the mere; 450 eels were landed at Landbeach which was also rich in marshland, presumably salt marsh for sheep-grazing. Many of her manors in Cambridgeshire had mills; the same Ælfsige had held under Eadgifu two mills and a fishery worth 1,200 eels at Exning, and when Count Alan succeeded her at Wicken he acquired no less than three mills, 4,250 eels and three fishing nets in the mere at Soham.

Eadgifu's properties were rich in important commodities; several of her Cambridgeshire holdings provided wood, as at Whitwell and Arrington for fences (i.e. coppiced), and wood for both fences and houses at Bourne. We know that she had many mills, but we only hear mention of one salt-house, which was held by Ælfric under her jurisdiction, at Wherstead on the Shotley Peninsula. Although she probably had more

⁴⁵ VCH Herts., III, pp. 441-58.

⁴⁶ On the opposite side of the River Lee, Waltham was being developed by the bishops of Durham.

than one salt-house, if not this would have still provided plenty of salt for all her estates. The manor at Wherstead was important for transport too: Wherstead means the place by the wharfe or shore, and it was the site of a causeway which crossed the River Orwell.

Eadgifu's lands in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk are differentiated from those in LDB Essex and those in the rest of GDB by their division into lands held by men and women under Eadgifu, and her sokelands which were held by her sokemen. Amongst her many tenants in Cambridgeshire are several women: Godgifu who had held around 75 acres at Croydon, Leofgifu who had held 30 acres at the same place and 60 acres at Arrington, Gode, or Golde, mother of Wulfric, who had held a substantial manor under Eadgifu at Papworth Everard, Leofflæd who had held under her at Balsham, and Sægifu at Whaddon. This unusual concentration of female landholders appears deliberate, suggesting that Eadgifu had created a network of land-holding women. It is probable that Eadgifu used the holdings in this area to reward her female relatives and retainers. One woman whose husband, Godwine, had held for life 180 acres at Watton (at Stone) in Hertfordshire from St Peter's, Westminster, turned with force to Eadgifu the Fair, presumably knowing that she would protect her.⁴⁷

For many of her estates in Cambridgeshire Eadgifu the Fair, her tenants, and freemen had to give yearly service to the king and sheriff; they provided an onerous ten cartages and seventeen escorts in total each year for the sheriff of Cambridgeshire. She also owed four cartages and one escort, or the payment of 4d, for the king, which suggests that she had enjoyed a personal and close association with Edward the Confessor.⁴⁸

Eadgifu the Fair's demesne estates varied in size, but several were exceptionally large, notably Exning and Swavesey in Cambridgeshire, taxable for 1,620 and 1,560

⁴⁷ GDB fols 136d and 137a; in 1086 Watton at Stone was held by Godwine from Count Alan. Evidently this was not the Godwine married to the woman who was protected by Eadgifu, as he died some time before 1066; perhaps a relative, may be a son?

⁴⁸ As, for example, GDB fol. 194b.

acres respectively.⁴⁹ She held other large Cambridgeshire estates at Bassingbourn which was assessed at 885 acres, Duxford at 720 acres, and Wickham at 840 acres; in Essex, Great Sampford was assessed at 870 acres; and in Suffolk, Thurlow at 840.⁵⁰ But Cheshunt in Hertfordshire and Mentmore in Buckinghamshire dwarf all these; Cheshunt was Eadgifu's largest estate, taxable for 2,400 acres with a further 240 acres which were outlying at Hoddesdon, and at Mentmore she had held 2,160 acres.⁵¹ There can be no doubt that her appellation *dives* was an accurate description of her monetary status.

Although most of Eadgifu's property was rural, she also had urban interests. In the borough of Cambridge itself Domesday records that in 1086 Count Alan had ten burgesses who paid nothing.⁵² Most Domesday Book borough entries make no mention of the TRE holders of burgage plots but it must be likely that these particular burgesses had previously belonged to Eadgifu. We know that she had three *domus* in Hertford and ten merchants in Cheshunt.⁵³

In 1066 Eadgifu the Fair had held eight churches in Suffolk and one at Mentmore in Buckinghamshire. At Hertford, Cheshunt and Reed in Hertfordshire, although churches are not mentioned, she had held estates with attached priests, which implies the presence of churches.⁵⁴ The bones of St Ealdgyth rested at Stortford; Blair thinks that she may have been the abbess of a previously unknown minster which makes Bishop William's choice of Stortford for his *caput* more understandable.⁵⁵ Domesday Cambridgeshire is also relatively silent on churches, and only records three religious institutions in total, which, however, does give an indication of their significance. These

⁴⁹ GDB fols 189b and 195a.

⁵⁰ GDB fols 194a and b, 195d, LDB 7b, and 286a.

⁵¹ GDB fol. 137a.

⁵² GDB fol. 194a.

⁵³ GDB fols 132a and 137a.

⁵⁴ Domesday counties were not always interested in recording churches, or recording them accurately; GDB fols 132a, 137a, and 146b.

⁵⁵ John Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 495-565 (pp. 530-01).

consisted of a church at Teversham, and two minsters (*monasteria*), one at Meldreth and the other at Little Shelford, the possible resting place of St Æthelwine.⁵⁶ Although none of these were actually on Eadgifu's land they are all in villas where she and frequently also Earl Ælfgar had held land, suggesting that the estates of these two pre-Viking minsters may have been carved up and given to members of the Wessex royal family and court.⁵⁷ The pattern whereby Eadgifu holds land adjacent to those of minsters also occurs at Melbourn and Bourne.

Recent work on the Anglo-Saxon minsters of Cambridgeshire undertaken by Susan Oosthuizen has made it apparent that Eadgifu the Fair had held land not only adjacent to minster sites throughout Cambridgeshire, but also that she had held several pre-Viking minsters herself, for example at Exning, an anciently royal manor and a focus point for the veneration of the East Anglian royal saints, Æthelthryth and Wendreda, and at Soham the minster of St Felix, a dependency of Exning.⁵⁸ At Cherry Hinton she held probably rather the site of a pre-Viking nunnery than a minster.⁵⁹ However, some of her religious sites were more recent in date, as the tenth-century minsters at Swavesey and Great Abington, which probably served her lands in Chilford Hundred, and at Kirtling which had belonged to Harold II before 1066, and could have ministered to the royal estates along the East Cambridgeshire border including her own estate at Burrough Green.⁶⁰ It appears probable that Eadgifu bought the wealthy Linton holding from Ely; Linton and Hadstock, also hers, had formed together a solid geographical unit for an earlier minster estate, which, like so many other minsters, had been diminished, by the

⁵⁶ Blair, 'A Handlist' (pp. 508-09).

⁵⁷ Susan Oosthuizen, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters in South Cambridgeshire', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 90 (2001), 49-68 (p. 56).

⁵⁸ This prompted Wareham to propose an ancestry for Eadgifu stemming from the Wuffinga dynasty.

⁵⁹ Sylvia Laverton, *Shotley Peninsula: The Making of a Unique Suffolk Landscape* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), pp. 107-08, mentions a twelfth-century deed (HD 1538/420/1) which relates to land in Suffolk where *Ediva* had held 'infra monasterium de Wervesteda'. I have not been able to locate this deed.

⁶⁰ Oosthuizen, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters'.

late tenth century.⁶¹ Perhaps what otherwise seems an unexplainable sale by Ely was influenced by Eadgifu's piety as evidenced in her track record of establishing estate minsters on her lands. This was probably a very late endowment, therefore, made by Eadgifu herself. After 1086 Count Alan endowed both Swavesey and Linton as alien priories of the abbey of Sts Serge and Bacchus in Angers, and St Jacut de Mer in Brittany respectively.⁶² The fact that he had apparently initially intended Isleham for St Jacut de Mer before quickly removing his foundation to Linton, suggests that there had also been some religious institution at Isleham, another dependence of Exning.⁶³

There appears to be a most striking connection between Eadgifu's Cambridgeshire estates and evidence for late Anglo-Saxon estate minsters; Eadgifu's endowment of Linton, and perhaps Swavesey, Kirtling, and Little Abington can be seen as representative of a general trend from around 990 for the refounding or endowing of minsters by Anglo-Saxon nobles.⁶⁴ In this respect it is usual to cite the exemplary examples of Earl Leofric and Countess Godgifu (Godiva) at Leominster, Wenlock, Stow, and Chester, but Eadgifu's patronage appears no less remarkable, just less recorded.⁶⁵ Although it was usual for someone of Eadgifu's status to have estate minsters it is significant that she acquired such long-established and valuable

⁶¹ Warwick Rodwell, 'The Battle of Assandun and its Memorial Church: A Reappraisal', in *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact*, ed. by J. Cooper (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 127-58, suggested Hadstock as a candidate for Cnut's minster built to celebrate his victory at Assandun.

⁶² Susan Oosthuizen, pers. comm.

⁶³ Mon. Ang., VI, pp. 1001-02

⁶⁴ John Blair, 'Introduction: From Minster to Parish Church' in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* ed. by John Blair, OUCA Monographs, 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 6. For an alternative viewpoint, David Stocker, pers. comm. and David Stocker and Paul Everson, *Summoning St Michael: Early Romanesque Towers in Lincolnshire* (Oxford: Oxbow Publications, 2006), who consider that secular patronage of churches at this date has been greatly over-stated, and that the laity were merely fulfilling the requests of the clergy.

⁶⁵ Stephen Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 182-88.

properties.⁶⁶ Indeed it must be likely that Eadgifu held many more churches and perhaps early and late Anglo-Saxon minsters which fail to appear in Domesday because of their lack of independent rights or endowments.⁶⁷

Blair has commented that it may well have been difficult to distinguish between a private minster and a group of household priests. Eadgifu's patronage certainly extended to religious personnel who may have served at her institutions and Domesday Book introduces us to some of them including several unnamed priests, as at Hertford and Cheshunt, but Leofing the Priest at Reed, and Firmatus the Priest at Great Abington in Cambridgeshire.⁶⁸

Domesday also reveals a little of Eadgifu the Fair's patronage of local craftsmen; in 1086 Grimbald, a man of Eadgifu, had held the manor of Quy and Stow in Cambridgeshire,⁶⁹ the *ICC* adds that he was her *aurifaber*, or goldsmith.⁷⁰ It is probable that he was not her only goldsmith; Goldsmith's Passage in the *ThLV* which can be dated to the late eleventh century, tells of a patroness named Eadgifu who donated two *oræ* of gold filigree for the book's cover for which she also donated the employ of two of her goldsmiths, Ælfric and Wulfwine, to work it.⁷¹ Of course we cannot be sure that the Thorney Eadgifu is Eadgifu the Fair, but the place and time match, and we might wonder which other Eadgifu at this time would have been wealthy enough to employ two or more goldsmiths.⁷²

⁶⁶ Suggested by Taxatio values of £42 for the church at Swavsey, £28 for Linton, £20 for Kirtling.

⁶⁷ John Blair, 'Local Churches in Domesday Book and before', in *Domesday Studies*, ed. by Holt, pp. 265-78, p. 275; Oosthuizen, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters in South Cambridgeshire' (pp. 51-52).

⁶⁸ GDB fol. 199b.

⁶⁹ GDB fol. 195b; Grimbald the Goldsmith is also recorded in Berkshire and Wiltshire, see 'Grimbald 4 Grimbald the Goldsmith', PASE.

⁷⁰ GDB fol. 195b.

⁷¹ *ThLV* p. 99, pp. 269-70. It is not impossible that this is also Ælfric the priest, but note that it was quite usual for clerics and monks to be goldsmiths, as, for example, Spearhavoc, Abbot of Abingdon (1047-1048).

⁷² Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 97.

4.2.6 Sub-Conclusion

What can the scale and nature of Eadgifu's Domesday estate tell us about this intriguing woman? First and foremost it is evident that she can only be compared with the most powerful of English women at this time – with Gytha, the wife of earl Godwine - £596, Godgifu, the wife of Earl Leofric £111, Ælfgifu, the wife of Earl Ælfgar £65, and Gode, the wife of Earl Ralph £55.⁷³ This suggests that Eadgifu the Fair, with an estate valued at more than £526, was not only very extremely wealthy, but one of the wealthiest in England, only surpassed by Countess Gytha, and Queen Edith, whose Domesday estate was valued at £1,860. Her affluence alone marks her out *prima facie* as a member of the highest nobility and potentially, therefore, of a comital family. The description of the nature of Eadgifu's estates has revealed a prosperous and powerful woman with particular connections across the East Midlands and East Anglia. She was a respected and prolific patroness of the church and had at her command several goldsmiths and no doubt other craftsmen too.

The distribution of her lands suggests that she belonged at the centre of a tight network of personal bonds in both Cambridgeshire and in the Shotley Peninsula, Suffolk (see Map 4.1). Moreover, the density of her holdings across Cambridgeshire implies that she may have been based there. Domesday records how both she and her men provided an onerous amount of cartage and escort services to the crown, which demonstrates how close she was to King Edward and his administration. In every respect the make-up of her lands looks not dissimilar to the holdings of any Anglo-Saxon male nobleman at this time, other than the suggestion of a slightly increased number of female tenants, who may perhaps exemplify some of the women attached to her household.⁷⁴ Domesday tells how one woman *vertit per vim* (turned with force) with

⁷³ Clarke, *The English Nobility*, app. 2.

⁷⁴ For example, GDB fol. 196d.

her land to Eadgifu.⁷⁵ Her husband, Godwine, had held TRE but for his lifetime only, one and a half hides at Watton (at Stone) of the Church of St Peter, Westminster, which would normally have been expected to return to the church after his death.

It is a matter of some conjecture how Eadgifu the Fair acquired such a large estate and although we may never really know, a study of her Domesday holdings has provided tantalising clues. Tout de même it is evident that Eadgifu was a landholder of such standing that she must have a member of the highest nobility, only equal to a countess – could she have been Earl Harold's wife?

4.3 'Who was Eddeva?' – a historiographical problem

As far back as the nineteenth century the minds of historians have been exercised by the identity of the Eadgifu the Fair we have met in Domesday Book. Sharon Turner was convinced by a seventeenth-century marginal note that he found on the Cottonian manuscript of the Waltham Chronicle that she was none other than Edith Swan Neck, whereas Henry Ellis thought that she was more likely to have been Ealdgyth of Mercia, Harold's second wife; Freeman pragmatically remained on the fence.⁷⁶ The authoritative study on this question remains J. R. Boyle's, 'Who was Eddeva?' in which he argued that the Eadgifu the Fair encountered in the Eastern counties of Domesday, not only was to be identified with Edith Swan Neck, but that she also held a further estate across Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Although the links between Eadgifu the Fair and lands in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire cannot be substantiated, the identification has become generally accepted and is rarely questioned. Nevertheless, there are still one or two adherents to Henry Ellis's alternative theory that Eadgifu the Fair is to be identified

⁷⁵ GDB fol. 136b.

⁷⁶ J. R. Boyle, 'Who was Eddeva?' *Transactions of the East Riding Antiquarian Society*, 4 (1892), 11-22; 'Ista Editha nominator Editha in Libro Domesday' (BL MS Cotton Julius D vi (s. xiv)); Henry Ellis, *General Introduction to Domesday Book*, 2 (London: no pub., 1833), p. 79; Edward Augustus Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Results*, 4 vols (London: Clarendon Press, 1867), II, p. 681; III, p. 792; IV, pp. 94 and 764.

with Ealdgyth; it has been recently expressed by Joanna Laynesmith.⁷⁷ Frank Barlow conceded that Edith Swan Neck may have been Eadgifu the Fair but his suggestion that she may have been the daughter and beneficiary of the East Anglian noblewoman, Wulfgyth, is unconvincing.⁷⁸ Peter Clarke proposed that Eadgifu the Fair may have been the wife of Ralph the Staller which has been accepted by Keats-Rohan, and Donald Henson, whilst, at the same time Henson was emphatic that she should not be identified as Edith Swan Neck.⁷⁹ However, Williams has put this particular hypothesis to bed by drawing our attention to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which specifically mentions that the mother of the son of Ralph the Staller was Breton.⁸⁰

The current dominance of the theory that Eadgifu the Fair is none other than Edith Swan Neck owes much to the influence of a seminal article by Eleanor Searle in which she claimed that Count Alan of Brittany had married a daughter of King Harold and Edith Swan Neck, Gunnhild, thereby legitimizing his acquisition of Eadgifu the Fair's lands, an argument which was strengthened by the apparent lack of suppression of the surviving English in Count Alan's newly acquired fief.⁸¹ Richard Sharpe has since demonstrated how the relationship between Alan and Gunnhild was not a simple marriage of convenience but a long-standing and probably loving relationship.⁸² Furthermore, he identified a daughter from the match, Matilda, who married the minor Norman tenant-in-chief, Walter d'Eyncourt. In later life Matilda granted the tithes from certain lands which had been Count Alan's to his foundation of St Mary's, York, and specifically those from Little Abington in Cambridgeshire which had been held by

⁷⁷ Joanna Laynesmith, 'Mistress, Wife or Legend? Unravelling the Stories of Edith Swan Neck', unpublished paper given at *Conquest: 1016, 1066*, London, 2016.

⁷⁸ Barlow, *The Godwins*; W. 32.

⁷⁹ Clarke, *The English Nobility*, p. 57; *DP*, pp. 219; Donald Henson, *The English Elite in 1066: Gone but not Forgotten* (Hockwold: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2001).

⁸⁰ Ann Williams, 'Ralph the Staller, earl of East Anglia (d. 1068-1070)', *ODNB*; ASC D, E 1075.

⁸¹ Searle, 'Women and the Legitimization of Conquest'; Keats-Rohan, 'A Question of Identity' (p. 176).

⁸² Richard Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter', *Haskins Society Journal*, 19 (2007), 1-27.

Eadgifu the Fair.⁸³ Thus she confirmed that her mother was Gunnhild, the wife of Count Alan, and that, consequently, her grandmother was Eadgifu the Fair, otherwise known as Edith Swan Neck.⁸⁴

It is by turning to the wealth of detail in Domesday Book and an analysis of the Domesday estates of Eadgifu the Fair that we find perhaps more constructive evidence that she was most likely the wife of Harold Godwinson, Earl of East Anglia. Williams demonstrated how the lands of Eadgifu the Fair and Harold complemented each other across the east Midlands. For instance, her lands lay mainly in Cambridgeshire, a shire where Harold had only a very small presence. More specifically her manor at Harkstead in Suffolk was attached to Harold's manor of Brightlingsea, Essex, and the majority of her Suffolk sokelands were tributary to Harold's manor at East Bergholt.⁸⁵ Moreover the pattern that we have already observed whereby William I 'returned' many of Eadgifu's estates to the earldom of East Anglia under the guise of Earl Ralph before his forfeiture, is very suggestive that these particular properties of hers had been comital properties.⁸⁶ It is more than likely that some of her largest estates, as at Exning, Great Sampford, and Norton in Suffolk, had been comital and had been granted to her by Harold whilst he was Earl of East Anglia. Her other comital estates probably included the strategically-positioned estates in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire that otherwise sit rather awkwardly with Eadgifu's East Anglian estates.

⁸³ (BL MS Add. 38816 (s. xii²) fols 21r-28v, forgeries based on original deeds); Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter' (pp. 4-5); GDB fol. 194a.

⁸⁴ Ian W. Walker, *Harold: The Last Anglo-Saxon King* (Cheltenham: History Press, 2011), p. 146; Walker considers that 'Swan Neck' is a later elaboration of fair and explains that white skin was considered a sign of beauty among Anglo-Saxon noble women. Hence the frequent use of the term *blachleor* (white-cheeked or fair) from *blác-hleór*, in Old English poetry, meaning pale-faced. Note that the lands of Godwin Cild, possibly Harold's eldest son by Edith Swan Neck, also transferred to Count Alan.

⁸⁵ Ann Williams, 'Land and Power in the Eleventh Century: The Estate of Harold Godwinson', *ANS*, 3 (1980), 171-87 (pp. 176-77); Keats-Rohan, 'A Question of Identity' (pp. 174-79).

⁸⁶ GDB fol. 86b; the royal manor at Crewkerne in Somerset had been held in 1066 by a woman called Eadgifu. Crewkerne was surrounded by several estates which were held by the Godwine family – Round conjectured whether this Eadgifu was Edith Swan Neck.

There is, therefore, cumulatively much to suggest that Eadgifu came from a wealthy East Anglian family, perhaps an heiress, or a woman whose claims to family land were enhanced by the prospect of such an advantageous marriage. It is plausible that Harold married her at the time of his investiture as the Earl of East Anglia, after which he enriched her with comital lands, which were later returned by William I to Earl Ralph. If this is in fact so, it is noteworthy that Eadgifu's comital estates were significantly positioned around and central to the core of her family lands, and this begs the question whether she herself had held a quasi-comital role in East Anglia, alongside Gyrth, Harold's brother, who succeeded to the earldom, for it is evident that her comital estates did not pass with the earldom to Gyrth. Indeed, one significant entry in Little Domesday accords Eadgifu the title of *comitissa*.⁸⁷

Thus, we can now confidently suggest that Eadgifu the Fair, otherwise identified as Edith Swan Neck, probably married Harold in the 1040s at the point at which he became earl of East Anglia, a position which he held from 1045 to 1053. Harold's choice of a bride from the East Anglian aristocracy would have facilitated his acceptance as the new earl in an area where otherwise he had had little influence. Eadgifu's marriage to Harold could have enhanced her claims on family inheritance, thereby explaining how she came to be the significant landholder we have encountered in the Domesday returns.

4.3.1 The Life of 'Edith Swan Neck'

Our first glimpse of Eadgifu as Edith Swan Neck occurs around 1047 when she purportedly granted a manor at Thurgarton, Norfolk, to the abbey of St Benet at Holme, perhaps one of a series of donations given by Edward the Confessor and his court to the

⁸⁷ LDB fol. 300a.

abbey.⁸⁸ It is possible that these grants were made on the occasion of the dedication of a new church at Holme which had been built by Abbot Ælfsige before his death in 1046.⁸⁹ His successor, Ælfwold, became one of Harold's closest supporters, and that Eadgifu granted land to St Benet's is another indication of her close association with Harold.⁹⁰ Benet's *Early History* and its later associated texts refer to Eadgifu as *Edgiva Swanneshals*; Tom Licence dates the *Early History* and therefore this sobriquet to 1066 to 1070.⁹¹

Eadifu and Harold are known to have had several children: Godwin, who was probably their eldest son, may have been born around the mid-1040s since he was old enough to hold land in 1066 and bear arms in 1068, when he and his brother Edmund attacked Bristol.⁹² Edmund, and another brother, Magnus, although too young to be recorded in Domesday Book, were both able to launch attacks against William the Conqueror in 1068 and 1069.⁹³ There was probably a younger son, Ulf, and two daughters, Gytha and Gunnhild, all presumably born between the years 1050 and 1055. Harold and Eadgifu are also known to have had at least one stillborn child who they buried at Christchurch, Canterbury.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ S.1055 is generally considered to be spurious but Hart in *ECEE* considers that the list of donations appears genuine; *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes, Oxenedes*, ed. by Henry Ellis (London: Longman, 1859), 292. The twelfth-century register of St Benet's lists the encroachments the abbey had suffered at the hands of Roger Bigod between October 1101 and 1107 –one of these was for a small parcel of twenty acres with a hall (*aula*) at Thurgarton which had been held by two women named Blide and Tbie (sic).

⁸⁹ *Register of the Abbey of St Benet of Holme*, Norfolk Record Society, 33, no 62.

⁹⁰ Tom Licence, 'The Origins of the Monastic Communities of St Benedict at Holme and Bury St Edmund's', *Revue Benedictine*, 116 (2006), 42-61 (p. 60).

⁹¹ It is strange that *Swanneshals* meaning Swan neck is actually of a Dutch/Flemish derivation, rather than from Old English (van Houts personal correspondence). One wonders if Eadgifu could have accompanied the Godwins into exile in Flanders in 1051. Note however, that ASC D 1067 does not include Eadgifu amongst the party, and, Harold and his brother Leofwine sailed instead to Ireland and the protection of King Diarmait mac Máel na mBó. See also Barlow, *The Godwins*, p. 59.

⁹² Clarke, *The English Nobility*, p. 25.

⁹³ ASC 1068, 1067; Mason, *The House of Godwine*, p. 254.

⁹⁴ *Memorials of St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. by W. Stubbs, Rolls Ser., 46 (London: PRO, 1874), p 230; Eadgifu may, therefore, be the woman referred to in

However, sometime between 1063 and 1066 Harold married Ealdgyth of Mercia, the sister of Earls Edwin and Morcar, in a politically strategic alliance with the house of Mercia. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that Harold repudiated Eadgifu, or that his marriage to Ealdgyth was anything other than political. In fact, it was Eadgifu who possibly waited out the Battle of Hastings at Waltham Abbey, Harold's own foundation, where he had stopped on his way south to meet Duke William and place gifts on the altar and pray before the Holy Cross. The Waltham Chronicle relates how two canons from Waltham, Osgod Cnoppe and Æthelric Childemaister, sought out 'Editham cognomento Swanneshals, quod gallicae sonat *collum cigni*' after the battle to identify Harold's body.⁹⁵ It is interesting that the name *Edith* Swanneshals comes from this late twelfth-century source, whereas both Domesday and the St Benet's cartulary have *Eadgifu* (Eddeva). The evidence suggests that both our landholder – and Harold's first wife – were definitely called Eadgifu, rather than Eadgyth or Edith, as she has now become known.⁹⁶

Harold's mother, Gytha, led an uprising in Exeter which was ultimately unsuccessful, after which she stayed on the Isle of Flatholm in the Bristol Channel until the efforts of her grandsons to strike back at William also failed. Then, in 1069, she fled with her daughter, Gunnhild, to safety in Flanders. We hear no more of Gytha, but we know from a lead burial plaque found at St Donatian's in Bruges that Gunnhild spent time in Bruges, and later Denmark, before returning to Bruges where she died on 9

Domesday Book as Harold's concubine holding four dwellings in Canterbury (GDB fol. 2a).

⁹⁵ *The Waltham Chronicle: An Account of the Discovery of Our Holy Cross at Montacute and its Conveyance to Waltham*, ed. by Leslie Watkiss and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, repr. 1994), pp. 54-5; *Vita Haroldi: The Romance of the Life of Harold, King of England*, ed. by Walter de Gray Birch ([n.p.]: Stock, 1885), 83, with translation on p. 187. See the entry for *concubularia* (royal room-mate) in Richard Ashdowne, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), A-G, p. 424.

⁹⁶ This, incidentally, helps to discount the theory that Eadgifu the Fair was Harold's second wife, Ealdgyth. Note that these names were not so confused at this date or in Domesday Book.

September 1087.⁹⁷ It is evident that she chose a life of chastity and piety and was remembered with affection in Flanders for her acts of charity.⁹⁸ Gytha was also accompanied by one of Harold and Eadgifu's daughters, a namesake, who was taken by two of her brothers, probably Godwine and Edmund, to the court of King Sweyn Estrithson in Denmark, who may have arranged a marriage for her to Vladimir Monomakh, the grand prince of Kiev.⁹⁹ Of Eadgifu and Harold's sons, Godwine, Edmund, Magnus – the sources are unclear on whether all three or just two of them were involved in the action in the south west, and whether they fled to safety in Ireland or Denmark. Barlow reports that Magnus may have reappeared in Suffolk where the remains of a monument which have been placed in the outer walls of St John sub Castro in Lewes commemorate a hermit called Magnus who came 'of the royal Danish line' and 'who had served the church' there.¹⁰⁰ A younger son, identified as Ulf, was taken hostage by William I, and held in Normandy until William's death in 1087 when he was released and knighted by Robert Curthose.¹⁰¹

As neither Eadgifu the Fair nor her younger daughter, Gunnhild, are mentioned in the company of the matriarch Gytha, both would appear to have remained in England after the Conquest. Gunnhild, who was probably born between 1054 and 1061, had been placed in the monastery at Wilton, probably at a time before 1066 ostensibly for her

⁹⁷ Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 167-68. For further details and a photograph, see *A Social History of England 900-1200*, ed. by Crick and van Houts, plate 12, p. 229.

⁹⁸ Mason, *The House of Godwine*, p.183; van Houts, 'Buried Abroad in the 1080s: The Materiality of Two Anglo-Flemish Latin Obituaries for Women on Stone and Metal', *IMC* 2019, showed how the lead plate, which was probably included in Gunnhild's coffin at the behest of Robert of the Frisians, reflected his position as ally of the Godwins, and demonstrated his effort to ensure Gunnhild Godwineson was not forgotten.

⁹⁹ Barlow, *The Godwins*, p 169; Mason, *The House of Godwine*, pp. 200-01. For an obscure reference, not yet consulted, which purports that Gytha died a nun in Palestine on 10 March 1098 or 1099, Aleksandr. V. Nazarenko, *Drevnyaya Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putyakh*, *Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki kul'turnykh politicheskikh svyazei, ix-xii vekov* (Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2001).

¹⁰⁰ Barlow, *The Godwins*, pp. 168-69.

¹⁰¹ Freeman, *The Norman Conquest*, IV, app. M, pp. 754-55, thought Ulf was most likely a son of Harold and Ealdgyth of Mercia, if so, Barlow, p. 173, n. 40, following Freeman, suggests that he must have been the twin-brother of their other son, Harold.

schooling, although perhaps later for her safety.¹⁰² Bishop Wulfstan visited her at Wilton and cured her of a tumour in the eye, so it may be that she had been too unwell to travel with her grandmother to Flanders.¹⁰³

4.4 What happened to Eadgifu

However, no source tells us of Eadgifu's whereabouts or actions after 1066 and it may be that William left her, like other wealthy widows, of whom the most prominent was Queen Edith, undisturbed.¹⁰⁴ This may seem an unexpectedly lenient treatment for the wife of a sworn enemy, but it could be that William did not recognize Eadgifu as a threat, or indeed as Harold's legitimate wife or widow; it may be that Ealdgyth, who was now pregnant, was seen as the 'official' wife and to offer the greatest threat. The actions of her brothers certainly suggests that this may have been the case: Earls Edwin and Morcar moved quickly after Hastings to take Ealdgyth to the comparative safety of Chester.¹⁰⁵

The only mention of Eadgifu the Fair after 1066 is found in a letter sent to her daughter, Gunnhild, by Archbishop Anselm around 1093 which makes it clear that by this time her parents were both dead.¹⁰⁶ But there are one or two tantalising references to women called Eadgifu or Edith after 1066. One particularly interesting suggestion is that she retired and died at the monastery of La Chaise Dieu in Aquitaine; George Beech investigated an unusual claim made by a monastery in the Auvergne that an English queen by the name of Edith donated money there for a dormitory and was later

¹⁰² ASC D 1067.

¹⁰³ William of Malmesbury, *Saints Lives*, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 80-83.

¹⁰⁴ Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest', p. 241; private conversation David Bates.

¹⁰⁵ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 2, ed. by R.R. Darlington and P. Mc Gurk, trans. by J. Bray and P. Mc Gurk (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1995), pp. 604-05.

¹⁰⁶ Epistolæ Anselmi, in *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. by F. S. Schmitt, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1940-1951), IV, nos 168 and 169; Rhona Beare, 'Anselm's Letters to Gunnhild, daughter of King Harold', *Prudentia*, 28 (1996), 23-35.

buried there.¹⁰⁷ He initially concluded that the queen referred to was most likely Ealdgyth, perhaps drawn there by the fame of La Chaise Dieu's founder, St Robert of Turland; a lost breviary, cited in 1842, had apparently named the queen, Editha.¹⁰⁸ More recently Beech, however, has revisited his investigation and decided that Queen Matilda was the most likely patron of the dormitory, but his conclusion that the burial of an English queen called Edith at La Chaise-Dieu was simply a tradition based on an oral myth remains somewhat unsatisfactory.¹⁰⁹

There are several brief references to Eadgifus who occur nearer to home but without any identifying epithets, these remain unsubstantial. Could Eadgifu have been the Edeva who held of Bury St Edmunds a tiny eleven-acre plot of land at Tostock, an estate where she had previously held 36 men.¹¹⁰ Could she have stayed on there in a semi-religious capacity?¹¹¹ Or could she have been the Domina Eadgifu who donated 40 acres near Bures, Essex to Westminster with the agreement of William I?¹¹² She is surely the Ediva mentioned in an undated deed believed to be from the twelfth century which refers to land that Ediva had held 'infra monasterium de Wervesteda' on the Shotley Peninsula, if we recall that Eadgifu had held 40 acres there in 1066 which passed to Count Alan and was held from him in 1086 by Ælfric the Priest.¹¹³ It is significant that this land was still identified by reference to Eadgifu in the twelfth century – did she retire there? We will probably never know.

¹⁰⁷ George T. Beech, 'England and Aquitaine in the Century before the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 19 (1990), 81-101.

¹⁰⁸ Ealdgyth may have had personal knowledge of La Chaise-Dieu; her eldest brother, Burghead had died on his way back from a papal visit to Rome and was buried at the abbey of Saint-Remi in Rheims, to which, their father, Ælfgar, had then bestowed land and gifts. Saint-Remi was closely connected to La Chaise-Dieu.

¹⁰⁹ George T. Beech, 'Queen Matilda of England, 1066-1083, and the Abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, (1993), pp. 350-74.

¹¹⁰ It is probably just coincidence that close-by at Woolpit was a Leofwy fæger cild, see *FD*, p.22 (which van Houts dates to 1086).

¹¹¹ Bates, *Regesta*, 324.

¹¹² Laverton, *Shotley Peninsula*, pp. 107-08.

¹¹³ Possibly another minster site? Note that Ælfric the Priest also held 60 acres of Count Alan at Pannington which was also in Wherstead parish.

Unfortunately Domesday Book does not give us a straight answer to the fate of Eadgifu, and all we can do is follow the lines of enquiry it introduces, chiefly that her major successor was Count Alan of Brittany and that he was married to her daughter, Gunnhild. We know that he unofficially fulfilled the role of an Earl of East Anglia, and, therefore, could be seen as a successor of Eadgifu's husband, Earl Harold. No doubt William would have been loathe to appoint another to the post of earl of East Anglia after the disastrous record of Earl Ralph. East Anglia was a volatile area prone to rebellion and Alan's marriage to the daughter of a regional aristocracy and their fair lady, would ease his acceptance in the area. Might it not be possible to get a sense of when Eadgifu was deprived of her lands, and, thereby, how long she survived after 1066, by following Alan's career in England and attempting to date his marriage to Gunnhild, the likely point at which he received her mother's lands?

Count Alan of Brittany was probably born before 1056-1060; he appears among the witnesses to a charter which records a grant of land to St Aubin in Angers by Count Eudo I of Brittany. The charter dates from 1056 to 1060 at which time Alan had probably still been very young. It introduces the family Penthièvre: 'Comes Eudo, uxor eius Orguen, et filii eorum Gausfridus, Alanus, Willelmus, Rotbertus, Ricardus'. That Alan was listed second, probably signified that he was the second legitimate son of Count Eudo, the regent of Brittany from 1040 to 1047, and his wife Orguen (Agnes).¹¹⁴ This would have made him only an adolescent in 1066. So it is perhaps not surprising that near contemporary sources such as Orderic Vitalis and William de Poitiers do not place him at Hastings, nor was he included on the Conqueror's Ship List. David Douglas did not consider him to have been amongst the 'Companions of the

¹¹⁴ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Aubin d'Angers*, ed. by Bertrand de Brouillon (Paris: Picard, 1903) II, 677, p. 171. Alan was related to William I by his maternal grandmother who was William I's aunt.

Conqueror'.¹¹⁵ If any of this Breton comital family had been at Hastings, it was most likely Count Brien, an older, but illegitimate, brother, who was afterwards entrusted to organize the defence of the south-west against Harold's sons in 1068 and 1069.¹¹⁶ After witnessing two charters of William I in 1069 he is not heard of in England again.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile it would appear that Alan had remained in France: in 1067 he witnessed a charter of Count Geoffrey's also to St Aubin as *filius Eudonis*, implying that he was acting on behalf of his father. This is the first time he is referred to as Alan the Red, to avoid confusion with another illegitimate brother called Alan or Alan the Black.¹¹⁸ The fact that Alan was probably not at Hastings, however, does not imply that he was not close to William I – there is evidence that they were together either in 1067 or sometime between 1066-1070 when William I assented and witnessed Alan's grant, actually of a gift he had received from William himself, to St Ouen de Rouen. The later date looks more likely, especially as Alan occurs in Rouen again around 1070 when he witnessed a grant of William I's to the Abbey of St Amand.¹¹⁹ This is the date that Richard Sharpe uses to mark the commencement of the close relationship between William I and Alan.¹²⁰

Our first evidence of Alan in England suggests that he attended King William's council meeting at Salisbury on 4 February in either 1069 or 1070. This probably coincided with William's return south after quelling the north, and the disbandment and

¹¹⁵ van Houts, 'The Shiplist', and David Douglas, 'Companions of the Conqueror', *History*, 27 (1943) 129-47; note that later sources such as Wace and Gaimar, do place Alan of Brittany at Hastings, and so does the *narratio* of St Mary's, York, but probably in order to embellish the credentials of their founder.

¹¹⁶ OV, vol. 2, bk 4, p. 189.

¹¹⁷ Bates, *Regesta*, 138, 245.

¹¹⁸ J. H. Round, *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France: Illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, I: A.D. 918-1206: Great Britain (London: PRO, 1899), 1176, p. 426.

¹¹⁹ Bates, *Regesta*, 237, pp. 732-34; see also Keats-Rohan, 'A question of Identity' in which she places Alan at Hastings.

¹²⁰ Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter'.

reward of his army.¹²¹ This would indeed have been a most opportune moment to join the Conqueror. It is important thing to note that we have no sources where Counts Brien and Alan witness together – their lives simply appear to cross-over at this point. In fact, Count Brien disappears from England after his defence of the south west; Wilmart concluded that he may have been wounded in the confrontation and returned to Brittany as a semi-invalid.¹²²

In this regard a familial charter to Marmoutier, although issued somewhat later, probably around 1084, is illuminating – it recites a series of family grants and confirmations made at Dol in Brittany, and shows the Penthièvre family putting their house in order, possibly at the time when Count Alan was acting as leader of William's forces at the Siege of St Suzanne (1083-1085).¹²³ This charter refers to Brien as Count in England, and calls Alan Rufus, his successor. This and the fact that he and his brother never attested charters together suggests that Alan arrived to take over as the Breton leader in England soon after Brien had left.

4.4.1 Date of Dispossession

In the search for a date for the transfer of Eadgifu the Fair's lands to Count Alan, therefore, the early 1070s are beginning to look very significant – the failed attack in the south west by Eadgifu's sons, the flight of the other family women, the disappearance of Count Brien and then, around 1070, the arrival of his brother, Alan, a brother who

¹²¹ Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 321.

¹²² There is a slight chance that Count Brien may be the same as Briene, constable of Apulia, reported at the Siege of Kastoria, by Anna Commena, *DP* p. 48. But Domesday, LDB fol. 291a states that Brien was the predecessor of Count Robert of Mortain in Suffolk, thereby implying that he had died by 1086. It is interesting that by 1086 Robert also held a vast amount of land across Cornwall, and the inference is that these too came from Brien. A nephew of Brien's, Alan of Richmond, later refers to him as the Earl of Cornwall, and although there is no actual evidence to support this, it does suggest that he may have held substantial property there, see *EYC*, IV: The Honour of Richmond, pt 1, 12.

¹²³ *OV*, II, bk. 7, ch. 10, p. 379; in *GBD* fols 141d and 142a Count Alan claimed Berkesdon and the men of the Hundred confirmed that he had been in possession of it until he had undertaken a recent sea voyage.

moreover was landless; William I had given Brien's fief to his own brother, Robert, Count of Mortain. Keats-Rohan considers that the lands that Count Alan received as the successor of Eadgifu the Fair were probably his first large acquisition in England.

Although we know that he may have received some of Stigand's lands slightly early, in Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, as Stigand's fall of grace can be precisely dated to 11 April 1070.¹²⁴ Perhaps Alan was granted these lands with the promise of marriage to Gunnhild.

Keats-Rohan has further suggested that Count Alan's foundations of alien priories at Linton and Swavesey may have been given in gratitude and that their date might, therefore, mark his receipt of them. If so, then these grants might, at the same time, indicate the timing of Eadgifu's dispossession. But unfortunately, the date of the grant of his tithes from Swavesey and its berewicks to Sts Serge and Bacchus can only be dated to around 1079, and that of Linton to St Jacut to some time before 1086.¹²⁵ However, in his grant to Swavesey, Alan had attributed his good fortune to the intercession of Queen Matilda. One wonders whether she also had a hand in some queenly match-making.¹²⁶ But, with the lack of adequate dating we are forced to fall back on Sharpe's conjectured chronology, by which we can assume that Count Alan married Gunnhild around 1072 and that this was probably the time at which he received the lands of Eadgifu the Fair.

There are two indications that Alan's attitude to his estates might reveal a personal significance to him, and perhaps thus to their association with his wife, and perhaps

¹²⁴ For example, Hare Street in Hertfordshire, GDB fol. 137a, but also Mileham, Stanfield, Toketorp, and Cringleford in Norfolk, and Hintlesham in Suffolk. For Stigand see, Alexander R. Rumble, 'From Winchester to Canterbury: Ælfheah and Stigand – Bishops, Archbishops and Victims' in *Leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Church: From Bede to Stigand*, ed. by Alexander R. Rumble (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), pp. 165-82 (pp. 175-79); 'Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury (1052-1070, d. 1072)', PASE; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Stigand (d. 1072), archbishop of Canterbury', *ODNB*.

¹²⁵ St Jacut c. 1079 and St Serge *ante*-1086.

¹²⁶ *EYC*, IV, pp. 1-2.

even with her mother. Firstly a few of Eadgifu's tenants were unusually successful in retaining their holdings; English men like Ælmær of Bourn, and his father, Colswein, and Ordmær of Badlingham, and Ælfric the priest all prospered under Count Alan.¹²⁷ As Ælmær, Colswein, and Ordmær were all called up as Domesday jurors it may be presumed that they acted in some official capacities for Count Alan.¹²⁸ Secondly, Alan decided to be buried at Bury St Edmunds, at the heart of his East Anglian fee, affirming his and his family's affinity to the area.¹²⁹

Conclusions

This case study of Eadgifu the Fair has demonstrated many of the problems of identifying the English in Domesday Book. Through a process of nominal analysis, and in this case, particularly the use of epithets combined with a comparison of successors, it has shown how various women called Eadgifu can be identified as one and the same. At the same time this study has brought to light one of the wealthiest women landholders in 1066 England, one who was, moreover, only comparable to the wives of earls, *prima facie* an argument for seeing her, too, as connected to such a family. After we have overcome all the problems that Domesday throws at us, what we see of her in the Domesday Book begs as many questions as answers, which are, as always, bound up with her pre-1066 situation – her relationships, her family, her origins.

Traditionally Eadgifu the Fair has been connected with Earl Harold, as his first wife, Edith Swan Neck, and there is much to commend this identification: the symbiotic relationship between the estates of Eadgifu and Harold, and the ability of Mathilda, daughter of Gunnhild, to donate tithes from Little Abington, an estate which TRE had

¹²⁷ *DP*, pp. 127-30.

¹²⁸ *ICC*, 1 and 5.1 *IE*, 97-98.

¹²⁹ The monks of St Mary's York had other plans for their patron, and his body was translated there later. For burial places of prominent Normans, see Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135*, app., pp. 212-15.

been held by Eadgifu, to St Mary's Abbey, York. Eadgifu's successors after 1066 point in this same direction – Ralph, earl of East Anglia as Harold had been, and Count Alan of Brittany who assumed a similar role for William I. Cumulatively there is much to suggest that she was a woman taken in marriage by Harold perhaps when he became earl of East Anglia, a member of a wealthy local family, perhaps their heiress, or a daughter whose claims to family land were enhanced as a result of the marriage. After this she was further enriched with comital lands, which have been identified in the main, as the ones which were subsequently held by Earl Ralph.

This case study has identified a woman who exemplifies all the sorts of factors which made a great female landholder in mid-eleventh-century England. But what happened to such a woman and her land after 1066? We know conclusively that by 1086 her lands and holdings had passed very largely to men, and especially to her daughter Gunnhild's husband, a new Norman ruler in East Anglia, who had needed to legitimize and extend his influence there. A consideration of the events in Eadgifu's life when compared with a chronology for Count Alan have been combined to make the late 1060s/early 1070s look especially significant for the timing of her dispossession.

The case study approach has found some answers but Eadgifu herself throws up many questions with regard to English women's landholding at this pivotal time. Which women were able to survive the Norman Conquest successfully? Did they need to be members of the élite? Of the old regime like Eadgifu the Fair, or new women poised to take advantage of a new order, like her daughter, Gunnhild? The next two chapters will explore this question, turning first to the experience of another influential English woman, Æthelgyth, whose family background was long and illustrious, but who, like Eadgifu the fair survived across the Conquest.

Chapter 5 Surviving across Conquest

In the six Eastern counties that are covered by this thesis there were an estimated 181 English women holding land in 1066, but by 1086 that figure had reduced to 42, a reduction of over 75%. The 139 women who are evidenced as having held on to some or all of their lands across 1066 but must then have died or been deprived since they are not recorded as landowners in 1086 included Eadgifu the Fair whose family background is obscure. However, a series of late Anglo-Saxon wills which survived at the abbey of Bury St Edmund's and others which were recorded in the *Liber Eliensis* provide unusual detail about another élite East Anglian family from this period: the family of Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex from 941 to 951, and more especially the families of his female descendants, and of one in particular who is directly comparable to Eadgifu in age in 1066, Æthelgyth.

We have seen how women as landholders need to be defined by the ways in which they held land and this raises the question whether differences in how they held land affected their position in 1066. By looking at the history of this family as it is revealed by their testamentary records, and particularly those of the women, we can see not only the important roles they assumed in the preservation of family land but also the course of their own landholding.¹³⁰

This chapter will firstly explore the history of the women of Ealdorman Ælfgar's family and secondly present a case-study of Æthelgyth, the last recognized member of this family. Æthelgyth, like Eadgifu the Fair, survived past 1066 with an extensive estate intact, one that was, in fact, the next largest estate of any English woman after that of Eadgifu and other dowager countesses. It is hoped that a survey of the women of this East Anglian family will show the sorts of factors, familial and otherwise, which

¹³⁰ *LE*.

placed land in the hands of women such as Eadgifu and Æthelgyth in late Saxon England.

5.1 The Women of the Family of Ealdorman Ælfgar of Essex

5.1.1 Æthelflæd of Damerham and Ælflæd

Æthelflæd (OE *æðelu*, feminine or neuter noun ‘nobility’, or OE *æðele*, adjective ‘noble’, + OE *flæd*, possibly feminine noun ‘beauty’, or OE *flede*, adjective ‘full’¹³¹) was the eldest daughter of Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex, and his wife Wiswyth.¹³² Around the year 944, and probably connected to her father’s appointment as ealdorman, she was married to Edmund I as his second wife.¹³³ This marriage, however, proved to be very short-lived as only two years later Edmund was assassinated on 26 May 946, whilst attending mass on St Augustine’s Day at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire.¹³⁴ By contrast her royal widowhood may have extended into the 990s; the *Liber Eliensis* compares her to the blessed Anna, who provided a saintly pattern for medieval widows, suggesting that not only did she not remarry, but also that she lived a long, and most likely religious, widowhood.¹³⁵ It is strange, therefore, that the *Liber Eliensis* appears to contradict itself when it also refers to her as the wife of Ealdorman Æthelstan (955-970) (*uxor Æthelstan ducis*). This would-be groom has usually been identified as Æthelstan ‘Rota’, an ealdorman of south-east Mercia.¹³⁶ However, Wareham rejects the idea of

¹³¹ Okasha, pp. 57 & 64.

¹³² Whitelock, *Wills*, p. 107, suggests OE Wigswithe for *Wiswithe* with perhaps *wig-* (war) as the first element, but other possibilities could be *with-* (person) or *yth-* (wave); also compare the estate name *Wiswethetun* (Wiswythe’s tun) in W. 15.

¹³³ *LE*, 64; W. 14; S.1494; for Edmund I, see Ann Williams, ‘Edmund I (920/921-946), king of England’, *ODNB*.

¹³⁴ *ASC* D 946.

¹³⁵ Foot, *Veiled Women*, I, p. 230.

¹³⁶ For these dates, see Donald Scragg, ‘Introduction’, in *The Battle of Maldon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp. 1-56, (p. 47, n. 57). For Æthelstan ‘Rota’ as Æthelflæd’s second husband, see *Wills*, pp.138-39; M. Locherbie-Cameron, ‘Byrhtnoth and his Family’ in *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. by Donald Scragg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 253-62 (p. 255); and Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992), p. 477.

this later marriage due to Æthelstan's absence from either Æthelflæd's or her sister's will, and, in fact, from any other reliable source.¹³⁷ Instead, he recounts how the Ely scribe, as others have done, might have confused her with Ælfwyn, the wife of Ealdorman Æthelstan of East Anglia.

Æthelflæd's toponym has been the cause of some conjecture. It was usual for queens to retire to nunneries which were frequently also the preferred place for their burial. Æthelflæd, who had been granted Damerham by Edmund with reversion to Glastonbury Abbey, returned it for the benefit of both her soul and for those of Kings Edmund and Edgar, suggesting, as Stafford has wondered, whether even after such a long time apart, Æthelflæd might not have been buried with her husband at Glastonbury.¹³⁸ Thus, her toponym may be a rejoinder of the scale and importance of this estate to Glastonbury. Alternatively, it may be that Æthelflæd actually chose Damerham for her retirement, perhaps as a vowess, close to both the institutions of Glastonbury and Wilton.¹³⁹ She died at some point between 975, Edgar's death, and 991, the death of her brother-in-law, Beorhtnoth.

Æthelflæd's sister, Ælfflæd (OE *ælf*, masculine or feminine noun 'fairy' + OE *flæd*, possibly feminine noun 'beauty', or OE *flede*, adjective 'full'¹⁴⁰), was the younger daughter of Ælfgar, Ealdorman of Essex, and his wife, Wiswyth.¹⁴¹ She married Beorhtnoth, a successor of her father's in the position of ealdorman of Essex (956-991),

¹³⁷ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 53-4, and n. 30.

¹³⁸ For burials of Anglo-Saxon queens, see Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 95, and for Æthelflæd in particular, n. 125.

¹³⁹ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 54-55. For King Alfred's will, see S.1507. Note that Æthelflæd at Damerham is not to be confused with the Æthelflæd, 'nobilissimæ et religiosissimæ matronæ', who is recorded in B's *Life of Dunstan*, Osbern of Canterbury, *Vita S. Dunstani*, in *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. by W. Stubbs, Rolls Ser., 63 (London: PRO, 1874), pp. 69-161, living in retirement in a set of cottages (*casulæ*) that she had built near to Glastonbury, and who is described by B as being born into the royal family and also related to Dunstan; this Æthelflæd would have died long before Dunstan became bishop of Worcester in 957.

¹⁴⁰ Okasha, pp. 57 & 64.

¹⁴¹ *LE*, II, 63; *W*, 15; S.1486; please note that Wareham is cautious to identify Wiswyth as Ælfgar's wife but admits the likelihood that there is some family connection.

some time before 946/951, the date of her father's will.¹⁴² Beorhtnoth has been identified as a descendant of the Mercian Ætheling Beornoth who died in 905 but he may have had other links with the West Saxon royal family.¹⁴³ Stafford is tempted to see him as a West Saxon nobleman, appointed to this post as part of West Saxon expansion during the tenth century; Ælfflæd and her land no doubt would have sweetened the deal.¹⁴⁴ Stafford wondered if Ælfflæd's marriage, occurring as it did probably after her father's death, was not arranged for her in the position of royal ward. Her husband, Beorhtnoth, is, of course, better known as the hero who met his death at the Battle of Maldon in August 991.¹⁴⁵

The *Liber Eliensis* records material gifts given by Ælfflæd to Ely to commemorate her husband. These include a vaguely described 'cortinam' . . . 'intextam atque depictam' showing the *gesta* of Beorhtnoth – perhaps an altar hanging or some form of curtain.¹⁴⁶ If the writer of the *Liber* is consistent in his use of *intextam* it may have been embroidered.¹⁴⁷ It is not known whether the item was actually made by Ælfflæd or commissioned by her. Nor indeed do we know what the textile depicted; it may not have been the heroic last stand at the Battle of Maldon, but something that would have served as a suitable memorial to Beorhtnoth. Ælfflæd outlived her husband by about ten

¹⁴² W. 2; S.1483; note that his immediate predecessor was Beorhtferth.

¹⁴³ For West Saxon links see Pauline Stafford, 'Kinship and Women in the World of *Maldon*: Byrhtnoth and his Family', in *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact*, ed. by Janet Cooper (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 225-35 (p.229); for Mercian links see Wareham, *Lords*, p. 47. See also *LE*, 92, and M. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family' in *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. by Scragg.

¹⁴⁴ Stafford, 'Kinship and Women in the World of *Maldon*'.

¹⁴⁵ Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon*.

¹⁴⁶ Ely and Glastonbury did own richly decorated tomb coverings, for which, see Charles R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), pp. 130-45; could this be a further example?

¹⁴⁷ He does not mention costly gold thread as he does with relation to other gifts received by Ely.

years, dying around the end of the first millennium; her will is usually dated by the historical opinion on the dates of Ealdorman Æthelmær.¹⁴⁸

The testamentary freedom of Anglo-Saxon women was seriously revised by historians at the end of the twentieth century and studies of Old English wills have shown the various restrictions that were placed upon them such as joint holdings, constant reversion, and life tenures.¹⁴⁹ Julia Crick's remark that Æthelflæd should be seen only as 'a beneficiary of her father's will and the temporary holder of an estate already destined for a religious house,' could be seen, however, as overly pessimistic.¹⁵⁰ In fact, Wareham has recently demonstrated how Æthelflæd's will shows 'a high degree of independence'; she actually disposed of twice as many estates in East Anglia as her father had and made eight new grants to religious houses.¹⁵¹ Although there can be no doubt that Æthelflæd's ability to alienate land was to some extent restricted by the covenants of her father it would appear that Ælflæd was even further limited by the restrictions of her elder sister.¹⁵² Æthelflæd bequeathed several estates to her sister and brother-in law, Ælflæd and Beorhtnoth, but these were only for Ælflæd's lifetime; thus Æthelflæd ensured that her younger sister remained well provided for but that those estates could not be acquired by Beorhtnoth's family, and would revert finally to the religious houses of either her father's choice or her own.

¹⁴⁸ W. 15; S.1486 (c. 999/1001 or 1000-1002); Ann Williams, *The World before Domesday: The English Aristocracy, 900-1066* (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 181, n. 22, says it is unlikely that Æthelmær received the title of Ealdorman of the Western Shires before 1013, yet with Ælfhryth, the Queen Mother, as a legatee, the will cannot be later than 17 November 1001, and may be as early as 999, refer to Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978-1016: A Study in their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 210, n. 203.

¹⁴⁹ Stafford, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family' (p. 233).

¹⁵⁰ Crick, 'Women, Posthumous Benefaction, and Family Strategy in Pre-Conquest England'.

¹⁵¹ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 55, 60.

¹⁵² Tollerton, *Wills*, p.181, writes that although her rights to alienate land were restricted, 'she deployed stock for her own spiritual benefit'. Stafford, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family' (p. 230) thought Ælfgar's actions protectionary against royal involvement.

Wareham notes how a greater responsibility was placed upon the shoulders of the elder daughter: Æthelflæd was given nearly twice as much land as her sister, with more freedom to bequeath as she wished, but also a general obligation to care for the souls of their family's ancestors.¹⁵³ However, this latter duty passed to Ælfflæd after the death of her older sister. The wills of both Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd show how they sought to balance these responsibilities to their natal family with new ones placed upon them by the families of their husbands. Æthelflæd counterbalanced her donations to religious houses connected with her husband's family with those of her own family. At the same time she strengthened the relationship with their family minster of Stoke-by-Nayland.

In her turn Ælfflæd, who was duty-bound to honour the death of her husband, initiated his memorialisation at Ely, but also respected the wishes of her father and sister by maintaining the family links with Stoke-by-Nayland. In fact she was so concerned to fulfil her obligations to safeguard the bequests of her ancestors and protect their burial place that she granted an additional two estates to Nayland, and called on the king, himself, to 'protect the holy foundation at Stoke in which my ancestors lie buried, and the property which they gave to it.' In this she was ultimately to fail as, after her death, Stoke fell into the royal fisc, and Bury St Edmund's was to eclipse it. The sisters' wills retain throughout this regional focus which is also exemplified by their generous bequests to family and friends.¹⁵⁴

The survival of the wills of Ealdorman Ælfgar and his daughters is fortuitous and the issues they raise about the transmission of land through women in late Anglo-Saxon England, and in particular, what they tell us about daughters as heiresses, and wives as widows, are important. Although Ælfgar's daughters lived fifty years earlier than Eadgifu the Fair, comparisons with her experience are still valid – a Wessex

¹⁵³ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 53-56.

¹⁵⁴ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 50.

nobleman given an earldom in East Anglia and an heiress from an influential regional family. Moreover, Eadgifu as the widow of a prominent warrior-king is directly comparable to Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd. Nevertheless, perhaps we should turn to the next generation of this family for examples of East Anglian daughters and heiresses, closer in time to the period of this thesis: to the daughter and granddaughters of Ælfflæd and Beorhtnoth.

5.2 Beorhtnoth's Legacy

5.2.1 Leofflæd

Leofflæd (OE *leof*, masculine noun 'friend', or OE *lufu*, feminine noun 'love', or *leof*, adjective 'dear', + OE *flæd*, possibly feminine noun 'beauty', or OE *flede*, adjective 'full'¹⁵⁵) was probably born after 946/951, at which time her grandfather, Ealdorman Ælfgar, granted Eleigh to her parents, Ælfflæd and Beorhtnoth, saying that 'if they should have children, then I grant it to them'.¹⁵⁶ She has generally been considered illegitimate due to her absence from Ælfflæd's will but the repetition of the same second element in their personal names is, in fact suggestive that her mother was none other than Ælfflæd.¹⁵⁷ The fact that she is not mentioned in her mother's will may simply mean that either she had been provided for already or was the recipient of customary land. She married a local thegn called Oswig who died in 1010 leading the Cambridgeshire forces at the Battle of Ringmere.¹⁵⁸ That her husband was still fit enough to fight the Danes at Ringmere implies that her birth date could well have been later than 951, if we assume, as we probably can, that she would not have been much older than he was; she might well have been younger.

¹⁵⁵ Okasha, pp. 57 & 65.

¹⁵⁶ W. 2; *LE*, II, 88; S.1520.

¹⁵⁷ Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 141-42.

¹⁵⁸ Whitelock, *Wills*, p. 68; *ASC* C, D, & E 1010; Oswig, unlike the husbands of her mother and aunt, was a local nobleman with extensive holdings across Cambridgeshire and Suffolk; *LE*, II, 33 and 67, also discusses the two brothers of Oswig: Uvi and Ætheric.

Leofflæd and Oswig had four children, a son: Ælfwine, probably born between 985 to 990, and three daughters, Æthelswyth, Ælfwynn, and Leofwaru, all born before 1010. We may be surprised then that the first male child born to this family in two generations was given to Ely, accompanied by a cousin, as an oblate around 995 to 1001.¹⁵⁹ This transaction, which was tied up with grants of land, should be seen as part of the family's commemoration of Beorhtnoth, and shows the strength of belief in the power of intercession for the dead by a close relative. The *Liber Eliensis* compares Leofflæd and her constant ministering to St Martha; she must have survived her husband by several, if not many, years and devoted her widowhood to charitable acts, dying at some point between 1017 and 1035 when she was buried at Ely.¹⁶⁰ She left her three daughters estates at Stetchford and Wetheringsett which were to revert to Ely.

5.2.2 Æthelswyth, Ælfwynn, and Leofwaru

Æthelswyth (OE *æðelu*, feminine or neuter noun 'nobility', or OE *æðele*, adjective 'noble', + OE *swið*, adjective 'strong'¹⁶¹) was alive at the time of her mother's will which is dated to 1017 to 1035. According to the *Liber Eliensis* she spurned marriage and gave the estate at Stetchford, which she had shared with her sister Ælfwynn to Ely, in exchange for some form of semi-religious life on the nearby Isle of Coveney, where she practised gold embroidery work with her *puellulæ*.¹⁶² In this way Æthelswyth could

¹⁵⁹ The date is suggested by the terminal dates of a bequest made by her husband Oswig, being the dates for Æthelstan, bishop of Elmham, 995x997-7.10.1001. If Ælfwine had been between five and ten at this time, it would suggest he was born 985-990. In light of the fact that three children in this family entered religion, one might speculate whether there was some genetic problem, some physical weakness or some illness that made the parents think that a religious life might be best.

¹⁶⁰ Leofflæd's will is ring-fenced by the dates of the reign of Cnut.

¹⁶¹ Okasha, pp. 61 & 64.

¹⁶² Foot, *Veiled Women*, II, pp. 79-81 for this small group of religious women attached to the male community at Ely in the eleventh century; Foot considers them vowesses (*nunnan*); Fairweather, *Liber Eliensis*, p. 188, n. 405, suggests she may have been running some form of school; items made by Æthelswyth were listed in an Ely inventory from 1134, *LE*, III, 50, – a white chasuble, well-embroidered, and a precious dalmatic. Æthelswyth's avowed skill with the needle has led Wareham and others to contemplate whether it was, in fact, she who made the Beorhtnoth hanging. However, *LE* records that it was given at the time of

intercede directly for her ancestors, for her father and grandfather both killed in battle, and actively maintain the Maldon myth.¹⁶³ We know nothing more of her sister Ælfwynn (OE *ælf*, masculine or feminine noun ‘fairy’ + OE *wynn*, feminine noun ‘joy’¹⁶⁴) than that which we can surmise: if she had not died already, she may have agreed with Æthelswyth’s wishes for Stetchford, which they had held jointly. And so, she may have been content to stay under her eldest sister’s wing at Coveney – one wonders whether their mother’s joint grant was a deliberate act to ensure that the elder sister looked after the younger, perhaps weaker sibling.

By contrast, Leofwaru (OE *leof*, masculine noun ‘friend’, or *lufu*, feminine noun ‘love’, or *leof*, adjective ‘dear’ + OE *waru*, feminine noun ‘protection’¹⁶⁵), the youngest sister (*tertium*), was given a separate estate at Wetheringsett with the stipulation that either she made a Christian marriage or remained chaste, implying that, at the time of her mother’s will, she had not yet reached puberty.¹⁶⁶ Sometime after her mother’s death, therefore, Leofwaru married Lustwine (d. 1036).¹⁶⁷ She was, in fact, the only child of this marriage to marry. It is unfortunate that her will cannot be dated more precisely than to a period from 999 to 1001 to around 1043/45, but it shows how Leofwaru’s first priority, like that of her elder sister, Æthelswyth, was the memorialisation of their illustrious grandfather, Beorhtnoth, rather than as the heirs of their own father.

Beorhtnoth’s death in 991 by his widow, although it is not actually mentioned in Ælflæd’s own will. This might possibly have meant that it was a customary gift – women often gave their best garment as their soulscot and a *cortina* might possibly have been an equivalent. There is no doubt however that fine needlework was a skill shared by the females of Beorhtnoth’s family and it is likely that Æthelswyth had learnt from her grandmother or mother, either of whom were probably equally capable of producing the textile.

¹⁶³ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁴ Okasha, pp. 63-64.

¹⁶⁵ Okasha, pp. 62 & 65.

¹⁶⁶ *LE*, II, 88 and 89.

¹⁶⁷ Locherbie-Cameron, ‘Byrhtnoth and his Family’ (p. 261, n. 17), identifies Lustwine as a relative of Æthelstan Mannesune who left an estate at Knapwell to his *cognato* Leofsige, son of Ælfwine, which descended via Lustwine, Leofsige’s nephew, to Thurstan, son of Leofwaru.

For Wareham, the bequests of this family created a lineage which emphasized their descent from a ‘high-status founding ancestor’.¹⁶⁸ However, Tollerton recognized the important role played by these women who channelled and rechannelled family lands to religious institutions for the spiritual benefit of both themselves, their ancestors and their late husbands.¹⁶⁹ Over time Ely won out as the focus of their veneration. Not only by successive bequests but also by child oblation, this family repeatedly reaffirmed its connection with the spiritual *familia* at Ely.¹⁷⁰ Their creation, grant and display of lavish material goods, in other words grave goods to accompany Beorhtnoth’s body, both commemorated his deeds but exhibited their social identity. In this way Ely became a part of their identity, and Ely chose to commemorate the members of this family as akin to a founding family. *The Ely Calendar*, a necrology of twelve lay benefactors, of whom no fewer than nine came from Ealdorman Ælfgar’s family, provides an indication of the round of rituals which would have been held by the community and the family to memorialize the ancestors, and to re-establish and strengthen the founder bond.¹⁷¹

It is striking that of the nine obits for this family no fewer than seven were for women; for example, the name of Leofwaru is recorded for commemoration on 18 October, but there is no complementary record for her husband, Lustwine. Leofwaru and Lustwine had a son called Thurstan, the first male to inherit in four generations. His will, made around 1045, lists his bequests, including those to his wife, which follow the pattern set by his maternal ancestors, right back to Ealdorman Ælfgar.¹⁷² It is his widow, an East Anglian woman called Æthelgyth (OE *æðelu*, feminine or neuter noun ‘nobility’, or OE *æðele*, adjective ‘noble’, + OE *gyð*, presumably OE *guð*, feminine

¹⁶⁸ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁹ Tollerton, *Wills*, p. 69.

¹⁷⁰ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 235-37.

¹⁷¹ See Wareham, *Lords*, p. 69, and discussion on pp. 69-75.

¹⁷² Wareham, *Lords*.

noun ‘battle’¹⁷³) whom we still see in Domesday Book, holding property from this family, who becomes the last definitively known female of Beorhtnoth’s dynasty. It is Æthelgyth and not Thurstan who is recorded in the Ely necrology and remembered on 11 March. It is this widow, like those before her, whom the monks chose to remember. It was to Æthelgyth that the land, aspirations and hopes of Beorhtnoth’s family descended; the fact that Ely chose to remember her after the Conquest, surely speaks of her success in her inherited role, and at a time of turmoil and unrest. Æthelgyth will now be the subject of the next case-study which forms the second half of this chapter.

5.3 Æthelgyth

Although Ealdorman Ælfgar’s family was only Æthelgyth’s conjugal family, she stood at the end as the sole heiress, and guardian of its destiny. This case-study, therefore, aims to place her within the longer term context of this family, to ask how far these factors applied to Æthelgyth and whether they can help us explain her survival. As intimated above, there has been previous work on her East Anglian family within the context of the Battle of Maldon where her heroic ancestor, Ealdorman Beorhtnoth, is known to have met his death, in general by Locherbie-Cameron, and the women in particular by Stafford.¹⁷⁴ As a rule though, scholars have only discussed Æthelgyth tangentially to Anglo-Saxon wills: Tollerton used her example to demonstrate how the Norman Conquest had obliterated the Old English multi-gift will.¹⁷⁵

But these very same wills and charters reveal an English woman pre-1066 and, as will become clear, one who appears to have survived 1066 as a landholder. At the same time Domesday Book informs us that the scale of Æthelgyth’s 1066 holdings would suggest that she, as an individual, should be taken more seriously, and that she has, until

¹⁷³ Okasha, pp. 58 & 64.

¹⁷⁴ Locherbie-Cameron, ‘Beorhtnoth and his Family’; Stafford, ‘Kinship and Women in the World of *Maldon*’.

¹⁷⁵ Tollerton, *Wills*, pp. 134-35.

now, escaped any concerted scholarly notice is surprising. Although both Meyer and Clarke wrote brief paragraphs on her Domesday estates, the focus was each time drawn to her identity as the widow of a man named Thurstan, rather than to the woman herself.¹⁷⁶ Clarke introduced Æthelgyth as the widow of this Thurstan, but nevertheless analysed her Domesday estate as that which she held as ‘Thurstan’s wife’, even though Domesday never referred to her as such. Meyer assumed that Æthelgyth’s estate was formed simply from normal ‘marriage endowment and the customary laws of the descent of real property to widows’. Nothing of her own then? What we have already learnt in the first half of this chapter would suggest that this might be otherwise.

We can safely identify Æthelgyth as the wife of Thurstan, the son of Lustwine and Leofwaru, whom we have met above, by the clear correspondence of the lands bequeathed by Thurstan to his wife Æthelgyth with the later possessions of the woman called Æthelgyth in Little Domesday Book.¹⁷⁷ However, we know little or nothing about Æthelgyth’s background before she married into this prestigious family. Both the date of her birth and marriage are obscured, and even an educated guess is difficult to formulate. Thurstan left two testaments, one a short bequest to Christ Church, Canterbury, but the second a longer, and much more complex will, was deposited, like many others of this family, at Bury.¹⁷⁸ His first bequest, comprising the single donation of an estate at Wimbish, Essex, to Christ Church, Canterbury, has been confidently dated to around 1042 or 1043, and as Thurstan made this grant not only for the benefit of his soul but also for those of his wife, Æthelgyth, and mother, Leofwaru, we know that the couple were married before 1042/43.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Meyer, ‘Women’s Estates’ (pp. 118-19); Peter Clarke, *The English Nobility*, pp. 235-36.

¹⁷⁷ W. 31.

¹⁷⁸ W. 30 and W. 31, S. 1530 and S. 1531.

¹⁷⁹ W. 31 was dated by Whitelock, according to the list of witnesses, to after Edward was crowned in 1042, but before Stigand became bishop of Elmham in 1043.

5.3.1 Thurstan's Will

There have been questions over the accurate dating of Thurstan's more detailed testament. Although the attestations of Stigand, bishop of Elmham in 1043-1047, and of Abbot Leofsige of Ely (fl. 1029-1044/45), perhaps shortly before his death which the *Liber Eliensis* recorded as 1044, have suggested that it was written subsequent to his bequest to Christ Church, several caveats have been raised which could affect this dating.¹⁸⁰ Firstly, Harmer has dated Leofsige's death to about 1055/1065, a good 10 years later, based on the dating of charter S1110 to 1055 to 1065. Secondly, Simon Keynes has corroborated that Leofsige's attestations do, in fact, cover the period 1053-1065.¹⁸¹ Thirdly, Knowles recorded attestations of two unidentified Leofsiges as late as 1053/1055 but he remained unconvinced that they were evidence for Abbot Leofsige after 1048. Perhaps the dates of another witness, Leofstan, dean of Bury, could decide the issue but if this, as seems likely, is the Leofstan who became abbot of Bury in 1044, then barring some mistake, and despite all the indications otherwise, Thurstan's will can still be dated no later.

That this document purports to be the last will and testament of one Thurstan, the son of Wine, rather than Thurstan, the son of Lustwine, is initially confusing and calls for some clarification before we can safely assume that Æthelgyth's spouse was none

¹⁸⁰ Stigand emerges as a young cleric in 1020 to whom Cnut gave his memorial church on the site of the Battle of *Assandune*, probably Ashdown in Essex. He was consecrated bishop of Elmham in 1043 and bishop of Winchester in 1047, succeeding to the see of Canterbury in 1052, whilst still retaining the episcopacy of Winchester; for Stigand, see M. F. Smith, 'Archbishop Stigand and the Eye of the Needle', *ANS*, 16 (1993), 199-219 and Rumble, 'From Winchester to Canterbury'. *The Chronicon Abbatum et Episcoporum Eliensium* assigns fifteen years to the abbacy of Leofsige from 1029.

¹⁸¹ Blake follows Florence E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952), pp. 255 and 566; Simon Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c.670-1066* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 1993) dates as follows: S.1478 (1053/1055), the spurious S.1025 (c. 1054), and S.1026 (1055-1062/1065). Although I can find no reference by Keynes to S.1110; *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales*, I, 940-1216, ed. by David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 44-45 and 248, and discussion on p. 226, app. 1.

other than Thurstan, the son of Lustwine, and heir to Ealdorman Ælfgar's East Anglian dynasty. In this regard Whitelock made two observations: first how rare was the name *Lustwine* and second that Thurstan had held several estates that the *Liber Eliensis* had recorded as previously being Lustwine's. These points taken together make it likely that the Thurstan of Will 31 who called himself son of Wine was the same as Thurstan, the son of Lustwine. Furthermore, Feilitzen noted many instances of the name *Wine* in Domesday Book where they appeared to be diminutives of *Wulfwine*. This would not preclude and, in fact, would suggest that *Wine* could also represent a shortened form of several other dithematic names which contain *-wine* as the second element, including Lustwine. The Thorney *Liber Vitæ* includes an entry made around the second quarter of the twelfth century of the same hypocoristic and here, too, the editors have concluded that it may have represented a shortened form of names beginning or ending with *-wine*. However, Thurstan's identification as the son of Lustwine is secured, as Whitelock demonstrated, by the fact that in his will he granted several properties which according to the *Liber Eliensis*, had earlier been in Lustwine's possession, for example, Knapwell, and Ashdon in Essex. Moreover, his will makes specific reference to *an girde* (yardland) *þe Lustwine hauede* at Henham.¹⁸²

Thurstan made two grants that suggest that he and Æthelgyth had at least two children. He gave a single estate at Weston (Colville) in Cambridgeshire to a female called Æthelswyth for her lifetime, after which it was to go to Ely, in accordance with the earlier bequest of his father, Lustwine.¹⁸³ And although Æthelswyth was the name of one of Thurstan's maternal aunts (of whom see above), she surely would have been in her dotage by this time. It must be likely, especially considering the shared use of the

¹⁸² W. 31, p. 84, l. 4.

¹⁸³ Whitelock, *Wills*, p.193, and Wareham, *Lords*, following Whitelock, both have Weston near Pentlow in Essex, but S.1531 has Weston Colville in Cambridgeshire – the latter is more likely since it had been held by Lustwine, and had been in the hands of Ely Abbey at 1066.

first element *Æthel-*, as in *Æthelgyth*, that this was a daughter of Thurstan and *Æthelgyth*. This suggestion is strengthened by a later addendum to Thurstan's will: whereas in the original he had given his wife, *Æthelgyth*, some land at Henham in Essex, excepting half a hide for the village church, in the latter he gave Henham, with several riders, first to *Æthelgyth* and someone called Askil, and then to *Æthelswyth* for her lifetime, before finally it should revert to Ely.¹⁸⁴

Askil is generally recognized as the couple's son although this is not corroborated by any other source, nor can any Domesday Askil be definitively identified as the son of Thurstan. The single reference to Askil in Thurstan's will perplexed Locherbie-Cameron, causing her to contemplate whether he may have been a priest.¹⁸⁵ He may, of course, have been already provided for. But, if indeed he was a priest, perhaps Aski the priest at Holme's church of All Saints in Little Moulton, Norfolk, would have been the most likely contender.¹⁸⁶

5.3.2 Did the Family Survive?

It is probable that *Æthelgyth* had died by 1086 when Domesday records that all her lands had changed hands; for example, Thurstan had specified that his bequest of Wimbish, Essex, to Christ Church should provide sustenance for the community after he and his wife had enjoyed life use of it first.¹⁸⁷ Little Domesday Book tells us that the eight-hide manor at Wimbish was in *Æthelgyth*'s possession right up to the arrival of the Normans.¹⁸⁸ Although Thurstan had carefully prepared a scheme of pious donations for the purpose of safeguarding his and *Æthelgyth*'s souls, none of these benefactions,

¹⁸⁴ LDB fol. 71a shows how TRE Henham was still in *Æthelgyth*'s hands.

¹⁸⁵ Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family'.

¹⁸⁶ Aski the priest had held two free men and had given pledge; LDB fol. 273a; Julia Barrow, *Who served the Altar at Brixworth? Clergy in English Minsters c. 800-c. 1100*, The Brixworth Lectures, 2nd ser., 9 (Brixworth, Friends of All Saints Church, 2013), p. 60; 'Aski the priest', PASE.

¹⁸⁷ W. 31.

¹⁸⁸ LDB fol. 69b.

which were planned to post-date his wife's death, seem to have taken effect. With the exception of Bromley, they are all listed in LDB as still in her hands in 1066, as they should have been under the terms of the will.¹⁸⁹ Whatever the date of her death, there seems little doubt, therefore, that she was alive and well in 1066, which gives us the ability to study a known survivor across the crucial 1066 date. She is one of very few women, other than royal or comital women, for whom we have sources both before and after the Conquest.

Nevertheless, Domesday shows no record of her daughter, Æthelswyth, and the estate at Weston Colville which she had been given for her lifetime had reverted to Ely, in accordance with the wishes of both her father and grandfather. TRE Ely Abbey was subletting it to Toki, an antecessor of William de Warenne; Toki was not allowed to separate it from the church as it accounted for part of the abbey's household revenue.¹⁹⁰ The future that Thurstan had envisaged and carefully planned for was subverted by the events of 1066 and Henham was to remain in the hands of Æthelgyth and never appears to have passed to either Askil or Æthelswyth. However, Askil the priest, not necessarily the son of Æthelgyth and Thurstan, was still alive in 1086 when he gave his pledge to the king to give up two free men whom he was holding at the time, probably illegally.¹⁹¹

5.3.3 Her Lands

Æthelgyth's estate was listed by Clarke as the twenty-ninth most valuable TRE non-*eorlisc* estate in the whole of Domesday Book.¹⁹² In 1066 Æthelgyth's estates stretched along a north-east corridor away from London into roughly two concentrations in Norfolk, one in Clackclose Hundred in the west of the county, the other around the central hundred of Mitford. In Essex she held seven estates, of which Henham was by

¹⁸⁹ Refer Table 5.1 below, for a complete list of relevant Domesday Book references.

¹⁹⁰ GDB fols 196b and c.

¹⁹¹ LDB fol. 273a.

¹⁹² Clarke, *The Nobility*, p. 32.

far her largest property, covering 1,630 acres in the Uttesford district. To the north she had three estates on the western fringes of Suffolk. (See Map 5.1) We have already noted that it was the largest of any woman after Eadgifu the Fair. To put that into some perspective, Clarke valued Eadgifu's estate at £332 and Æthelgyth's estate at £111; the next largest estate held by a woman was held by Wulfgifu Betteslau, primarily in Hampshire, and this Clarke valued at £98.¹⁹³ It is evident that Eadgifu's estate was in a whole different league, and although Clarke referred to it as non-*eorlisc*, it is now accepted that she owed at least some of her property to her relationship with Earl Harold. It seems sensible, therefore, to classify Æthelgyth's estate as the largest held by any non-*eorlisc* woman, not only in East Anglia but across the whole of England, which makes the study of her, and whether she survived, and of her lands essential.

Our two main sources for Æthelgyth and her landholding are Thurstan's will and Little Domesday Book. If we put them together, Domesday shows how estates that had been Lustwine's had passed via Thurstan to Æthelgyth. Thurstan made a detailed inventory of estates which he bequeathed to Æthelgyth, of which the main anomalous group was perhaps that which *ic an mine wife Ailgið al pe ping pe ic haue on Norfolke so ic it her hire gaf to mund and to maldage* (I [give] to my wife Æthelgyth everything that I have in Norfolk, just as I gave it to her as a bride price and covenant). There have been questions about the nature of this grouping, specifically its relationship to any agreements made at the time of the marriage. Whitelock translated the phrase used here '*gaf to mund and to maldage*' both as 'bride payment and by agreement' and as 'a marriage payment and in accordance with our contract,' concluding that *maldage* was a

¹⁹³ Æthelgyth's estate also included a strip of land at Shouldham in Norfolk of a league (three miles) in length; which has not been included in this total; Æthelgyth's estate was taxable at £111, Eadgifu's at £366. See also Clarke, p. 32.

borrowing from Old Norse.¹⁹⁴ In fact, this tautological couplet may exemplify one of our earliest attestations of this word.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps Whitelock may have stretched her translation too far with the implication of *maldage* being ‘in accordance to our contract’, when it is likely that Thurstan did not mean to add any further layer of signification by his use of the second word but rather to employ a nice-sounding alliterative doublet where one word would have sufficed.¹⁹⁶ No Anglo-Saxon *morgengifu* (morning gift) is specified in the will although there may well have been one.¹⁹⁷

It is unfortunate that Thurstan felt no need to itemize Æthelgyth’s Norfolk estates; they had probably been formally announced previously and would have been common knowledge among their contemporaries. But it raises the question which of her Norfolk properties had she received at her marriage? It is immediately possible to separate out three of Æthelgyth’s Norfolk estates which were definitely not part of the marriage agreement: those at Shouldham where she held three parcels of land in the same vill, all of which were specifically named in Thurstan’s will with explicit instructions regarding their intended distribution to various religious foundations after the couple’s deaths. The

¹⁹⁴ Whitelock, *Wills*, p. 195; *mál-dagi*, is translated as ‘a covenant, agreement’ in *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. by William A. Craigie, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

¹⁹⁵ Alaric Hall, pers. comm.

¹⁹⁶ *Wills*, pp. 190, 195, 135-36; other alliterative doublets being *sake and soke*, *toll and team*; Whitelock made further reference to the Scandinavian influence in Thurstan’s testaments in his earlier bequest to Bury, where a list of benefactors refers to him as *vir strenuus Heing Thurstan*. ‘Heing’ is a frequent Icelandic nickname whose original significance we have now lost but which literally meant ‘salmon’.

¹⁹⁷ Æthelgyth’s Norfolk properties, defined as those properties that were covered by her marriage agreement, have been frequently discussed by those mainly interested in the instrument of the Anglo-Saxon vernacular will or the rights of Anglo-Saxon women and widows as portrayed therein, rather than as a source for the woman herself and her significance. Note that Crick in, ‘Women, Posthumous Benefaction, and Family Strategy in Pre-Conquest England’, wondered why Thurstan thought it necessary to regrant Æthelgyth’s *morgengifu*. However, the will itself never specifically mentioned it; one assumes that she was referring to the marriage payment. Holdsworth considered that this ‘regranting’ may have served to protect Æthelgyth’s interests from avaricious relatives. If this were the intention of the will, Æthelgyth’s evident successful survival could suggest that this aim was achieved.

Shouldhams, although dealt with individually by Thurstan, joined with Æthelgyth's other Norfolk properties to form a geographically compact group based in the west of the county, concentrated around the hundred of Clackclose: Barton Bendish, Boughton, and Fincham, and within the neighbouring hundreds of Freebridge, South Greenhoe, Wayland, and Shropham: Wiggerhall, Bradenham, Merton and Wilby respectively.

Included in table 5.1 are three properties where Domesday records only that they were held by a freewoman, that is Pentlow and Messing in Essex, and Crimplesham in Norfolk.¹⁹⁸ In the first case the geographical proximity of Pentlow and Messing to other of Æthelgyth's properties is striking; additionally, we know from Thurstan's will that he had previously held Pentlow.¹⁹⁹ Thus we can probably safely assume that the freewoman referred to here is none other than Æthelgyth. The fact that Pentlow and Messing shared the same successor in 1086, Ralph Baynard, who, as will become clear, was frequently Æthelgyth's successor, adds weight to the theory that Messing was also Æthelgyth's. In the case of the third *vill*, Crimplesham, the freewoman who had held 240 acres there in 1066 was addressed in Domesday as *alid libera femina*. Farley transcribed this as *alia* (another) freewoman but *alid* is surely a transcription of *Æthelgyth*; it was written in the same way in the entry for Fincham, Norfolk – *Alid libera femina* (Æthelgyth a free woman).²⁰⁰ Crimplesham, along with Yaxham, were the only two of Æthelgyth's Norfolk estates not to pass to the hands of Ralph Baynard, transferring instead into the possession of Rainald fitzIvo. In 1086 Baynard also held five out of her six estates in Essex, the exception being a one-hide manor at (Chipping) Ongar which was in the possession of Eustace (II) aux Gernons, count of Boulogne and the brother-in-law of Edward the Confessor.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ GDB fols 69b, 230b.

¹⁹⁹ Lewis, 'Joining the Dots'.

²⁰⁰ GDB fols 230b, 250b; von Feilitzen concurs on pp.183-84.

²⁰¹ LDB fols 30b and 31a; note that at (Chipping) Ongar there was also one freeman with half a hide which had previously belonged to the manor, TRW Ralph Baynard was holding it.

The different successors to Æthelgyth's lands raise questions and sow an initial doubt that perhaps not all of her Norfolk properties came to her in the same way. Whitelock hypothesized many years ago that the variety of Æthelgyth's successors might give a clue to the different origins of her lands. The following discussion aims not only to pursue this issue but also intends to investigate what these various Norman successors can tell us about Æthelgyth, her lands and family. The fate of two of her estates was singular: Gilbert son of Richere received her estate at Mildenhall on the border between Suffolk and Norfolk, and Count Eustace, as discussed above, succeeded to her estate at (Chipping) Ongar.²⁰² However, Æthelgyth's main successor was Ralph Baynard, a prominent associate of William I, whose family came from Saint-Leger-des-Rôtes in Eure in Normandy. In William I's English realm he occupied the post of sheriff of Essex, for a period from around 1076x1081.²⁰³ Her next significant successor was Rainald fitzIvo, who received her estates at Crimlesham and Yaxham in Norfolk. It is these particular possessions and their successor that give us further important clues about Æthelgyth and her family.

In 1086 Rainald fitzIvo held a lot of property throughout Norfolk, most of which had been previously annexed by his grandfather, Wihenoc of Burley, a follower of Earl Ralph.²⁰⁴ But another group of entries appear to reveal a local kinship network behind some of the properties which held by Rainald in 1086. He held a series of estates at villas connected with Æthelgyth: at Crimlesham he held Æthelgyth's manor of two carucates and 27 of her free men; also three men of Toombes who were attached to Crimlesham, at Yaxham he held her five acres of woodland and one meadow. In

²⁰² LDB fol. 263a; LDB omits to give the total acreage of the Mildenhall estate, but its TRE value of £5 suggests that it was not small; in W. 31 Ongar appears to have been a very high-status site with a deer enclosure and a stud; that it was used frequently was attested to not only by it being their nearest manor to London, but also by their complement of favourite retainers.

²⁰³ *DP*, p. 327; Green, *Sheriffs*, p.39.

²⁰⁴ As at Fincham where Æthelgyth also held.

addition it is noticeable that he held land in villis where Æthelgyth had previously held land, but where she was not his antecessor. For instance, his manors at Boughton, Shouldham, and Barton Bendish had all been held in 1066 by Thurkil. A shared succession at the same villis suggests some connection between Æthelgyth and Thurkil – could it be familial?²⁰⁵ The fact that in 1066 Thurkil had held his land at Crimplesham as a tenant of Æthelgyth raises the possibility that he could have been Æthelgyth’s son. This assumption is strengthened by the reuse of nominal elements: the initial element *Thur-* as in Thurstan and Thurkil, and the ending *-kil* as in Askil and Thurkil. Was this the elder brother in receipt of his customary inheritance? It is significant that although Thurkil was no longer in possession of his own Domesday estates in 1086, he had survived holding a carucate of Æthelgyth’s own estate at Crimplesham as a tenant of Rainald fitzIvo.²⁰⁶ However, Thurkil’s usual successor was Hermer de Ferrers, which adds weight to the theory that the holdings where he was succeeded by Rainald fitzIvo or his son Roger son of Rainald, were those with a connection to his natal family through Æthelgyth.²⁰⁷ The apparent bond between Æthelgyth and Thurkil is confirmed if we allow them to be recognized as the couple with the same names who deposited a joint bequest of uncertain date at Bury.²⁰⁸ In this bequest they granted Wereham in Norfolk and all the men they possessed there to St Edmunds. By 1086 this too was in the hands of Rainald fitzIvo.

However, as far as Domesday tells us, neither Æthelgyth nor Thurkil had apparently held land in Wereham in 1066. But a man named Toli had, and once again his successor

²⁰⁵ For all Domesday references, please consult Table 4.1.

²⁰⁶ LDB fol. 230b; the six estates which Thurkil had held in his own right in 1066 were now held by Rainald or his family, that is his nephew Ralph fitzHerluin, son of his brother Herluin and Roger fitzRainard, whom I identify as his own son, on the basis of geographical proximity and a shared antecessor.

²⁰⁷ ‘Thurkil of Stow Bardolph’, PASE.

²⁰⁸ W. 36.

to his estates and men at Wereham, Upwell, and Stoke Ferry was Rainald fitzIvo.²⁰⁹ It looks as if this tight concentration of estates and men in patronage reflect the possessions of a local kindred; further, the numbers of commended men would suggest that we have stumbled across their heartlands. The number of men commended to Æthelgyth is not insignificant, suggesting that she was by no means a secondary player in the group. But who was Toli?

TRE Toli's estates were centred round Barton Bendish, where we have noted that both Thurkil and Æthelgyth had held land, and Wereham, the centre of his estate, which lay between the heaths of south-west Norfolk and the Wissey Valley.²¹⁰ Whitelock surmised that Toli might have left Thurkil and Æthelgyth his Wereham holding either just before or after 1066.²¹¹ Lewis, writing about Toli the pre-Conquest sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, came to a similar conclusion – that Toli ceased to be the sheriff and retired to Bury in 1065 or 1066.²¹² Although Lewis distinguishes between Toli the sheriff and Toli of Wereham, I, as Morris, have no problem as seeing them as one and the same; indeed the information as laid out here makes that seems probable.²¹³ We have now built up a connection between Æthelgyth, a possible son, Thurkil, and now Toli, who should probably be seen as Toli the sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk.²¹⁴ But what was Toli to Æthelgyth other than a benefactor? Does he enter this picture in his role as sheriff with access to her lands through his office? Or could there have been a family connection? The close proximity of their lands, and the three way division of

²⁰⁹ LDB fols 230b, 231a, and 232a.

²¹⁰ Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday People: Some Corrigenda' in *Domesday Descendants: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), p. 4. Later Rainald fitzIvo founded an alien priory at Wereham, in honour of the Breton Saint Winwaloe, as a cell of Montreuil-sur-Mer. See also 'Toli 4', PASE.

²¹¹ Whitelock, *Wills*, p. 206.

²¹² 'Toli 2', PASE.

²¹³ William Alfred Morris, *The Medieval English Sheriff* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, repr. 1968), pp. 17-40.

²¹⁴ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76, Toli sheriff of Suffolk 1052, 1053/1057, and of Norfolk.

land, as at Barton Bendish, would suggest that Toli could have been a father or brother. His grant of his most prestigious estate at Wereham to Æthelgyth and Thurkil, presumably on his deathbed, suggests that he had no son. It is probable that the lands which Æthelgyth had held which had connections to Toli, as at Barton Bendish and Crimplasham, were her own lands, from her natal family, and not those of the marriage agreement with Thurstan; but a marriage which joined together such contiguous estates would have been advantageous.

Another entry in Domesday Book provides further links between an Æthelgyth and Thurkil: it seems unusual that two individuals with these same names had in 1066 held equal shares of 720 acres apiece at Old Somerby in Lincolnshire.²¹⁵ Could they be Æthelgyth and her son? The distance from their other holdings, coupled with a different successor would suggest otherwise; the six bovates of sokeland that had been held TRE by Æthelgyth at Old Somerby, were TRW in the hands of Guy de Craon.²¹⁶ The high instance of Thurkils in Domesday Book, especially in Scandinavian-influenced Eastern England, would also work against this hypothesis.²¹⁷ However, there is only one other Æthelgyth in Domesday Book. It should be noted that this Thurkil also survived to 1086.²¹⁸ Perhaps it is significant that Æthelgyth held Old Somerby free of geld but rather by the service of helping *in exercitu regis in terra et in mari*, perhaps a hereditary duty held by the family of Toli the sheriff, who also had official business in the royal manor at Thorney and probably in the great royal town of Dunwich.²¹⁹ Alternatively, one might wonder if Old Somerby should be linked with Æthelgyth's holding of 780

²¹⁵ GDB fol. 368a.

²¹⁶ *DP*, p. 51 and n. 37. Roffe, 'Hidden Lives'. Guy de Craon succeeded to much of the land around Old Somerby which formed a compact lordship in South Kesteven, Lincolnshire, mostly from the King's thegn Æthelstan son of Godram, and his brothers. Guy de Craon appears to have owed his barony to the fall of Earl Ralph; see GDB fol. 377b.

²¹⁷ PASE recognizes 92 different individuals holding this name in Domesday Book.

²¹⁸ Frank Stenton noted that in 1066 Æthelgyth's portion at Old Somerby was annexed to the manor of Keisby that was held by the thegn, Osfram, but the nature of their relationship was, nevertheless, obscure.

²¹⁹ 'Toli sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, fl. 1066', PASE.

acres at Shimpling in Norfolk where she held *sub glorioso rege Edwardo*; this unusually loquacious comment led Meyer to contemplate whether Æthelgyth had received Shimpling by royal charter from Edward the Confessor.²²⁰

5.3.4 Date of Dispossession

In Little Domesday Book we are often fortunate to receive greater detail: one such is the three value points, then, later, and now, which indicate an interim transfer of land some time after 1066.²²¹ This extra detail accompanies several entries where Æthelgyth is the antecessor of Ralph Baynard. Frequently Ralph's entries, including many for Æthelgyth's property, as for instance at Shouldhams Thorpe and Tottenhill, repeat the phrase that Ralph's men said he claimed it in exchange (*reclamat pro escangio*), which draws further attention to a land acquisition at a third point in time.²²² Mortimer demonstrated how Baynard used the mechanism of exchange to acquire extra freemen and sokemen in the vicinity of his main holdings, and that it was therefore logical to assume that this process must have followed the normal acquisition of lands from his English antecessors.²²³ In one instance Domesday records how the land of three men of Bishop Stigand's had been *vivente Stigando liberatum e Baignardo pro escangio*, suggesting that Baynard's exchange occurred after 1066, and, at least for this element of it, before the death of Stigand in 1072.²²⁴ There can be no doubt that his estate was formed over a period of time rather than in one set of transfers soon after 1066, and that he succeeded to the bulk of Æthelgyth's lands. Indeed, he centred his honour on Æthelgyth's small manor at Little Dunmow.²²⁵

²²⁰ LDB fol. 234a.

²²¹ Marten, 'The Impact'.

²²² LDB fol. 251a; Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 56, Ralph Baynard, sheriff of London and Middlesex, or castellan of Baynard's castle from 1075 to 1085.

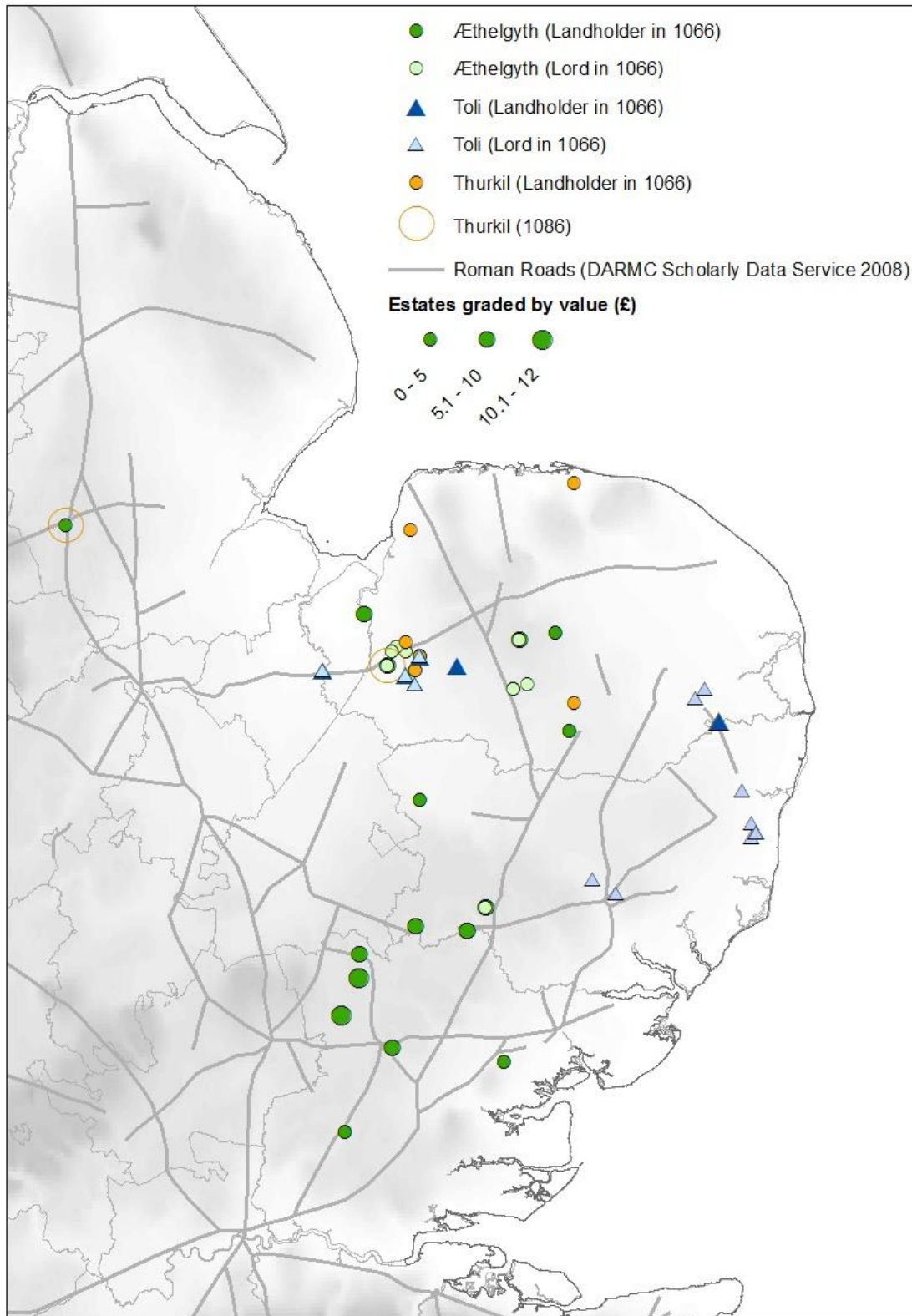
²²³ Richard Mortimer, 'The Baynards of Baynards Castle' in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), 241-53 (pp. 250-51).

²²⁴ LDB fol. 252b.

²²⁵ LDB fols 69a and b; perhaps because of its proximity to the present-day A11.

Vill	Acres	TRE	TRW	County	fos
Ongar (Chipping)	120	Æthelgyth	Count Eustace	Essex	30b/31a
Mildenhall	10	Æthelgyth	Gilbert son of Richard	Norfolk	263a
Old Somerby	120	Æthelgyth	Guy de Craon	Lincs	368a
Kedington	600	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Suffolk	413b
Shimpling	780	Æthelgyth, under King Edward	Ralph Baynard	Suffolk	415b
Great and Little Dunmow	540	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Essex	69a/b
Wimbish	960	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Essex	69b
Pentlow	570	free woman	Ralph Baynard	Essex	69b/70a
Messing	60	free woman	Ralph Baynard	Essex	69
Ashdon	240	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Essex	71a
Henham	1630	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Essex	71a
Barton Bendish	240	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	250b
Fincham	120	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	250b
Shouldham	3 miles	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	250b/251a
Boughton	120	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	251a
Shouldham Thorpe and Tottenhill	110	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	251a
Wiggenhall	240	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	251a
Bradenham		Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	252a
Merton	390	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	252a
Wilby	120	Æthelgyth	Ralph Baynard	Norfolk	252a
Crimplesham	240	Æthelgyth	Rainald fitzIvo	Norfolk	230b
Yaxham	5	Æthelgyth	Rainald fitzIvo	Norfolk	232b

Table 5-1 Æthelgyth's Domesday Book Estates



Map 5-1 Holdings of Æthelgyth, Toli, and Thurkil

The progression to Baynard of Æthelgyth's holdings where Thurstan's will had made more complex provisions for religious institutions, and favourite retainers underlines the fact that Baynard was the major beneficiary of Æthelgyth's 1066 holdings, and that it was the fact that she was holding them – not any other provisions attached to them – which underlies his succession.

It would appear that Æthelgyth's estate at Mildenhall was also transferred late, to Gilbert son of Richere. It was certainly treated unusually in Domesday Book: recorded in Norfolk, although it actually lay in Suffolk, which seems to suggest a very recent change in the estate's history, not yet clarified in the documents and returns on which Domesday Book was based. Gilbert's grandfather, Engenulf, was the only prominent Norman to actually die at Hastings and yet the family has such a low profile in Domesday, in fact only holding two manors, Mildenhall, and Witley in Surrey.²²⁶ This may indicate that Richere had been too young to capitalize on the Norman gains after Hastings. However, both he and his son were close to William I and as members of his *familia regis* fought at the siege of Sainte-Suzanne, where Richere died on 18 November 1085.²²⁷ I suggest that Witley and Mildenhall may have been given to Gilbert by William I in the wake of Sainte-Suzanne in recompense for the death of his father and in recognition of his own services to the crown there. Similarly the two properties where Æthelgyth was the antecessor of Rainald fitzIvo once again LDB refers to a third time point. It may, of course, be that this refers to Wihenoc's annexations, mentioned above, although it is not spelt out, but it nevertheless suggests a change of ownership at some time after 1066.

²²⁶ Kathleen Thompson, 'The Lords of L'Aigle', *ANS*, 18 (1995), 177-99 (pp. 176-77, p. 180). Although Witley and Mildenhall are some distance from each other, they were connected by Roman Stane Street 1.

²²⁷ *OV*, IV, pp. 48-50. In January 1086 Gilbert and William de Warenne attempted unsuccessfully to avenge Richere's death.

After considering the transfer points of Æthelgyth's holdings to Ralph Baynard, Gilbert son of Richere, and Rainald fitzIvo, it is evident that Æthelgyth survived beyond 1066, perhaps until 1072, the death of Stigand, or perhaps even as late as 1085 or 1086, the date of the siege of Saint-Suzanne. However, it must be pointed out that just the fact of a late transfer does not necessarily mean that Æthelgyth lived until then; it may be that she had died earlier and her lands had remained in the king's hands for some time before being redistributed. But for this, perhaps Mildenhall, given to Gilbert son of Richere could have been in the hands of Ralph Baynard in 1086.

William I himself only acquired some of his lands subsequent to 1066, for example all his lands that had been forfeited by Earl Ralph after his 1075 rebellion, which Godric the Sheriff held in his hand. It is significant that most exchanges in Domesday Book are recorded within the King's Lands. That many exchanges involve well-known sheriffs such as Geoffrey de Mandeville and Peter de Valognes, suggests that this was something that sheriffs were uniquely placed to exploit.²²⁸ It would appear that Ralph's exchange was at this level, for he received seven free men and their lands at Poslingford in Suffolk, where *rex concessit ei*.²²⁹ One may tentatively wonder if Ralph at some point also acquired Æthelgyth's widows' lands from the King, perhaps as compensation for the costs of building Baynard's Castle in London.²³⁰ Had William, until this point, included Æthelgyth, the widow of Thurstan, in that group of élite English women whom he allowed to hold their dower lands safely and undisturbed? Stafford has drawn our attention to the relationship between Anglo-Saxon female survivors and sheriffs' holdings in Domesday which led her to contemplate whether widows' lands in theory became the property of the King.²³¹ Although the sheriff was ostensibly holding them

²²⁸ Green, *Sheriffs*.

²²⁹ LDB fol. 413b.

²³⁰ David Roffe, pers. comm.

²³¹ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday', p. 78 considers Æthelgyth as an example of the English widows who were undisturbed by William I.

for the King, the situation was perhaps open to abuse, and allowed him the opportunity to transform this holding into a stronger claim. In this case, it would appear that William sanctioned Ralph's rights to Æthelgyth's estates, and the jurors had even seen the writ – *ex hoc vidimus breves*, allowing the extension of his holding of her land beyond those he would have held as sheriff of Essex.²³² Her lands elsewhere would normally perhaps have fallen to local sheriffs, but still have been in the king's gift.

If Æthelgyth's estates had been defined early on as in some way 'shrieval' – that is a group of lands held by virtue of the sheriff's concern for the king's rights, here her widows' lands – they may have been passed from sheriff to sheriff. But an alternative scenario might be that she had successfully managed to retain her lands until around the time of Ralph's term of office – a prima-facie case for her survival until that point. According to Judith Green, Ralph was sheriff of Essex roughly from 1072-1076, but David Bates has more recently dated his period of office from 1076-1081.²³³ He was also castellan of Baynard's Castle 1075 to 1085. Although there is much confusion over who was what when with several sheriffs of Essex throughout this period, Bates noted how references to Ralph Baynard as sheriff of Essex tend to date to the second half of the 1070s and early 1080s. He has dated one writ of William I which was addressed to three of his sheriffs including Ralph, as late as 1076-1085.²³⁴ Thus, although this writ may have been issued within the same period as the other items which mention Ralph, there is a possibility that it could have been slightly later.

5.3.5 Familial Context

Æthelgyth's landholding can be placed within the schemata of the longer-term family context. In 1066 she was holding estates at several places, including Kedington,

²³² LDB fol. 413b.

²³³ Green, 'Sheriffs', p. 39 has Swein son of Robert as sheriff from 1066 to 1075, and thereafter intermittently; Bates, *Regesta*, p. 440.

²³⁴ Bates, *Regesta*, no 313.

Pentlow, Wimbish, and Ashdon which had belonged to Leofwaru and Lustwine, and had been transmitted via Thurstan to her.²³⁵ With regard to these estates of Beorhtnoth's legacy we would fully expect her, without the interruption of the Norman Conquest, to have completed the wishes of her marital ancestors.

Thurstan had left her with explicit instructions for the reversion of some of their estates after her death: Wimbish should go to Christ Church, Shouldham North Hall to Bury St Edmunds, Shouldham Middle Hall, half to St Benedict's, Ramsey, and half to St Benet's at Holme. So, too, had he arranged for the disposal of the estate at Kedington to the clerics who served at the local church, probably an Anglo-Saxon minster.²³⁶ He also left land at Bromley which after her death was to go to the village church at Ashdon but during her life we can assume that Æthelgyth was personally responsible for the church at Ashdon. This was the probable site of the Battle of *Assingdune*, no doubt of significance to a family who had lost two prominent father figures fighting against the Danes at Maldon and Ringmere, and possibly others at Ashdon.²³⁷ She continued Thurstan's family's patronage of Ely and thereby maintained the commemoration of Beorhtnoth; the *Ely Calendar* records her personal donation of one estate, in all probability she would have intended to leave more on her death. Ely held her in high esteem and memorialized her along with Æthelflæd, Ælfflæd, Beorhtmoth, Leofflæd, Oswig, Æthelswyth, and Leofwaru.²³⁸

²³⁵ W. 31.

²³⁶ That Kedington could well have been a favourite home is suggested by the presence of a church associated with them where prayers could be said on a frequent basis, thus requiring resident priests, as Ælfric, Thurstan's personal priest, and Thurstan and Ordheah, the hirdprests; a Taxatio value of £20 would suggest a major Anglo-Saxon minster at Kedington.

²³⁷ No doubt an important minster: Taxatio value of £25; Ann Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: The Ill-Counselled King* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), pp. 144-48, possible site of the battle, but note that according to Warwick Rodwell, 'The Battle of Assandun and its Memorial Church' Cnut's memorial church is more likely to have been the minster at Hadstock.

²³⁸ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 69.

Like the great widows who had preceded her she had to consider the wishes of her natal family who, if my identifications are correct, patronized Bury St Edmunds – Toli the sheriff had given the abbey 120 acres at Broome in Suffolk some time prior to 1066, holding it thereafter as their tenant.²³⁹ Presumably he left his putative daughter and grandson his estate at Wereham in Norfolk on his deathbed, probably with reversion to Bury just after 1066.²⁴⁰ Their joint bequest shows that they had fully intended that after their deaths it should revert to Bury but, in the event, it passed into the hands of Rainald fitzIvo.²⁴¹ As the daughter of a loyal and trusted royal servant, Æthelgyth's ownership of Shimpling and Old Somerby suggests that she still honoured some of the hereditary offices of her father's family.

Conclusions

This chapter has introduced the English woman Æthelgyth, who was probably born in the first quarter of the eleventh century, and who was married to Thurstan, the son of Ealdorman Beorhtnoth's granddaughter, Leofwaru. It has examined the female members of this dynasty and has underlined the importance of their landholding. Æthelgyth received a legacy heavy with responsibility and this study has shown how, if not for the intrusion on normal events of the Norman Conquest, she would most probably have completed the demands of both her conjugal and natal families. It is to her credit that Ely honoured Æthelgyth as the donor of an estate at this tumultuous time, although they did not furnish us with its name. It is significant that Ely chose to commemorate the widows, Æthelgyth and her mother-in-law Leofwaru, rather than their respective husbands. They obviously held the womenfolk of Beorhtnoth's dynasty

²³⁹ LDB fol. 211b *per firmam II dierum* which 'Toli the sheriff', PASE, suggests that it rendered enough produce to support the monks for two days.

²⁴⁰ LDB fol. 230b.

²⁴¹ W. 36.

in high esteem, and Æthelgyth was no different – she succeeded. The *Ely Calendar* remembers her death on 11 March.²⁴² Did Ely see her as the last representative of this English family who had defended Eastern England for so long?

The unique opportunity of comparing Thurstan's will with Domesday Book has shown how Æthelgyth possessed several of the estates of Ealdorman Beorhthnoth's kindred. Widowed before 1066, at the time of the Norman Conquest she still retained in her own hands those that she had received from her husband, Thurstan, along with others of her own, making her the richest non-comital woman in England. The study of her successors has suggested alternative provenances for her estates: those that she had received from her husband, and brought to the marriage passed into the ownership of Ralph Baynard, whilst Rainald fitzIvo received the land of her birth family. In this manner we have been introduced to two Norman sheriffs and their succession to Æthelgyth's lands raises questions about their activities, especially with regard to their acquisition of the property of widows. Questions which we may have cause to revisit.

Through her antecessorship of Rainald I have argued that a son Thurkil, who survived as a tenant on his mother's old estate of Crimlesham, and probably as the holder of six bovates at Old Somerby, can be identified. And I have suggested that Æthelgyth may have been the daughter (or sister) of the Anglo-Saxon sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, Toli.

An analysis of all her Domesday holdings has shown how they may have been redistributed to her successors as late as 1072 or 1075 to 1085 or 86. This long survival could have been helped not only by her respected, widowed status but also as a member of a family of royal servants who had served William I's avowed predecessor, Edward the Confessor. Æthelgyth belonged to a family of national renown which survived

²⁴² The *Ely Calendar* printed in Wareham, *Lords*, p. 69, shows how she shares her obit day with Count Alan. It is interesting that Thurstan's estate at Burrough Green had been a TRE estate of Eadgifu the Fair. Is there be a link?

through her, its last celebrated member after 1066, with its regional respect intact. She was an important English woman who, through the fortunate survival of a combination of testamentary and documentary sources, is uniquely positioned to tell us about English women across the Conquest. We turn now to English women who survived to 1086 and beyond.

Chapter 6 Identifying Survivors

So far my case-studies have concentrated on women with large estates and famous family backgrounds to ask what happened to them, and how their inherited wealth and obligations might have affected their survival across the Conquest. Other women made their own way after 1066. But how can we identify them and what were the factors that allowed these women to survive and thrive in the post-Conquest world?

Two case studies can be made which are suggestive of how this can be achieved and reveal interesting possibilities. The first comes from Lincolnshire, a comparatively large shire but one which had only nineteen English women holding land in 1066 in Domesday Book, and no more than eight in 1086, of whom only two (or three) are named.¹ A name which is recorded at both time points is *Beorhtgifu*. The second case study ranges across four shires of our research area: Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Suffolk, and Essex. For these too it is worth reminding ourselves of the raw statistics which have been drawn from Domesday Book. Firstly in Great Domesday Book: Cambridgeshire has records of nine English women who held land in 1066, but only one in 1086; Huntingdonshire recorded six English women who held land in 1066, and five in 1086. Secondly, figures taken from Little Domesday Book show that as many as 45 English women were holding land in Essex in 1066 and ≥ 21 in 1086, whilst in Suffolk 71 English women held land in 1066 as compared to 38 in 1086. In each of these shires we find several instances of the Old English name Gode.² A case-study built around the woman or women who bore this name must once again deal with all the

¹ The other is Leofgifu, GDB fol. 371c.

² OE (f) Okasha, pp. 38-39; Fei., pp. 262-63.

problems intrinsic to Domesday Book identification, which we have already experienced with Eadgifu the Fair and Æthelgyth. In this instance, an initial appraisal suggests that we may have here more than one 1066 survivor and in more than one set of circumstances. We certainly have a type of woman landholder and survivor whom we have not yet encountered, namely an urban and rural property holder called Gode.

6.1 Beorhtgifu³

6.1.1 Lincolnshire

Two of these entries involve a woman or women with the Old English name of Beorhtgifu (*beorht*, probably OE adjective ‘bright’ + *giefu*, OE feminine noun ‘gift’⁴) and, therefore, presumably of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian heritage, holding land in the West Riding of Lindsey.⁵ Who are these two women? Could they be one and the same? What can we discover if we follow clues about their identities?

The first entry records that in 1086 a Beorhtgifu was sharing, with a man named Sighet, a tenancy for two manors from the Norman Jocelyn fitz Lambert: ‘In Hagetorne et Haneuorthe habuerunt Sighet et Briteua II carucatas terræ et I bouatam ad geldum. Terra IIII carucis’. (In Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth, Sighet and Beorhtgifu (Briteva) had 2 carucates and 1 bovat of land to the geld). [There is] land for 4 plough-teams).⁶ In the second entry a Beorhtgifu is listed as a king’s thegn holding the same manor at Corby Glen that she had held in 1066: ‘In Corby [Glen] habet Bricteua I carucatam terræ ad geldum. Terra I carucis. Idem ipsa habuit ibi I carucam et III bordarios et I acram prati et XXX acras silve pasture’. (In Corby Glen, Beorhtgifu (Bricteva) had 1 carucate of land to the geld. [There is] Land for 1 plough-team. Likewise she has there 1

³ Please note that a version of this case study is forthcoming in *Anglo-Saxon Women: A Florilegium*, ed. by Emily Butler, Irina Dumitrescu and Hilary E. Fox.

⁴ Okasha, pp. 58 & 64.

⁵ For other examples of this name see ThLV, p. 161; Okasha, p. 25; GDB fols 359a and 371a.

⁶ GDB fol. 359a.

plough-team, 3 bordars, 1 acre of meadow, and 30 acres of woodland pasture).⁷ The identity of these two Beorhtgifu, and the question of whether they may be one and the same woman, goes to the heart of problems of using Domesday Book to study female survival across 1066. Pursuit of those questions reveals both the limitations, but also the possibilities of that great survey for the study of English women.

Beorhtgifu is not a common name in the Domesday Book, occurring in only nine instances, of which it is likely that at least four, and possibly five, as will be explained below, may in fact refer to the same individual as the Beorhtgifu of Corby Glen.⁸ The other entries look unconnected based on findings not only of the lack of similar tenurial connections but also on grounds of their geographical remoteness. The size of their holdings was also insignificant when compared to those of the Beorhtgifu of Corby Glen, whose holding was not unsubstantial: one who lost a virgate of land in West Heanton, Devon, and another, whose virgate at Stringston in Somerset transferred to Alfred of Spain.⁹ Two further Beorhtgifu had similarly small holdings at Stanway and at Wickford in Essex, of which both had been deprived by 1086.¹⁰

In 1086 the vill of Corby Glen supported two holdings, the other of which was held by the bishop of Lincoln. John Palmer noticed how several other Domesday estates held by a Beorhtgifu were strikingly close to lands of the same bishop, in his view suggestive that their owners were one and the same.¹¹ The links between the bishop and this woman, or women, will form an important line of enquiry. At the time of Domesday the

⁷ GDB fol. 371a. Note that Beorhtgifu is the man holding the estate but that she is also qualified by a female pronoun.

⁸ As before, GDB fols 359a and 371a, but additionally GDB fols 207b and 155b.

⁹ GDB fols 118a and 97a.

¹⁰ LDB fols 5a and 42b. PASE references a further three instances from *FD* which may refer to one individual, a free peasant called Beortgifu who paid rent to Bury St Edmunds.

¹¹ John Palmer, 'Notes on the Identifications in the Translation and Indexes (of Domesday Book)' <<https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/assets/hull:2707/content>> [accessed 3 December, 2015]; GDB fols 207b and 359a.

bishop of Lincoln was a man named Remigius.¹² Remigius was appointed bishop of Lincoln in 1067 following the death of the Anglo-Saxon bishop, Wulfwig – or rather, he was appointed bishop of Dorchester on Thames in 1067. Remigius then moved the seat of the bishopric to Lincoln, which lay within the Dorchester diocese. The diocese of Dorchester was huge, stretching as it did from the Thames Valley in the South to the Humber in the North. It had already gone through one reincarnation, from the diocese of Leicester to the diocese of Dorchester in the late ninth century. At this point it was augmented with Oxfordshire holdings, and also some in Buckinghamshire, largely thanks to Æthelred and Æthelflæd, Lord and Lady of the Mercians. The bishops received several Anglo-Saxon minsters in the Thames Valley and endowed Dorchester with them.¹³ Thus Remigius succeeded to a vast amount of land and revenue in the south of his diocese but not much in the north. He had, therefore, to build up his Lincolnshire portfolio, more especially when a council at Windsor decreed that episcopal sees should be removed to larger walled towns.¹⁴ He needed quickly to provide not only a network of properties across his large and populous diocese to allow ease of movement for himself and his clerics, but also land for his new canons at Lincoln. The geography of the Lincoln/Dorchester diocese should be borne in mind in all consideration of the land held by women named Beorhtgifu.

Women of that name held land at several places within the diocese, and often in close proximity to land held by the bishops. The case of Corby Glen has already been noted. In addition at Hackthorn the land held by the woman Beorhtgifu was surrounded

¹² H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Remigius (d. 1092), bishop of Lincoln, *ODNB*; David Bates, *Bishop Remigius of Lincoln 1067-1092*, Lincoln Cathedral Publications (Lincoln: Honeywood Press, 1992).

¹³ John Blair, 'Estate Memoranda of c.1070 from the See of Dorchester-on Thames', *EHR*, 116 (2001), 114-23 (p. 117).

¹⁴ Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1066-1154: A History of the Anglo-Norman Church*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1979); Francis Hill, *Medieval Lincoln* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, repr. 1965), pp. 64-65.

on three sides by episcopal estates, neighboured to the west by Welton and to the south by Ingham, whilst the bishop's estate at Owmbly-by-Spital to the North was just five miles away.¹⁵ And at (Great and Little) Gidding in Huntingdonshire the holding of a woman called Beorhtgifu was only five miles north from the bishop's extensive estate at Leighton Bromswold, and Stilton, another episcopal estate, lay only five miles to the northeast.¹⁶ (See Map 6.1)

The Domesday Beorhtgifu who held land at Hackthorn can be supplied with a putative family connection: Sighet, or Sigketill, who was mentioned briefly above and with whom a woman named Beorhtgifu first appears in the Lincolnshire folios, was one of at least three brothers of Aghmund, the burgess and *lageman* (lawman) of Lincoln, son of Wælhæfn.¹⁷ David Roffe wonders whether Aghmund may also have been a moneyer during the early years of the reign of William I.¹⁸ This must be extremely likely since his father's name and those of five other *lagemen* named in Domesday Book are also shared with some of the Lincoln moneyers of Edward the Confessor.¹⁹ The estates of Aghmund's family were not solely confined to the city and in 1066 this highly influential family had held a substantial and concentrated group of holdings within Lincolnshire that by 1086 had passed to Joscelin fitzLambert. It is possible that this Beorhtgifu was a part of this Anglo-Scandinavian family, perhaps a sister or wife of Sighet. Although Roffe cautions against too readily reading into proximity familial ties where the Domesday Book entry may in fact simply represent lordship, this assumption

¹⁵ GDB fols 344a and b.

¹⁶ GDB fol. 203d; PASE, 'Beorhtgifu 'of Gidding' reports that the four and a half-hide manor held at Gidding by a woman called Beorhtgifu in Huntingdonshire was probably a berewick of the royal manor at Alconbury, and had perhaps been held by the unusual serjeanty of hunting large vermin across the contiguous shires of Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Rutland.

¹⁷ Jen., p. 233; Jen., Sc., p. 2; ThLV, p. 187.

¹⁸ *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. by David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), p. 217; Roffe, 'Hidden Lords' (p. 217).

¹⁹ Sir Francis Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 50.

may in fact be justified here since the holdings of both Beorhtgifu and Sighet at Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth passed to the same tenant-in-chief, Joscelin fitzLambert.²⁰ But once again there is a connection with the Lincoln bishop, because Joscelin too, like his antecessor Aghmund, if not Beorhtgifu, was also a tenant of the bishop. In 1086 Aghmund was Remigius's tenant for North and South Clifton in Nottinghamshire and a Beorhtgifu was Remigius's tenant for Marsh Baldon in Oxfordshire and for land in Dorchester (Oxfordshire) itself.²¹ The Oxfordshire Beorhtgifu may not, of course, be the same woman as the Hackthorn one, nor need the Oxfordshire Beorhtgifu be one and the same woman. But the tenurial and family links here are, at least suggestive, and give some grounds for linking the holders of Marsh Baldon and/or Dorchester to the Beorhtgifu who held Hackthorn, if not to the woman or women who held Corby Glen and Gidding.

6.1.2 Oxfordshire

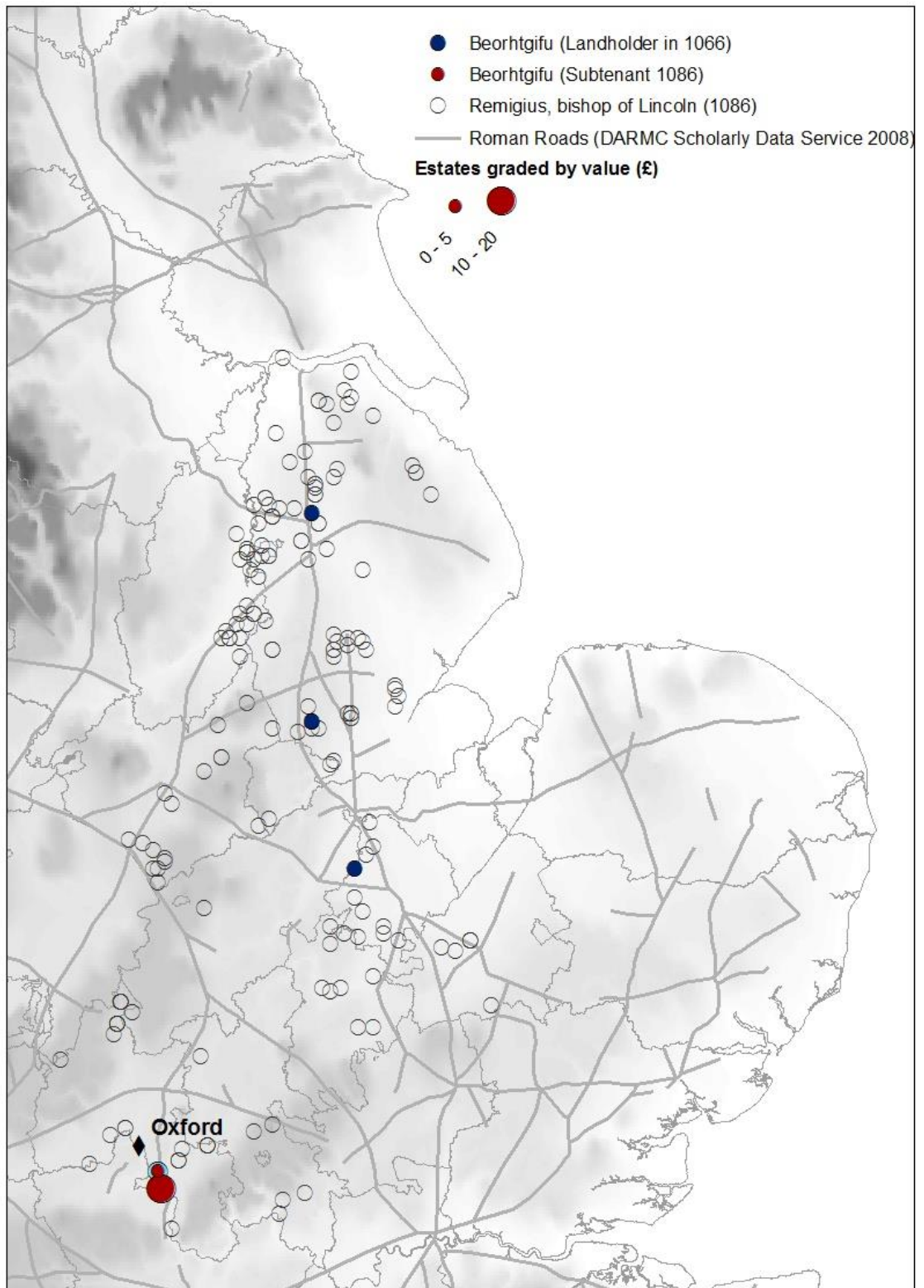
The Oxfordshire evidence is especially significant. Two estates in Oxfordshire were in the hands of women called Beorhtgifu: Marsh Baldon, mentioned above, and also a very substantial holding of twenty hides in Dorchester itself – the heart of the old bishopric. Oxfordshire itself lay in the well-endowed southern area of the bishopric. *The Victoria Shire Volume* for Oxfordshire has discerned a pattern in the bishop's 1086 holdings which suggests that it was a deliberate episcopal policy to divide his estates into two parts, one which provided a regular personal income for the bishop, and the other to be leased to tenants of a relatively high status.²² It is significant that the woman Beorhtgifu holds land at Dorchester that is not only considered part of the bishop's private estate, but is actually part of the ancient endowment of the bishopric.²³ Her holding of twenty

²⁰ *DP*, pp. 236-37.

²¹ GDB fols 283b and 155b.

²² VCH Oxon., I, p.378.

²³ GDB fol. 155b.



Map 6-1 Holdings of Beorhtgifu and Remigius

and a half hides is a very substantial estate and is significantly recorded at the head of the bishop's chapter, amongst the lands he holds himself. She was, in fact, holding no less than half of the episcopal demesne at Dorchester.²⁴ She held this estate *ad firmam* (at farm), or for revenue purposes only, which implies that the bishop of Lincoln wanted to make it clear that it was non-heritable.²⁵ Why? Palmer thinks that the insertion of her name in the bishop's *breve* could have been erroneous but this is not likely: Remigius was one of the Domesday commissioners for the West Midlands and as such he would have been unlikely to make errors in his own return.²⁶ So who was this powerful woman and what was her connection to Bishop Remigius? The statement, *ad firmam*, a form of non-heritable nature, like the inclusion of Beorhtgifu herself, may be read as strategic. The emphasis was on the fact that the land could not be removed from the bishop's estate – including by any descendants of Beorhtgifu. There can be no doubt here of some connection with the bishops; a holding on this scale in the old seat of their bishopric raises questions about its nature. Does this emphasis on the temporary nature of Beorhtgifu's holding indicate a relationship with one of the Dorchester clerics which could have produced such a temporary holding – as for example through dower, or which could have produced children who might try to make claims through their mother? Could she have been the wife of the previous incumbent of Dorchester, Bishop Wulfwig, or perhaps the widow of one of the canons?²⁷ The Domesday entry for the bishop's land in Dorchester does not include who held it in 1066, although one assumes it had been held by Wulfwig and his canons; however, it does give three values – 'This

²⁴ In PASE 'Beorhtgifu 11', Chris Lewis has done much work on locating Beortgifu's holding in Overy, Stadhampton, Marsh Baldon, and other places.

²⁵ The see was transferred to Lincoln c.1072-73; GDB fol. 155a.

²⁶ John Palmer, 'Notes: Oxfordshire' <<http://www.hydra.hull.ac.uk>> [accessed 17 October 2019].

²⁷ Bishop Wulfwig is considered the father of the Wulfstan who occurs in the Domesday Book entry for St Martin's, Dover, thereby implying he had a consort (GDB fol. 1d).

land pays £20. TRE £10. When she received it £8'.²⁸ The third date strongly suggests that Beorhtgifu received this land after 1066 and the most likely occasion for this would have been when Remigius became bishop and relocated his seat to Lincoln. It would appear that Beorhtgifu and her lands were connected rather with Remigius than Wulfwig. Although one could question whether Dorchester was too far removed from the Lincolnshire holdings to be held by the same Beorhtgifu, it is necessary to note that the TRE estate at Gidding, Huntingdonshire, would have been approximately equidistant between the two and could have provided a convenient staging post, giving easy access to both Ermine Street and the Fosse Way.

The tenure of the Dorchester Beorhtgifu leads to speculation on the nature of her connection with the Bishop Remigius. Lewis has made three suggestions: that she may have been given the estate of the clerics when the episcopacy moved north; that she was the abbess of a hitherto unknown female minster in Dorchester on Thames; or that she came from a rich regional family so influential with Remigius that she was given this prestigious estate on a life tenancy. This last solution coincides with my argument given above, although my research would suggest a family from Lincolnshire rather than Oxfordshire. A mid-twelfth-century charter of Archdeacon Walter of Oxford for the nearby nunnery of Godstow may throw further light upon the question.

Walter died in 1151, giving land in Shillingford, just downstream from Dorchester, that he had inherited from his aunt (*amita*) called Brityna.²⁹ Presumably because of 'c'/'t' confusion, the scribe of the English version of the Godstow cartulary misread *amita* (aunt) as *amica* (girlfriend) and translated it as *leman* (lover), and Kemp followed

²⁸ 'Beorhtgifu 'of Dorchester'.

²⁹ *The Latin Cartulary of Godstow Abbey*, ed. by Emilie Amt (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2013), no 632, p. 295; I am very grateful to Julia Barrow for this reference. For Walter, see *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by Diana E. Greenway (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts; 1996), p. xxxi; *Heads of Religious Houses*, I, 35.

this reading.³⁰ Amt, on the other hand, sensibly decided on ‘aunt’ – it was not possible to inherit from a girlfriend in the middle ages. Brityva would be an acceptable twelfth-century version of Beorhtgifu: note that at this time there would have been ‘v’/’n’ confusion as well. Walter became archdeacon early in the twelfth century, under Bishop Robert Bloet, succeeding Alfred Parvus who had been made archdeacon of Oxford by Bishop Remigius. This charter appears to suggest rather a relationship with Walter, than Remigius – he says he is Beorhtgifu’s nephew – but we should note that Walter’s predecessor had the English name, Alfred. Is there an outside possibility that Alfred was the son of Remigius and Beorhtgifu? This would be a big leap to make if it were not for the importance of her landholding in the centre of the bishop’s demesne, and the strange fact that both Remigius and Alfred appear to have been noticeably short of stature: Henry of Huntingdon commented that Remigius was of *statura parvus* and archdeacon Alfred had been given the sobriquet *parvus*. It is also noteworthy that Remigius gave the archdeaconry to Alfred who was succeeded by Walter, who succeeded to land from Beorhtgifu – an ecclesiastical dynasty in the making?³¹

6.1.3 Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln (1067-1092)

There is nothing about the career of Remigius, who was the bishop of Lincoln from 1067 to 1092, which is inconsistent with that of a man who might have had an English wife or mistress; he was a ‘worldly’ bishop. It is known from William I’s Ship List that he was the almoner of the abbey of Fécamp. Although the list is only extant in a twelfth-century manuscript, it is likely to have derived from an original text

³⁰ *Twelfth-Century English Archidiaconal and Vice-Archidiaconal Acta*, Canterbury and York Society, 92 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), no. 169.

³¹ For clerical dynasties, Hazel Freestone, ‘The Priest’s Wife in the Anglo-Norman Realm, 1050-1150’ (Cambridge Ph.D. thesis; 2017); Julia Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800-c. 1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 115-57; Hugh M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.154-89.

contemporary with 1066.³² In this administrative post, Remigius would have often been on the outside of the monastic community both metaphorically and physically. It is in this liminal position that he was able to support William, Duke of Normandy, and his expedition to England. A thirteenth-century source written by the Lincoln canon, John Schalby, is enigmatic about Remigius' purpose in accompanying William. He writes that he did so 'for a certain reason', perhaps implying that there was a matter that was commonly known but perhaps of regret to the Lincoln community.³³ Other sources vary as to whether Remigius accompanied William of his own accord or at the behest of his abbot. William of Malmesbury and Eadmer claim that he personally provided William with both ship and men in return for a promised reward within a conquered England, but Gerald of Wales' *Vita* describes him as the leader of ten men provided by the Abbey of Fécamp.³⁴ There certainly were aspects of Remigius' life that could have been the source of some unease. His career was problematical for his contemporaries, as well as for us: he was accused of simony for following William I for personal reward and he also made a strategic mistake in allowing himself to be consecrated by the pluralist Stigand.³⁵

A small group of Hampshire entries in Domesday may provide further insight. Three of these five land-holdings were held by Herbert fitzRemy and two by Herbert the Chamberlain. The entry for Herbert the Chamberlain follows immediately after the

³² van Houts, 'The Ship List of William the Conqueror' (p. 176).

³³ *The Book of John de Schalby: Canon of Lincoln, 1299-1333, concerning the Bishops of Lincoln and their acts*, Lincoln Minster pamphlets (Lincoln: Friends of Lincoln Cathedral, 1966).

³⁴ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. by M. Rule, Rolls Series (London, PRO, 1884), I, p. 11; William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. by N. E. S. A. Hamilton, Rolls Series (London: PRO, 1870), pp. 65-6, 312-13; Gerald of Wales, 'Vita Sancti Remigii', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, VII, ed. by J. F. Dimock, Rolls Series (London: PRO, 1870), p. 3, p. 21.

³⁵ David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016) p 285; at the time Stigand seems to have been enjoying William's support, the error could have been partly down to William I's for not warning him off doing this.

entry for Herbert fitzRemigius.³⁶ In the opinion of David Roffe, although the later descent of the two fees does not encourage the idea that they were held by one and the same man, there are some intriguing coincidences.³⁷ Firstly both tenants-in chief were *ministri* of William I and that, although Farley Chamberlayne was apparently held by Herbert fitzRemigius in 1086, it was later associated with a chamberlain of the mid-twelfth century. However, more suggestive that the two Herberts were perhaps one and the same is the scribe's clear confusion when writing up these two chapters; the first line in Herbert the Chamberlain's chapter is post-scriptal, being written over an erasure and there also appears to have been some tampering with the same two names in the list of tenants-in chief at the beginning of the Hampshire return.³⁸ One could therefore argue that the scribe was unsure whether he was dealing with the holdings of one man or two different people and that his eventual decision to record them separately may have been erroneous. In which case the discontinuity in the later tenorial history of these estates may merely have been a consequence of the transfer of ministerial rather than hereditary lands.

That this is in fact the case is encouraged by the unusualness of the Latin personal name *Remigius* in England at this time. Even in Normandy it would have been highly unusual.³⁹ It was however a more popular choice amongst the Franks for whom Remigius was an important saint. Its geographic base was in the environs of Rheims

³⁶ For both Herbert fitzRemy and for Herbert the Chamberlain, see GDB fol. 48b.

³⁷ Personal communication with David Roffe; VCH Hants., IV, pp. 443-45, and 3, pp. 257-68. Farley Chamberlayne was apparently held by Herbert fitzRemigius in 1086 and in the mid-twelfth century it was associated with a chamberlain.

³⁸ GDB fol. 37b.

³⁹ Bates, *Remigius*, p. 4, says he was probably named for St Remigius, Apostle of the Franks. Other examples of the name in Eastern England include: *Remigius the monk* listed in ThLV and *Remigius de Pocklington*, Sheriff of Holderness, 1261-1264. However, it is worth noting that there are a few other known instances of the name in the twelfth century, all perhaps in emulation of Remigius, bishop of Lincoln.

where St Remigius had been bishop from around 459/60 to 533 AD.⁴⁰ This suggests that Remigius had been named for the Apostle of the Franks and, if he was given this name at baptism by his parents, likely came from the Rheims area. But as it was still uncommon for laymen to be given saints' names in the late eleventh century, it may be that Remigius was given to the church as a child, and received his name on entering Fécamp. All this being so, it must be likely that Herbert fitzRemigius was none other than the son of Bishop Remigius.⁴¹ This hypothesis is perhaps also encouraged by the fact that William the Conqueror brought Herbert with him from Normandy and fostered him in his own household.⁴² He subsequently appointed him to the position of royal chamberlain in the latter years of his reign. Such favour would be in keeping with his being the son of a major ecclesiastical follower of the Conqueror. William also granted Herbert the Chamberlain lands in Yorkshire. He made his *caput* at Londesborough in the Wolds somewhere between Pocklington and Beverley. Given the previous conjecture it is perhaps not surprising that the later Sheriff of Holderness (1261-64) was called Remigius of Pocklington.⁴³

Thus one cause of unease with Remigius might have been his marital status. But was Remigius even more 'worldly'? Did he have, in Beorhtgifu, an English wife or mistress? A number of charters from the Gilbertine Priory of Bullington may be significant in this regard: they chronicle a series of gifts to the priory of land in Hackthorn. The specific charters, dated to the third quarter of the twelfth century, referred to grants and attestations by the Wodecok family of Hackthorn, the father

⁴⁰ The dates for Remigius of Rheims suggest that he was exceedingly long-lived; his birth date, at least his supposed date of birth, was 437 or 438, and he died in 533, or at any rate in the early 530s. It is not known exactly when he became bishop of Rheims but see Flodoard, *Die Geschichte der Reimser Kirche*, ed. by Martina Hartmann, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum*, 36 (Hanover: Hahn, 1998), 80n.

⁴¹ Bates, *Remigius*, p. 4.

⁴² Christopher Norton, *St William of York* (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), p. 6.

⁴³ Barbara English, *The Lords of Holderness, 1086-1260: A Study in Feudal Society* (Hull: University of Hull, 1979), pp. 71, 228-33.

Remigius clericus, and his two sons Adam and Remigius Wodecock (alias of Hackthorn).⁴⁴ In consideration of the unusualness of this Latin name even in Normandy at this time, it would have been a singular choice in a minor aristocratic and secular family. Could it be that *Remigius clericus* was another son of Bishop Remigius?⁴⁵ Another series of charters accounts for further gifts of land at Hackthorn by particularly Adam, but also Remigius, of Hackthorn, sons of Remigius, to St Mary's York in the early 1200's.⁴⁶

Remigius's familial situation would certainly not have been unusual in early Anglo-Norman England. Other bishops of the time had well-known 'mistresses' whom we should probably now recognize as wives, like Roger, the bishop of Salisbury, whose famous mistress, Matilda of Ramsbury, defended his castle at Devizes against King Stephen.⁴⁷ In at least one case a bishop had a native English mistress or concubine: Ranulf Flambard, the bishop of Durham, had a well-documented and long-term relationship with Ælfgifu, the aunt of Christina of Markyate, by whom he had at least two acknowledged sons.⁴⁸ Should Beorhtgifu of Hackthorn – if not Corby Glen and Dorchester – be added to that list?

⁴⁴ *Documents Illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw from Various Collections*, ed. by Sir F. M. Stenton (Oxford: Oxford University, 1920), nos. 35-47, pp. 23-32. This alias may be taken from Wodecock Hall, Oxford, one of the earliest Oxford colleges which was run by Oseney Abbey, and had been refounded by Lincoln; the Oxford *studium* was seen very much as an extension of the diocese of Lincoln. Refer to *The History of the University of Oxford: 1: The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. by J. I. Catto and T. H. Aston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 98.

⁴⁵ *Danelaw*, no. 37, pp. 25-26. On clerical dynasties see Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World* (pp. 143-45).

⁴⁶ *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln*, v, ed. by Kathleen Major, The Publications of the Lincoln Record Society, 34 (Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1940).

⁴⁷ For priest's mistresses as wives see Hazel Freestone, 'The Priest's Wife in the Anglo-Norman Realm, 1050-1150' (Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 2017). For Bishop Roger see B. R. Kemp, 'Salisbury, Roger of (d. 1139)', *ODNB*.

⁴⁸ *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. by Fanous and Leyser, p. 7; Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World*, p. 145; Moore, 'Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate'.

The fact that in 1066 a Beorhtgifu had held a manor in Hackthorn, where Adam, son of Remigius, held his later fee, is possibly just coincidental, but, as we have seen, there are reasons to connect that woman with the holder of Corby Glen. The succession to the manor at Corby Glen, which a woman Beorhtgifu still held in 1086, may reveal more about a personal relationship with Remigius. In the seventeenth century a lead tablet, now called the d'Eyncourt plaque, was discovered in Lincoln Cathedral.⁴⁹ It commemorated the death and burial of William d'Eyncourt, son of the Domesday tenant-in-chief Walter d'Eyncourt and Matilda.⁵⁰ The engraving not only recorded the boy's royal ancestry from Harold Godwineson but it also claimed a blood relationship (*consanguineus*) between the d'Eyncourts and Bishop Remigius. A twelfth-century confirmation charter purporting to be of Henry I recorded the grant by Walter's wife, Matilda, to St Mary's York.⁵¹ Strikingly with this gift, she gave, amongst others, land at Corby Glen *que fuit Brictive*. As Matilda refers directly to Beorhtgifu as the previous owner of the land it is unlikely that Beorhtgifu's holding had simply been incorporated into the larger holding of the bishop next door. Rather, her land had probably passed directly to Matilda on Beorhtgifu's death as a bequest by the latter, or perhaps indirectly, through the hands of Remigius. Although the exact nature of his relationship with Beorhtgifu remains tantalisingly obscure, that Beorhtgifu's land at Corby Glen passed to Matilda d'Eyncourt is very suggestive indeed of a familial link between Remigius, Beorhtgifu and the d'Eyncourts.

6.2 Gode

Gode is a name around which there is much confusion, not least for the Domesday scribes who appear to have sometimes muddled the two Old English monothematic

⁴⁹ Sir William Dugdale, *Baronage of England*, 1 ([n.p]: Newcomb, 1675), p. 386.

⁵⁰ Richard Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter', *Haskins Society Journal*, 19 (2007), 1-22, and in particular p. 2, for the wording of the plaque.

⁵¹ *EYC*, I, no. 354, pp. 269-70 (Farrer considers it spurious).

names, *Gode* (OE *god*, neuter noun ‘good thing’ or OE *god*, adjective ‘good’⁵²) and *Golde* (OE *gold*, neuter noun ‘gold’⁵³) so that, on occasion, the same woman can appear within Domesday with both names interchangeably.⁵⁴ But perhaps more confusion has been caused by the latinisation of these two names, whereby the feminine, *Goda* and *Golda*, arose from OE *Gode* and *Golde*, making them indiscernible from OE *Goda* and *Golda*, the equivalent masculine homonyms. As if this were not enough, *Gode* is also be used as a hypocoristic form – Countess Gode was christened Godgifu – of the many Old English dithematic names which begin with the first element *God-*.⁵⁵ Obviously this complex nomenclature will require careful unpicking in order to distinguish any women bearing the name *Gode* and given its latinized form, *Goda*, in Domesday from men bearing the name *Goda*. This task has not been helped by the assumptions of earlier scholars that a *homo de...* or a *liber homo* was naturally male. Although von Feilitzen recognized the problem posed by the coalescence of the masculine and feminine name-forms *Gode* and *Goda*, he still listed every example of *Goda* accompanied by the descriptor *liber homo* as male, whereas we know that even with straightforward feminine names, such as for example, *Leofwaru* (OE *leof*, masculine noun ‘friend’, or *lufu*, feminine noun ‘love’, or *leof*, adjective ‘dear’ + OE *waru*, feminine noun ‘protection’⁵⁶) Domesday will usually still refer to the holder of such a name as a free man or sokeman.⁵⁷ Moreover, and as will be pertinent in this particular case study,

⁵² Okasha, p. 67.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Fei., p. 273.

⁵⁵ Okasha, pp. 55-64, provides a list of second elements which could be used with this stem; for Countess Gode, a daughter of Æthelred the Unready, whose holdings were predominantly in Sussex. For this Anglo-Saxon princess, sister of Edward the Confessor, who was married first to Drogo of the Vexin, and secondly to Eustace II of Boulogne, see Christopher Lewis, ‘The Madness of Countess Gode’, unpublished paper given at IMC, Leeds, 2016. Countess Gode has no biography in *ODNB* and receives no mention in *DP*, other than that of Eustace’s wife. Confusingly, and as an obvious illustration of the problems with this name, PASE has a *Goda* 43 and a *Gode* 2, who are both listed as the sister of Edward the Confessor.

⁵⁶ Okasha, pp. 62 & 65.

⁵⁷ ‘coalesced’ *sic* von Feilitzen, p. 263; as *Leofwaru* in LDB fol. 396b.

Domesday frequently adds together both men and women with other landholders to make a collective grouping which is then referred to as *liberi homines*. It is clear, therefore, that this collective description does not signify they were all male.⁵⁸

PASE Domesday conservatively recognizes in total one individual named Golda, three individuals called Gode and as many as 30 individual Godas.⁵⁹ An initial look at the distribution of their lands shows several clusters of holdings in Devon, Sussex, and Gloucestershire, whose distance from the area of this study immediately precludes them from further notice.

In Eastern England DB records as many as seventeen instances of *Goda*, four of *Gode*, one of *Goddæ*, one of *Golda*, and one of *Golde* for 1066, and six instances of *Goda*, one of *Goddæg*, and one of *Golde* holding in 1086.⁶⁰ An initial appraisal suggests that these names appear in three clusters, straddle the border between Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire, accumulate in the south-eastern corner of Suffolk, and are particularly concentrated around Colchester in Essex. But how many individual women are meant, or for that matter men? And how can we begin to identify them?

6.2.1 Outlining a Methodology

Palmer used *Gode* as an example, or rather the occurrence of the different Domesday name forms, to demonstrate how complicated the initial identification of individuals in Domesday Book could be without further study. He considered that spatial distribution, or mapping, could provide the ‘principal clue’ in the identification of Domesday *personæ*.⁶¹ And demonstrated how a clustering of ten manors in Cambridgeshire might

⁵⁸ For example LDB fol. 314b has 12 free *men* who include a *Goda* (m/f?) and a *Modgifu* (f).

⁵⁹ PASE distinguishes all four variations: *Gode*, *Golde*, *Goda*, and *Golda*.

⁶⁰ See ‘Goda’, PASE.

⁶¹ John Palmer, ‘Great Domesday on CD-ROM’ in *Domesday Book*, ed. by Hallam and Bates, pp. 141-50 (pp.146-49).

have belonged to one single Goda/e. In this way we can use geographic proximity to suggest a preliminary number of individuals.

However, there are other identifiers which we can use to distinguish particular individuals. Some are indicators of relationships: in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire we find a woman called Golde who jointly held several estates with her son Wulfric.⁶² Palmer connects Golde and her son Wulfric with Gode and a King's thegn called Wulfric who held 240 acres at Welwyn in Hertfordshire from Queen Edith.⁶³ The re-occurrence of a mother and son duo with such similar names, even over this relatively large distance, would be an extremely rare coincidence.⁶⁴ Another relationship reveals another individual Gode: Little Domesday records a Gode jointly holding a share of 60 acres at Strickland in Blything Hundred, Suffolk, with *eius* brother, Ælfwine.⁶⁵ But is Gode Ælfwine's sister or brother? It seems more likely that Gode would have been Ælfwine's sister since we find a Gode described specifically as a *libera femina* holding 240 acres very close by at Brome.⁶⁶

Toponyms are very rare in Domesday Book but when we find them they can help identify specific individuals. Little Domesday lists a number of freemen who had been added to a manor at Stratton in Colneis Hundred in Suffolk, but one of them was accorded a rare topographic byname, Gode 'of Struostuna'.⁶⁷ This Gode must surely be

⁶² GDB fols 206a and 207v.

⁶³ GDB fol. 140a.

⁶⁴ Palmer, 'Great Domesday' (pp. 146-49).

⁶⁵ LDB fol. 334b.

⁶⁶ LDB fol. 339a.

⁶⁷ LDB fol. 314b. For *Struostuna* or *Strewston*, see Keith Briggs and David Boulton, 'Scandinavian Elements in Suffolk Place-Names', *Nomina*, 44; Norman Scarfe, 'Domesday Settlements and Churches: the Example of Colneis Hundred' in *Domesday Gazetteer*, p. 42, refers to a lost vill in Kirton, and gives a possible location on the map provided on p. 43. Several vills, including *Struostuna* and *Mycelegata*, were lost, most possibly as local rivers silted up. Mark Bailey, 'An Introduction to Suffolk Domesday' in *Little Domesday Book: Suffolk*, ed. by Ann Williams and G. H. Martin (London: Alecto Editions, 2000) traced *Struostuna* in fourteenth century court rolls to a hamlet on Kirton Brook between Bucklesham and Newbourne.

one and the same as the Goda whom we find elsewhere with a small tenancy at Struostuna.⁶⁸

The Godes/as across Eastern England show women holding different types of property – although we are aware that most held rural estates which we readily recognize there are some who appear with urban property. Whilst these might or might not be the same women as those suggested above, there is one particular cluster of Godes/as in Essex, in and around the borough of Colchester holding burghage assets, suggesting that this type of property might identify one individual.⁶⁹

Of course, as we have seen in the previous case studies, one of the main methods of identifying English individuals in Domesday Book is by succession. The Godes/as of Eastern England present with various successors but there are two successors who reoccur: Roger of Montgomery and Roger Bigod. There are several instances of Godes who were holding a group of estates in 1066 in a tight geographical proximity and were also succeeded to by Earl Roger of Montgomery. The other major successor who is repeatedly connected to Godes/as, and more especially in Suffolk, is Roger Bigod. Recalling that Roger Bigod was a prominent sheriff of William I, it is noteworthy that there are several links between Godes/as and other Anglo-Norman sheriffs, especially Eustace, Picot of Cambridge, and Edward of Salisbury.⁷⁰

Another identifier might an individual's landholding status used in conjunction with whether they survived to 1086. A possible individual Gode held some estates in Cambridgeshire under the lordship of and, in one instance, under the patronage of Earl Ælfgar.⁷¹ The Goddæ who held three hides at Basildon in Essex in 1066 held these outright, but in 1086 was holding them as a tenant of Swein – a lord and a survivor

⁶⁸ LDB fol. 341b.

⁶⁹ LDB fols 104b, 105a and b, 106a.

⁷⁰ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76.

⁷¹ GDB fols 193a and b, and 198a.

then.⁷² In Suffolk many Godas/es were listed as freemen in 1066 and by 1086 their property was held by Roger Bigod; it is possible that these free Godas/es were all one and the same and that they survived holding under Roger Bigod in 1086 but that this tenurial information is simply absent from the pages of Domesday Book.⁷³

But these freemen suggest another layer of possible identification – that of commendation. We have seen above how one Goda can be distinguished by her commendation to Earl Ælfgar in 1066, similarly LDB is assiduous in recording this information: the Godas/es in Suffolk were commended to various lords, in particular Northman and Wihtmær, but also Godwin, son of Toki, and Stigand.⁷⁴

If we put all these identifiers together – geography, relationships, toponyms, urban vs rural property, succession, survival to 1086, lordship, and commendation, can we begin to identify individual Godes/as, or even individual women called Gode?

6.3 Case Studies

This preliminary review of identifying factors has introduced geographical clusters of Godes/as who share some characteristics which suggest that we may be able to differentiate some individual Godes, of whom three in particular can be identified. (See Map 7.2) In particular in Cambridgeshire there appears to be a woman landholder called Gode who in 1066 was commended to Earl Ælfgar, and was the antecessor of Roger of Montgomery; she is probably also the mother of King's thegn, Wulfric. This identification is now usually agreed and makes, as Baxter says, an 'unusually wealthy' individual.⁷⁵ On the basis of Roger's succession, it is also likely that she is the Gode

⁷² LDB fols 42b and 106b.

⁷³ LDB fols 334b, 339a, 340a, 341b, 342a and b, and 396a.

⁷⁴ Williams, 'Tenurial Revolution Revisited', p. 159, where Williams makes a detailed examination of the personal and tenurial relationships in the Armingford Hundred of Cambridgeshire, and the vills of Abington Pigotts, Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Shingay, and Litlington both before and after the Conquest; using the *ICC* which works vill by vill, hundred by hundred, she followed the descent of land and tracked the tenurial links in GDB and the *ICC* for Earl Ælfgar.

⁷⁵ Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 227, n. 101.

who held four estates from Queen Edith in 1066 within Hertfordshire, one of which had passed by 1086 into the hands of Roger of Montgomery, even though the other three estates were received by Count Eustace, Edward the Sheriff, and Geoffrey of Bec.⁷⁶

We shall call her Gode A. In Suffolk, and specifically around Colneis Hundred in eastern Suffolk, we have found a freewoman called Gode who was succeeded by Roger Bigod; she may be one and the same with Gode the sister of Ælfwine, or Gode of Struostuna: this is Gode B. Lastly there is Goda/e, the burgess of Colchester, who, if she is also the Goddæ who survived holding under Swein, was female, and another survivor: Gode C, whom we will meet in greater detail in the next chapter.

6.3.1 Gode A

Palmer wrote that if Gode A were indeed one individual, she would have been one of the richest women of late Anglo-Saxon England but excepting the odd paragraph or two, she has never been researched as one individual before.⁷⁷ Gode A was the antecessor of Earl Roger, the son of Roger I of Montgomery. A favoured companion of William I; he had supplied ships for the invasion force but had remained in Normandy to assist Duchess Matilda.⁷⁸ He followed William to England in 1067 when he set about building up a large estate which would later include not just the Chichester Rape, but the whole shire of Sussex. In 1071 he was rewarded further with an earldom. At some point he succeeded to nearly all of Gode A's Cambridgeshire holdings, including her tenement of one and a quarter hides at Steeple Morden, her manor at Shingay with its appurtenances at Guilden Morden and Abington Piggotts, two hides at Meldreth, and half a hide less a virgate at Melbourn. All of these lay within Armingford Hundred in the southwest corner of Cambridgeshire, grouped closely together south of the River

⁷⁶ GDB fol. 137c.

⁷⁷ Palmer, 'Great Domesday' (pp. 147-49, nn. 65-70); DB Herts., n. 34/4, Williams, 'Tenurial Revolution Revisited', (p. 163, n. 14).

⁷⁸ *DP*, pp. 399-400.

Cam and close to Earl Ælfgar's old manor at Litlington.⁷⁹ Earl Roger succeeded to all but one of this compact grouping of estates, the exception being a second tenement of half a hide and half a virgate at Guilden Morden, which was attached to Gode's manor at Shingay, and had been annexed by one of Hardwin de Scale's men, Alvred, in Roger's despite.⁸⁰ It is accepted by Baxter that it was probably Gode A who also held five hides at nearby Papworth although these she held under Eadgifu the Fair in 1066 and the land was, therefore, acquired by Eadgifu's successor, Count Alan of Brittany.⁸¹

Another two holdings in Papworth Hundred, Willingham and Fen Drayton, were recorded as being held by Golde, a name that we know the scribe used interchangeably with Gode.⁸² According to Baxter, it would have been perfectly acceptable to have been commended to two lords; Gode could have been Earl Ælfgar's man until his death around 1062, after which she became the man of Eadgifu the Fair. At Willingham, Gode (Golde) held a virgate of land under the Abbot of Ely and at Fen Drayton, the *IE* adds that the abbot's man, Gold, held half a virgate. By 1086 both of these estates had passed into the hands of Picot, sheriff of Cambridgeshire, and were held of him by one Roger, who although most probably Picot's son, may, since this is not stated, have been instead Gode's Norman successor, Earl Roger.⁸³

Earl Roger had one holding in Hertfordshire: half a hide at Broadfield which he had also succeeded to from Gode who, as at Welwyn, above, had held it TRE of Queen Edith.⁸⁴ She had held another two manors of Queen Edith in Hertfordshire, both at

⁷⁹ GDB fols 193a and b, 198b. Gode's estates at Meldreth and Melbourne were held in 1086 by the Abbot of St Evroul of Earl Roger.

⁸⁰ GDB fol. 198b.

⁸¹ GDB fol. 195a; Baxter, *Earls*, p. 227 and n.101.

⁸² GDB fol. 201a; *IE*, 111-112. One might question the use of the masculine Latin ending in *Gold-us* in the entry for Willingham, but the use of *God-* with the Old English masculine ending *-a* has not so far prevented us from recognising this landowner as female. Please refer to Appendix A for the use of *-us* as an ending for feminine hypocoristic names, such as, *Goti-us* and *Wihti-us*.

⁸³ *IE*, 111-112.

⁸⁴ GDB fol. 137c.

Hoddesdon in the Lea Valley.⁸⁵ TRW one of these was in the hands of Edward the Sheriff, and the other the property of a King's thegn called Peter the Burgess.⁸⁶ By 1086 Welwyn was held by Roger, possibly Roger of Montgomery, from Geoffrey of Bec.⁸⁷

We have learnt that Gode's son was called Wulfric from two Domesday entries for the vill of Woolley in Huntingdonshire; at the first one of which they had held together TRE half a hide that was later held by Eustace the Sheriff, and at the second they, described as King's thegns, had held three hides as a manor.⁸⁸ This they still held jointly in 1086.

Are these all of Gode A's Domesday Book holdings? She should probably be differentiated from the woman Godid (Godgyth), the man of Æsgar the staller, who had also owned TRE several estates in Hertfordshire; Godgyth was frequently succeeded by Eustace the Sheriff. It is probably only mere coincidence that this woman also had two holdings at Hoddesdon, where Gode A had held two manors from Queen Edith.⁸⁹

Even without the holdings of Godgyth, the extent of Gode A's landholding in 1066 was considerable. Clarke wrote that only two estates worth over £20 in Cambridgeshire were held by people whose total Domesday estate was worth less than £40, the cut-off point for entry in his list of English lay non-*eorlisc* people with the most valuable Domesday estates.⁹⁰ The first of these was owned by Ælfsi Squitrebil, the other, by Gode at her manor of Shingay.⁹¹ Clarke assumed that she probably had no further land

⁸⁵ GDB fols 139b and 142b.

⁸⁶ Presumably a burgess of Hertford? Possibly Peter de Valognes, sheriff of Hertfordshire, and Essex, also *fermor* of the King's manors in Essex?

⁸⁷ GDB fol. 140a.

⁸⁸ GDB fols 206b, and 207b.

⁸⁹ Godgyth's property at Hoddesdon: GDB fols 137c, 137d; Gode's at Hoddesdon: fols 139b, 142b. The entries, LDB 13a and GDB 140a, are particularly informative and tell how Godgyth had sold/given Norton (Mandeville) in Essex, to St Paul's, but that at the time of Domesday they could provide neither the writ nor the King's assent to prove this. Similarly King William had sold, with her consent, four hides of her holding at Thorley in Hertfordshire to the Bishop of London.

⁹⁰ Clarke, p. 102.

⁹¹ Earl Roger gave, and the countess Mabel granted, the church at and tithes of Shingay to the Abbey of St Martin of Sées (Round, *Calendar*). His daughter, Sybil de Rames, and her son

outside Cambridgeshire – he considered it only faintly possible that she was Gode, the woman of Queen Edith, in Hertfordshire. And, therefore, although he recognized Gode as Earl Ælfgar’s most important dependant in Cambridgeshire, her total estate, which he calculated as £26, failed to qualify for his list. To remedy this omission there follows below a table of Gode A’s estates across Eastern England, and their respective values. It shows that the total value of her estates was approximately £48, which admittedly places her low down the list of the major Anglo-Saxon landowners, but bearing in mind that most of these were men, in an equivalent list of women landholders she would have been the fifth-richest non-*eorlisc* woman in land-wealth terms in the country, after Eadgifu the Fair, Wulfwynn of Cresslow, Æthelgyth wife of Thurstan, and Wulfgifu Betteslau.⁹²

Besides placing Gode fairly and squarely on Clarke’s list, the analysis of Gode’s lands in Domesday has also revealed a series of important relationships between Gode and her contemporaries, perhaps more than for any other case study so far. She had personal and tenorial links with the Wessex royal family, King Edward and Queen Edith, with Eadgifu the Fair, the wife of Harold Godwineson, and with Earl Ælfgar of Mercia. We know little of her close family and antecedents other than a son who was a King’s thegn called Wulfric. They had held land together at Woolley in Huntingdonshire and at Welwyn in Hertfordshire. It may be surmised that Wulfric had been a minor in 1066 and his mother had been safeguarding his claim. However, they still retained the manor at Woolley jointly in 1086, even though Wulfric should have come into his inheritance by then. Two solutions present themselves: either that in 1086 he was too ill to hold in his own right, or that the inclusion of his mother in the return was strategic in order to emphasize his right to the land through his mother.

in law Robert Earl of Gloucester gave the manor of Shingay to the Knights Hospitallers who founded a preceptory there, later acquiring the church and tithes also (VCH Cambs.).

⁹² Clarke, pp. 38-39.

ESTATES	VALUES
Abington (Pigotts)	£ .13s 4d
Melbourn	£ .5s
Guilden Morden	£ .0s
Steeple Morden	£ .50s
Meldreth	£ 8.00
Shingay	£14.00
Papworth	£ 9.00
Wendy	£ .5s
Willingham	£ .3s
Fen Drayton	£ .2s 6d
Papworth	£ .2s
Woolley	-
Woolley	£ .2s
Corney	£ .15s
Broadfield	£ .10s
Hoddesdon	£ .60s
Welwyn	£ 6.00
Hoddesdon	£ .30s
TOTAL	£48.00 4d

Table 6-1 Value of Gode's Estates

Gode was not only tenurially connected to William I but, as we have found with the subjects of previous case studies, she and her property were often linked with the activities of William I's new sheriffs. She had held property at Willingham and Fen Drayton, both in Papworth Hundred, which became the personal fief of Picot, the 'notorious' Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, who was in office from around 1071 to 1086.⁹³ The virgate of land she had held in 1066 at Fen Drayton was held TRW by Roger from Picot. Another sheriff involved in Gode's story was Eustace, the Sheriff of Huntingdonshire in 1080, and then in 1086, a man 'of almost equally evil memory'. Although Eustace had been a companion of William I's at Hastings, his origins have remained obscure. He became a tenant-in-chief in Huntingdonshire where he acquired Gode and Wulfric's smaller piece of land at Woolley.⁹⁴ He is not to be confused with Count Eustace II of Boulogne, the tenth richest Norman landholder in 1086 who held Corney, Hertfordshire, which had also originally been Gode's, letting it out to Robert, son of Rozelin.⁹⁵ A third sheriff, who has been mentioned briefly already with connection to Gode, was 'Edward the Sheriff' or Edward of Salisbury, the Sheriff of Wiltshire on occasions between 1070 and 1087, and also the richest English tenant-in-chief recorded in Domesday. The largest part of his estate was in Wiltshire, and had been mainly received from his mother, Wulfwynn of Cresslow; Morris believed him to have later been a chamberlain of Henry I. By 1086 he had acquired Gode's larger manor at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire.⁹⁶

As we have noticed already in LDB, we are fortunate that the GDB shires of Circuit Three, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Huntingdonshire, also sometimes include a

⁹³ GDB fol. 201a. Gode may also have been the unnamed freeman of King Edward who had held half a virgate at Papworth itself.

⁹⁴ *DP*, pp. 196-97.

⁹⁵ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 48, but note that William Morris, *The Medieval English Sheriff to 1300*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 48-49, n. 49, has him superseded by 1091.

⁹⁶ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 85; *DP*, pp. 186-87; Morris, *English Sheriff*, pp. 47-48, nn. 48 and 49.

third interim value. It is significant that this pattern is repeated throughout Gode's entries, suggesting that Gode may have retained her lands until some time between 1066 and 1086. Three scenarios spring to mind. First, that the three-fold values are evidence of Earl Roger's tardy arrival and late acquisition of lands in England which included most of Gode's Cambridgeshire holdings. Second, that the interim value given for Gode's lands outside Cambridgeshire may reflect their repossession by acquisitive sheriffs, such as Picot c.1071, Eustace 1080, or Edward of Salisbury 1070-1087; by 1086 Edward of Salisbury, sometimes known as Edward the Rich, was holding Gode's largest manor at Hoddesdon, which was twenty miles north of London and ideally located on Ermine Street, allowing easy travel to the north where he had connections.⁹⁷ Might a third possibility be that Gode may have lost her lands around 1075 subsequent to the date of the death of her main patron, Queen Edith? Uniquely, both Gode's properties at Woolley are recorded without this extra value since Gode and Wulfric's possession here remained uninterrupted. However, half a hide listed separately was removed by Eustace the Sheriff.⁹⁸

Two extremely interesting entries come from one stint of the ThLV. They were written by the same hand, probably about the beginning of the twelfth century and record the following family group: *Dunnig et uxor eius Golda et nepos eius Wulfric* and a few lines below that: *Dunnig et Goda*.⁹⁹ Could this be our Gode and her family? If so, what relationship is Wulfric to Dunnig? His nephew, or stepson even?¹⁰⁰ Dunni(n)g is a fairly common moneyer's name of the early twelfth century, examples are found at Hastings, Derby, and Exeter, but more importantly, at Huntingdon, and, in fact, recently

⁹⁷ DP.

⁹⁸ VCH Hunts., III, p. 125; it was probably soon reunited with the manor estate at Woolley, since it did not descend to Eustace's descendants, the Lovetots?

⁹⁹ ThLV, (BL Add. MS 40,000, fol. 9v), pl. 7, pp. 176-77.

¹⁰⁰ *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, p. 1906, has, for this time period, 'nephew and especially a sister's son'; although it had previously meant 'grandson or any male descendant'.

discovered on a coin from the Cambridge mint.¹⁰¹ This fenland Dunning is probably the Dunning who was the antecessor of Eustace the Sheriff for his manor of Southoe¹⁰² in Huntingdonshire.¹⁰³ This particular Domesday entry is suspiciously close to those of Woolley – listed as Golde and Wulfric’s - within the *breves* of Eustace the Sheriff. It has been assumed that Wulfric was Gode’s son simply because this is the most likely partnership of a woman and man holding jointly in Domesday Book, and other possibilities could be considered if it was not for their second Woolley entry where Wulfric is categorically referred to as Golde’s son, *Golde et Wulfric filius eius*.¹⁰⁴

Can two interesting charters shed further light on this putative family?

- 1) A grant given by one Hervey of fifteen acres of land to the prioress and nuns of St Radegund’s Priory, Cambridge, whose origin is unknown. King Stephen issued the priory with a confirmation charter in 1138, in which the grant is described as the gift of Hervey son of Eustace, through the death of his father, Eustace, who had inherited the land through the death of Dunning, his father, who had had it *per antiquum successum antecessorum suorum*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Henson, *The English Elite in 1066*, p. 124; ‘Dunning 4’, ‘Dunning 5’, ‘Dunning 6’, ‘Dunning 7’ all PASE; Martin Allen, ‘The Cambridge Mint after the Norman Conquest’, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 166 (2006), 237-44 (pp. 238 and 244).

¹⁰² GDB fol. 206c. Did Dunning have a descendant called Eustace, named after the sheriff? Or could he have been related to Dunning and Gode? Dunning had held Southoe as a manor in 1066, passed to Eustace by 1086; then to the Lovetot’s, Eustace’s descendants – *DP* agrees that his fief appears to have been escheated after his death c. 1100 – in the twelfth century the Honour of Southoe was held by William de Lovetot. Farrer ponders whether William de Lovetot’s mother was one of the heirs to the fee of Southoe. This adds weight to the tentative hereditary links between the Dunnings and Eustace; *EYC*, III, pp. 4-5. *VCH Hunts I*, pp. 393-95, calls Eustace ‘de Lovetot’, founder of St Mary’s Priory, Huntingdon – William de Lovetot succeeded him. *DP* on slim evidence identifies Eustace with Eustache d’Abbeville, who was, according to Wace, a companion of William I. But Roger de Lovetot (‘Roger de Lovetot’, PASE) held 1086 land of Roger de Bully mainly in Nottinghamshire, including two 1066 estates of a Dunning at Grassthorpe and Sutton.

¹⁰³ PASE also recognizes a ‘Dunning 8 of Mercia’, fl. 1066/1086, who, *TRE*, had had property across several midland shires, with apparently no links to Gode, other than that he is an antecessor of Earl Roger’s in Shropshire.

¹⁰⁴ GDB fol. 207c.

¹⁰⁵ *Mon. Ang.*, IV, p. 215.

- 2) A grant of 50 acres of land in *campis citra pontem* (Cambridge) given to Barnwell Priory, *ex dono Dunning*, the *proavus* or ancestor of Hervey Dunning and his wife Matilda.¹⁰⁶

This burgess family became a leading family in Cambridge and produced the first recorded mayor in 1213, Hervey fitzEustace Dunning.¹⁰⁷ We may be seeing a hereditary *burgensis* family in the descendants of the moneyer, Dunning. Although it is tempting to suggest he may have been Gode's husband, we must be cautious and even more so regarding the nature of any connection they may have had with Eustace the Sheriff, which is suggested by the repetitive use of his Christian name for the male children of this family.

6.3.2 Gode B

Another English woman who survived 1066 and retained possession of some of her land in 1086 is the freewoman Gode B. An initial survey of her holdings suggests she may have come from a lower social stratum than the previous Gode; her several land holdings were comparatively much smaller, generally equating to only a few acres each, and were frequently shared with other freemen. The exception to this was a manor of two carucates that she had held in 1066, which had comprised one carucate in Brome, and another in Oakley, both within the central hundred of Hartismere in northern Suffolk.¹⁰⁸

It is perhaps this lesser status that has kept her generally beyond scholarly notice. Nevertheless she was briefly mentioned by Warner in his chapter on the Suffolk Domesday in the Suffolk edition of *The Origins* series. Here, in a section devoted to freemen and women, he commented on the 'startling' lack of study of any of the

¹⁰⁶ Mon. Ang., VI, pt. I, p. 392.

¹⁰⁷ F. W. Maitland, 'Township and Borough: The Ford Lectures 1897: With an Appendix of Notes Relating to the History of Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 65-66.

¹⁰⁸ LDB fol. 339a.

freewomen in Domesday Book, even amongst the major reference books for the period.¹⁰⁹ The Suffolk Domesday returns include an exceptional amount of information on an unusually large number of freemen as compared to the average for the other Domesday shires. Darby calculated that the Suffolk entries recorded an increment of 27% on the average.¹¹⁰ Although we know that the freemen who had held lands in West Suffolk before 1066 and who had fought with Harold at Hastings were granted by royal writ of William I to the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds, the abbey's returns were much less detailed than those of Roger Bigod.¹¹¹ For his Eastern Suffolk fief Domesday's coverage of his 537 freemen is uniquely thorough, even to the point of including many personal names.¹¹² Williams exploited the rich reporting in the hundred of Colneis, in a chapter specifically focused on its pre-Conquest landholders.¹¹³

In Colneis there are no fewer than nine Domesday entries containing the name Gode; there could easily have been more than one freewoman with the same name. Indeed, this does appear to be the case at the vill of *Mycelegata*, where Domesday Book refers to both a *Gode* and an *alt. Gode*.¹¹⁴ Fortunately, these can also be distinguished by their commendation to different lords: Gode to Northman, and *alt. Gode* to Wihlmær.¹¹⁵ It might be likely that she held acreage in more villis where Domesday is silent on the names of their freepeople. In one entry for Colneis Hundred, Gode, a 'freeman' of Roger Bigod, is accorded a toponym, as *Gode of Struostuna* she was listed as one of twelve freemen who were added to the manor of Stratton after 1066.¹¹⁶ It was the usual pattern for Gode to be recorded as one of various groupings of freemen: at Burgh she

¹⁰⁹ Peter Warner, *The Origins of Suffolk* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 195-203 (p. 199).

¹¹⁰ Darby, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England*, p. 168.

¹¹¹ *FD*.

¹¹² LDB fols 330b-345b.

¹¹³ Williams, 'Little Domesday and the English: The Hundred of Colneis in Suffolk'.

¹¹⁴ A lost vill in Trimley.

¹¹⁵ LDB fol. 342a.

¹¹⁶ LDB fol. 314b.

was one of sixteen freemen with a share of one carucate, at Wadgate, one of five with twenty acres between them, at *Struostuna* one of three named as Gode, Edric, Husteman, with six acres between them, at Burgate one of nine freemen with fifteen acres, and finally, at *Mycelegata* she held with a man called Regifer with twelve acres between them.¹¹⁷

Besides these smallholdings in Colneis Hundred, Gode also held land at Strickland in Blything, a hundred that roughly covered the catchment area of the River Blythe where it joined the North Sea. Here she shared 60 acres with four freemen – a brother named Ælfwine, Bondi the smith and his son, Ælfric, and with Askell.¹¹⁸ In the same hundred she retained a share of fourteen acres at Stoven, and in the central hundred of Claydon she held a further fifteen acres at Ulverstone.¹¹⁹

At the time of the Domesday Survey Gode B, in all but one instance, was a freewoman of Roger Bigod, who had succeeded the English Northman for much of eastern Suffolk, usually held in lordship but, sometimes, by one of his sub-tenants, like William Scudet at Brome and Oakley, Hugh Houdain at *Struostuna*, and Wihtmær, at *Mycelegata* and Trimley. Although she held at Ulverstone from Godwy of Odo, presumably Odo of Bayeux, Ulverstone was nevertheless recorded as one of Roger Bigod's annexations from Ely.¹²⁰ The exception, therefore, was at Stratton, to which

¹¹⁷ LDB fols 340a, 341b, 342a and b. Fei., p. 126, has *Regifer* from Ragi(n)frid(?); but compare Jan Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, I: Compounds, Lund Studies in English, 55 ([n.p.]: Glerup, 1979), OE *Gefēra* 'companion' as in Godifer, *Gōd* good companion.

¹¹⁸ LDB fol. 334b.

¹¹⁹ LDB fols 334b and 339a. A free woman named Gode who had held TRE two carucates and thirty acres at Wrating in Risbridge Hundred, Suffolk (LDB fol. 396a), which was held TRW by Pain of Richard fitzGilbert, has not been identified here as an instance of Gode B due to the large distance between this West Suffolk estate and her main concentration of holdings in Colneis Hundred; neither has the Goda/e who was listed as one of two half free men with a carucate and forty acres between them at Newbourn in East Suffolk in 1066 (LDB fol. 424b) although proximity would not make the latter instance impossible.

¹²⁰ LDB fol. 376b.

manor Gode and eleven other freemen had been added after 1066, and which was held in 1086 by Bernard of London from Robert Malet.¹²¹

Immediately the ominous presence of two of William I's sheriffs is felt in the story of the survival of this freewoman, Robert Malet and Roger Bigod but also of the pre-Conquest sheriff, Northman. Robert Malet was sheriff of Suffolk at least twice, once around 1071, and later, around 1080; he had probably succeeded to the position from his father who died in 1071.¹²² But it is our second sheriff, Roger Bigod, who occurs regularly in connection with Gode B. He was sheriff of Suffolk around 1072-1075, in 1086, and then later for a period that stretched from 1101 to 1107. It would also appear that he held the shrievalty of Norfolk concurrently with that of Suffolk.¹²³ Originally from Normandy, he may have been the son of one of the bishop of Bayeux's knights, who held land in Les Loges in Calvados, and Aunay-sur-Odon and Savenay in Vire.¹²⁴ Morris has suggested that his father was closely aligned to the fortunes of the Conqueror.¹²⁵ And, certainly, Roger was greatly rewarded in the new English kingdom with 117 lordships in Suffolk, even if these, as we have seen, were mainly of freemen with small manors.¹²⁶ Beyond this shire he only held a further six lordships.

For the majority of his Suffolk holdings he appears to have been the direct successor of his predecessor, Northman, who had been sheriff before 1066, and then after, for a period covering 1066-1070.¹²⁷ Roger Bigod's freemen, therefore, had previously been those of Northman's who had held with their own land. Thus it would appear that Roger

¹²¹ LDB fol. 314b.

¹²² Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76; C. P. Lewis, 'Malet, Robert (fl. 1066-1105)', *ODNB*.

¹²³ Green, *Sheriffs*, pp. 60-61.

¹²⁴ *DP*, pp. 396-98.

¹²⁵ Morris, *Sheriffs*.

¹²⁶ Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, p. 188.

¹²⁷ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76. There was also a Northman, sheriff of Northamptonshire from 1053 to 1066. *Northman vicecomes* is depicted on the twelfth-century *Guthlac Roll*, as an eleventh-century benefactor of Croyland Abbey. He is generally assumed to be Northman, the brother of Earl Leofric, however, he had supposedly died in 1017. The donation comprised land in Sutton and Stapleton (Leics.) in the Wapentake of Guthlaxton. I note that TRW a 'Norman' still held extensive estates in the same area.

Bigod succeeded to those lands which Northman had held as sheriff; it is quite likely that a sheriff was needed to police these various freemen.¹²⁸ It is also apparent that Roger forged a close alliance with both Northman and his English counterpart in Norfolk, Æthelwine of Thetford.¹²⁹ Keats-Rohan has suggested that Roger may even have been connected by marriage to his antecessor, Northman, who, after 1066 held some of his pre-Conquest holdings as his tenant.¹³⁰ The wording of an early twelfth-century grant to Rochester Cathedral Priory perhaps implies a closer relationship than a purely business connection. In this charter Roger and his wife Adelisa invoked a *pro anima* clause for Northman, who they described as their English predecessor. The alliance proved successful for both parties: Northman was still active in regional government in the 1070's.¹³¹ In 1086 he was a rare English survivor who had held onto five of his manors, albeit as a sub-tenant of Lord Roger. Northman had reason to be grateful to the new regime: William I, in an 'unparalleled act of clemency' returned three of his estates in Suffolk, including Saxmundham, which he then held of Roger.¹³² The Ralph FitzNorman who was a tenant of Roger and who witnessed his foundation charter of Thetford priory was probably Northman's son.¹³³ The fact that this young man was given such a popular Continental name so soon after 1066 might suggest that he had a Norman godfather after whom he was named; a Norman mother at this point would have been unlikely.

We have seen how Northman's pre-Conquest power was built upon the large number of freemen who were commended to him, and similarly that of Roger Bigod who

¹²⁸ Andrew Wareham, 'Bigod, Roger (d. 1107)', *ODNB*; Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk in the Middle Ages: Studies in Places and Place-Names, the Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial, Saints, Mummies and Crosses, Domesday Book, and Chronicles of Bury Abbey* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), pp. 148-49.

¹²⁹ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 146-49.

¹³⁰ *DP*, p. 306.

¹³¹ Wareham, *Lords*, pp. 147-48, and n. 48.

¹³² *LDB* fol. 338b; Scarfe, *Suffolk in the Middle Ages*, p. 148.

¹³³ Wareham, *Lords*, p. 148.

succeeded him. His power base was centred in the south-east corner of Suffolk, and particularly around Colneis Hundred. It is no surprise, therefore, that Gode had been primarily, but by no means exclusively, under his patronage. Warner identified a three-tier structure of commendation within the Suffolk Domesday entries: firstly, the thegns who had held very large estates and manors, then a middle class of named freepeople who had held or shared substantial, even carucated, lands and manors.¹³⁴ This is the class in which we find Gode with a two-carucate manor at Brome.¹³⁵ The Domesday scholar is fortunate that the Suffolk pages give such abundant information on this class and its networks. It is also frequently revealing on kinship groups, as for instance at Strickland where Gode is listed with her brother, Ælfwine.¹³⁶ The final and third class of freepeople was the largest and included those who had held very small acreages, probably managing to live little above a subsistence level. Although it was once thought that all freepeople over the age of twelve had had to be commended to a lord in a public ceremony, it is the opinion of Henry Loyn that only those freewomen who held land, or who were likely to inherit any, would have had to go through this process.¹³⁷

The table below shows Gode's commendation to various lords at a hundredal level. An initial question arises: was it possible to be commended to more than one lord in the same hundred, bearing in mind that swearing was done publicly at hundredal assemblies?¹³⁸ It is necessary to reconsider that Domesday Book does not reveal only one time frame but may be referring to perhaps several over a thirty-year period. It is therefore quite plausible that over time one freeman could be commended to more than one lord in the same hundred. Further some entries show that it was possible to be

¹³⁴ Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, pp. 196-98.

¹³⁵ LDB fol. 339a.

¹³⁶ LDB fol. 334b.

¹³⁷ Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, p. 199; Henry R. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 500-1087* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

¹³⁸ Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, p. 199.

commended to more than one lord even for the same piece of land at the same time, as at Thorington where one freeman was half commended to one lord and half to another.¹³⁹ Gode herself was sub-commended to an unnamed lord under the patronage of Robert Malet's predecessor for the fifteen acres she held at Ulverstone.¹⁴⁰ For the purpose of this case study it is sufficient to say that the Suffolk Domesday returns and the freemen and women recorded within them, such as our subject, would reveal a complex web of networks and strata of regional patronage, if further study allowed.

	Vill	Patron	Successor
Colneis	Stratton	Eadric of Laxfield	Robert Malet
	Burgh	Northman	Roger Bigod
	Wadgate	Northman	Roger Bigod
	<i>Struostuna</i>	Northman	Roger Bigod
	Burgate	Northman	Roger Bigod
	<i>Mycelegata</i>	Northman	Roger Bigod
	Trimley	Northman	Roger Bigod
Blything	Strickland	Ulf	Roger Bigod
	Stoven	Godwin, son of Toki	Roger Bigod
Hartismere	Brome and Oakley	Stigand	Roger Bigod
Claydon	Ulverstone	Eadric (sub- patronage)	Odo of Bayeux

Table 6-2 Gode's Holdings listed by her Successors

¹³⁹ LDB fol. 335a.

¹⁴⁰ LDB fol. 376b.

Gode's name is twice coupled with those of men, Regifer, at Myceleghata, and Langabein at Stoven.¹⁴¹ As nothing else is known of either of them and in the absence of further knowledge, it is probably unwise to connect them directly with Gode, or see them in any way related; they may simply have been co-freemen who owned land in the same village, or shared the commendation for a few acres. However, we do know, that she had a brother named Ælfwine with whom she held in 1086 a portion of fourteen acres at Strickland in Blything Hundred.¹⁴² He could have been the Ælfwine the Priest who held a much larger holding of one carucate and 40 acres in the same village, under the commendation of the predecessor of Robert Malet, who would have been his father, William Malet.¹⁴³ By 1086 Ælfwine held it of William I. Another Ælfwine the Priest was also holding 40 acres as a manor at Ulverstone, once again under the commendation of Robert Malet's predecessor and it is noted that he had still been alive on the day of the death of William Malet.¹⁴⁴ As these two entries may not refer necessarily to the same man, is it just a coincidence that Gode also held fifteen acres at Ulverstone? An Ælfwine appears in Barrow's list of royal clerks with a further 30-acre manor at Darsham, including half a church with six acres of glebe, before 1066.¹⁴⁵ Here, though, there is no corresponding entry showing that any Gode had held at Darsham too. Darsham was divided into four manors, one royal and three held by Robert Malet.¹⁴⁶ Additionally in 1086 Bigod's own chaplain, Ansketil, held of him a one-carucate estate there with the advowson of the church.¹⁴⁷ Was he Ælfwine's successor?

¹⁴¹ LDB fols 342a and 333b. But is Regifer definitely a man? Cf St Regouefe (f), or even Rægengifu>Rængifu>Rægifu). Jönsjö, *Studies on Middle English Nicknames*, I, p. 118, has ON *Langabein*, Longshanks.

¹⁴² LDB fol. 334b.

¹⁴³ LDB fol. 282b; for more on Robert Malet, see Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday Book and the Malets: Patrimony and the Private Histories of Public Lives', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 41 (1997), 13-56.

¹⁴⁴ LDB fol. 376b.

¹⁴⁵ Julia Barrow, *Who served the Altar at Brixworth? Clergy in English Minsters c. 800-c. 1100*, The Brixworth Lectures, 2nd ser., 9 (Brixworth: Friends of All Saints Church, 2013), p. 35.

¹⁴⁶ LDB fols 282b, 310b, 313a and b.

¹⁴⁷ LDB fol. 334b.

The church of All Saints, Darsham, still retains some early twelfth-century quoins of rough ashlar.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, the Sibton Cartulary includes an intriguing undated, but early *narratio*, which also suggests some connection between an Ælfwine and a Gode in the vicinity of Darsham.¹⁴⁹ The story, written under the heading of Wenhaston, a vill in the hundred of Blything, concerns Ælfwine, the lord of Wenhaston and Walpole, and his wife Gode. In the Suffolk Domesday, Wenhaston, Walpole, and Darsham, all within Blything Hundred, have small entries in the returns of Count Alan of Brittany – as too does Sibton itself where an Ælfwine also held one carucate and twenty acres as a manor – and all are included in the assessment of Bramfield.¹⁵⁰ Although the charters make no mention that the Ælfwine in the story is a priest, based on the repetition of names and places alone it must be possible that we are talking about the same Ælfwine, or at the very least, the same family. Moreover, they record how that the two sons of Ælfwine and Gode’s marriage – the first, Robert I Malet, took service under Hugh Bigod, Roger Bigod’s son, and that the second, Geoffrey, became the steward of Bramfield. I am not suggesting for a moment that this elder son is *the* Robert Malet, the sheriff, but it is a strange re-use of this name. We may recall that the Ælfwine the Priest of Domesday was commended to the Malet family.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that studying Domesday Book for women across 1066, even with all the pitfalls it presents, not least the uncertainty of how many individuals share the same name, can be revealing. The first case study identified a woman of great

¹⁴⁸ ‘All Saints, Darsham, Suffolk’ <<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk>> [accessed 1 August 2019].

¹⁴⁹ Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters, ed. by Philippa Brown, Suffolk Records Society Suffolk Charters, 4 vols, 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), no. 817, pp. 199-201.

¹⁵⁰ LDB fols 292b–298a.

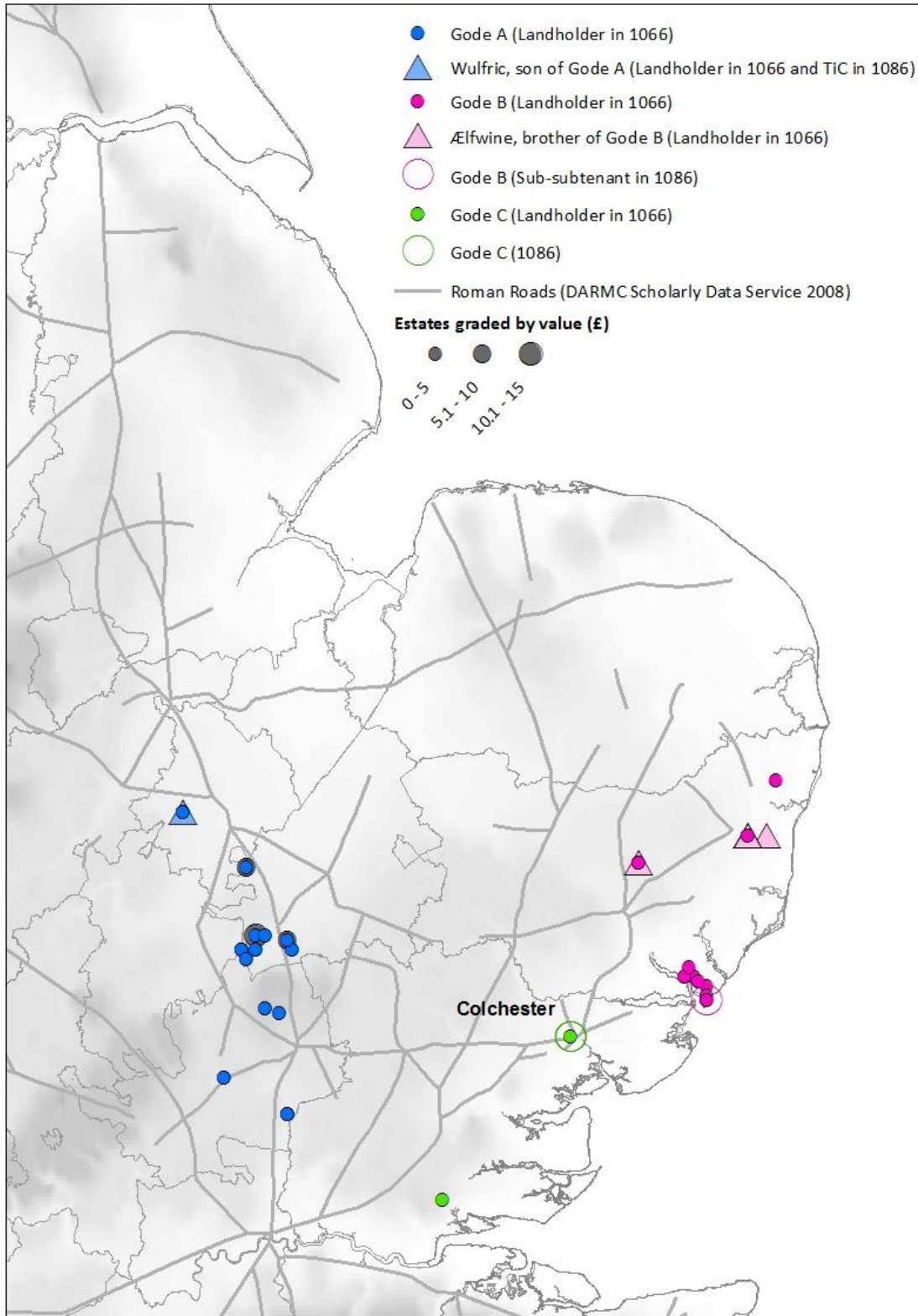
consequence to her contemporaries, Beorhtgifu. She was significant enough for both Archdeacon Walter and Matilda d'Eyncourt to name her specifically in their twelfth-century charters. She probably belonged to the Anglo-Scandinavian family of Aghmund, son of Walhræven, the Lincolnshire lawman, and that she had some connection with the family of Archdeacon Walter of Oxford and the Norman d'Eyncourts, both probably through Remigius, bishop of Lincoln. Beorhtgifu was a successful woman who maintained a large estate over a great distance, including two substantial Oxfordshire holdings held of the bishop of Lincoln. However, the manner of her tenure at Dorchester and the efforts taken to circumscribe its future implications for the bishopric has illuminated the insecure nature of that success. The evidence put forward in this case study is indicative of how a connection with the incoming Norman bishop may have helped Beorhtgifu to be a political survivor of the Conquest. Conversely it has also demonstrated how a native mistress from a regionally important family, such as the *lageman* Aghmunds's, could have smoothed Remigius' entry into English society in Lincoln when he moved his episcopal seat there in 1067. She is an example of how women could fit into the structures of ecclesiastical landholding, either because they were drawn into clerical families or because they were regarded as suitable tenants of major churches, or both, as I have argued. Most importantly she was one of very few English women who survived to 1086, retaining the manor at Corby Glen which she had held in 1066.

A second case study identified Gode A whose lands were concentrated across Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire. Her tenurial and personal links show that she moved in the highest echelons of English nobility, and may possibly have been part of the English court, very close to the royal household, and perhaps even a lady-in-waiting. She had held several estates of the queen and was also a man of King Edward. Additionally, she was tenurially linked and bound by personal commendation

to the House of Mercia through Earl Ælfgar, and through Eadgifu the Fair, wife of King Harold, to the House of Godwine. She was also a tenant of the Abbot of Ely.¹⁵¹ There can be no doubt that she had been influential both regionally and nationally. She was the fifth richest non-*eorlisc* woman in late Anglo-Saxon England. She may have survived until 1075 and the death of Queen Edith. Unfortunately, we know nothing of her natal family. It seems unlikely that such a woman would become the wife of the moneyer, Dunning, but after the Conquest, moneyers were one group of society who still prospered. Her lands show predation by William's sheriffs but she remained in possession of her manor at Woolley that she jointly owned with her son. A second marriage to Dunning may well have helped her retain an element of security. Sheriffs may have encouraged relationships with English officials, such as moneyers, to smooth their path and aid in integration, especially in towns where their presence, involving castle building was intrusive.

The third case study did not only identify Gode B but perhaps more importantly revealed and discussed possibly for the first time an Anglo-Saxon freewoman, and one who, moreover, survived across the Conquest. If the suggested identity is correct Gode B was a freewoman whose property included two large manors and several smaller, shared holdings. The fact that Domesday Book gives her a name suggests, at the very least, she was in the middling strata of freepeople. We have seen how her freeholdings remained hers although her commended lord changed and that it was her larger estates were the ones that fell forfeit. The influence of the sheriffs can be seen all over her lands, especially since Roger Bigod chose to align himself so closely to his predecessor, Northman the pre-Conquest sheriff of Suffolk, and Gode's main commended lord.

¹⁵¹ GDB fol. 201a; but which Abbot of Ely is debateable – Wulfric (1044/1045-?1066) or Stigand (c. 1066), or even Thurstan (?1066-1072/1073), the last Anglo-Saxon abbot who was appointed by Harold Godwineson, Knowles, *Heads*, p. 45. Perhaps, the most likely candidate considering Gode's closeness to the house of Wessex, is Wulfric, a cousin of Edward the Confessor.



Map 6-2 Holdings of Gode A, Gode B, and Gode C.

. But what about our fourth subject, Gode C? At first glance it is difficult to know how many individuals Godes/as there were holding land in and around the Domesday borough of Colchester. Even if individuals could be spotted could we recognize their gender? The discussion above would suggest that we should consider that it likely that one or more of them may have been female. The name of one Colchester burgess is transcribed as *Goddæ* in Domesday which, although, it may be a shortened form of the alternative female name *God-dæg(e)* may simply be a feminine variant of Goda/e. Female burgesses are far from unusual in Colchester and there are several King's burgesses listed in Domesday with unequivocal female names, such as Leofgifu, Ælfflæd, and Wulfgifu. Burgesses called Goda/e held in total at least nineteen houses with their accompanying acreage for gardens and animal housing.

It is, of course, possible that Gode the burgess may even be one of the influential Godes whom we have met already; Fleming showed how wealthy thegns from remote areas frequently also held urban tenements in towns that were within half a day's ride from their farms.¹⁵² Thus, one Goda held a Colchester town house in 1066 which had been attached to the rural manor of Elmstead, also in Essex.¹⁵³ By 1086 Goda's town house was the property of Swein of Essex, the English sheriff of Essex who also held a manor at Basildon which had been held TRE by a freeman named *Godæ*.¹⁵⁴ It is likely that *Godæ* is the same as the burgess called Goda and that, therefore, at least this Goda, if not all Colchester burgesses called Gode/a, was, in fact, a woman. Gode C introduces an English woman who has not been recognized before: one who held urban as opposed to rural property in 1066. She raises new questions as to whether and how such women

¹⁵² Fleming, 'Rural Elites and Urban Communities'.

¹⁵³ LDB fol. 106b.

¹⁵⁴ LDB 42b; Swein occurs as sheriff of Essex occasionally from 1066x1085), Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 39.

survived and whether their type of landholding affected their survival. She, and they, will be the subject of the next chapter

Chapter 7 English Women in Domesday Towns

Gode C does not just heighten our awareness of English survivors among urban women at this time but she also raises many questions about the urban women whom we find in Domesday Book, not least whether these are in fact the same set of questions that Domesday poses for the study of women in rural areas. Naturally Gode prompts us to ask about the identity of these English urban women. And bearing in mind the problems concerning identifying women in Domesday, can we identify any, and, if so, are any of them the same women whom we see in rural situations?

The bulk of Domesday evidence, and thus so far the bulk of this thesis, concerns rural estates and their holders. Towns raise different questions, but also overlapping ones. In the first instance it is necessary for this chapter to provide some context about the history of Anglo-Saxon urban centres before it starts looking more closely at urban women themselves. It will discuss the effects the Norman Conquest had on towns, and particularly on the towns of Eastern England. This more general discussion will be followed by a general overview of the English women found in the Domesday towns of Eastern England, which will then be compared with the detailed return for Colchester. The chapter will conclude with three short case studies, Gode C from Colchester, and Leofgifu and Hungifu, both from Huntingdon, from which conclusions will be drawn specifically around English women and survival, whilst always bearing in mind our questions around using Domesday for English women.

7.1 Domesday Towns in Eastern England

7.1.1 Towns in Domesday Book

The nineteen towns that occur in the Eastern sections of Domesday Book dealt within this thesis are Lincoln, Stamford, Louth, Torksey, and Grantham in Lincolnshire, Norwich, Kings Lynn, Thetford, and Yarmouth in Norfolk, Dunwich, Eye, Beccles, Clare, Sudbury, Ipswich, and Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, Maldon and Colchester in Essex, and Cambridge and Huntingdon, in the respective one-town shires of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. This thesis, whilst acknowledging that the development and origins of Domesday Boroughs have remained the main impetus behind previous study, will follow the advice of Bärbel Brodt that it is not a good idea to ‘engage in argument on the subject of urban definition’.¹ Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, any Domesday Book entry that lists property under some form of town house and/or refers to burgesses will be considered to be referring to an urban community. This chapter will not therefore make any value judgements on the relative usage within Domesday of such terms as *burgus*, *civitas*, or *vicus*. Another possible area of confusion could arise from the several words employed in Domesday Book to signify a town dwelling – *mansio*, *mansura*, *domus*, and *haga* – which, ostensibly, appear to be synonymous, but on further inspection, could refer to town dwellings of differing sizes and composition.² Whereas Domesday was primarily concerned with an urban dwelling as a unit on which tax should be paid, this thesis will treat the various words for houses

¹ Bärbel Brodt, ‘East Anglia’, *CUHB*, pp. 639-56 (pp. 642-43). For Domesday boroughs, Adolphus Ballard, *The Domesday Boroughs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904); Susan Reynolds, ‘Towns in Domesday’, *Domesday Studies*, ed. by J. C. Holt (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987), pp. 295-309; Geoffrey Martin ‘Domesday Book and the Boroughs’ in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, pp. 143-63 and Geoffrey Martin, ‘Essex Boroughs and their Records’, in *Kenneth Neale, An Essex Tribute*, pp. 27-45. Julian Munby is currently working on the Domesday Boroughs Project which aims to provide, in the near future, a full text of the borough material accompanied by a commentary and general discussion. For some preliminary thoughts, Julian Munby, ‘The Domesday Boroughs Revisited’, *ANS*, 33 (2010), 127-150.

² Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, p. 137.

simply to signify urban property, owned or lived in by a townsperson or persons. Above all, it is these people, those who paid the customary tax, upon whom this chapter will focus.

First it is necessary to acknowledge that most property and power in pre-Conquest urban centres was divided between the members of the highest-ranking English nobility, and from this women were not excluded. Queen Edith in particular was influential in several Eastern boroughs: in 1066, and most probably up until her death in 1075. She held two parts of the borough of Ipswich where she held in lordship *unam grangiam* with four carucates of land, on which lived twelve freemen, ten *bordarii* and two burgesses.³ In the county of Lincolnshire, she had held 70 *mansuræ* with an adjacent two and a half carucates of land in Stamford, the *suburbium* of Torksey with its 102 burgesses, and the manor of Hardwick contiguous with that, together with an extra-burghal two carucates.⁴ These large urban holdings were integral to a huge swathe of estates that Edith had held across the North-East Midlands, in Northamptonshire and Rutland, but particularly across Lincolnshire. The castle at Stamford may have been built at the centre of Queen Edith's holdings to emphasize her power.⁵

Countesses, too, had considerable presence in the towns of Eastern England. Ælfgifu of Mercia, the widow of Earl Ælfgar, was the dominant pre-Conquest lord of Sudbury. Another rung down the social ladder, the LDB borough account for Norwich appears to emphasize the position and property of an unnamed sister of Archbishop Stigand.⁶ She and her two brothers, the other being Bishop Æthelmær of Elmham, were important

³ LDB fol. 290.

⁴ GDB fols 336d and 337a.

⁵ For Stamford, David Roffe and Chris Mahany, 'Stamford: The Development of an Anglo-Scandinavian Borough', *ANS*, 5 (1982), 199-219; David Roffe and Chris Mahaney, 'Stamford and the Norman Conquest', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 21 (1986), 5-9.

⁶ Rumble, *Leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 175; Lucy Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research*, 81 (2008), 1-27 (p. 19).

members of Norwich's élite in 1066, suggesting that the family may have been from this area, and LDB stresses that Æthelmær's had inherited the church of St Simon and St Jude in Norwich since it was family property and not part of his bishopric.⁷ Stigand's sister appears to have only held as a burgess, and one moreover with only a relatively small plot of thirty-two acres. However, the pointed reference to her ahead of the mention of other burgesses may have been politically motivated, seeking to highlight the tainted and insecure nature of her holding.⁸

Much further down the urban hierarchy came the burgesses, whom Palliser divided into four categories based on their dues: those who paid husgabel or house rent, those who paid variable tolls, such as market tolls and judicial fines, those who paid geld, and those who paid towards militia and defences such as walls or bridges.⁹ They were governed by their own customs and rules of inheritance – burghage holdings were heritable – and ultimogeniture applied in some boroughs where the youngest son, and sometimes the youngest daughter, would inherit.

Burgesses were not the only group of urban dwellers. Towns needed supplies; and food and other requirements were provided by the bordars and cottars of Domesday Book, sub-tenants with smallholdings and garden plots, such as the *horti* or *hortuli* at Westminster.¹⁰ The bordars were unfree smallholders; in Huntingdon they accounted for a third of the total population and in Norwich they numbered 1,300.¹¹ Dyer, using Domesday, has investigated the links between town and country, and found that in an inner zone, the bordars and cottars formed settlements either within the towns or in extra-mural suburbs where they were considered a part of the urban communities that

⁷ August 1047-c. April 1070.

⁸ Brian Ayers, 'Understanding the Urban Environment: Archaeological Approaches to Medieval Norwich', in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill, 68-83 (p. 72). Note that Stigand was deposed in 1070.

⁹ *CUHB*, pp.

¹⁰ GDB fol.128a.

¹¹ GDB fols 203a and b, and LDB fols 116a-119a.

they served.¹² The surrounding villages which also fell within this zone provided produce and labour. Beyond that an outer zone of up to twenty miles included manors with long distance trade links that supplied the town with rural produce in exchange for manufactured and commercial goods. This trade is evidenced by the substantial lined cellars that have been excavated within the remains of houses in major towns such as York and Lincoln and which appear to have suddenly proliferated in the second half of the eleventh century. Blair makes a reasonable case that three urban sites in or closely linked to what he terms the ‘eastern zone’, and all within the research area, were probably built up around the same time – Ipswich, Thetford, and Norwich.¹³

Fleming was also struck by the connection between the town and country and she proved that English thegns had held property and operated within both rural and urban spheres.¹⁴ She suggested that the wealthy and powerful English élite appeared to have had influence in more than one town and, as they could not be differentiated from their rural counterparts, were probably one and the same, forming, in her view, a ‘single élite’ for whom an urban presence was essential. Astill contended that the urban involvement of thegns had been under-recorded, and that, in Domesday, we can see the remnants of extensive ‘urban manors’, essentially large plots which had been the gift of the king.¹⁵ Dyer, with particular reference to the city of Worcester, demonstrated how these mostly pre-Conquest *hagan*, and their connections to substantial rural estates, could be reconstructed.¹⁶ The Domesday return for Colchester records how several town houses belonged to rural estates; for example, amongst others, three houses which were

¹² Christopher Dyer, ‘Towns and Cottages in Eleventh-Century England’ in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. by H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London: Hambledon, 1992), pp. 91-106.

¹³ John Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 341-42.

¹⁴ Fleming, ‘Rural Elites and Urban Communities’.

¹⁵ Grenville Astill, ‘General Survey 600-1300’, *CUHB*, 27-51.

¹⁶ Dyer, ‘Towns and Cottages’.

held by Otto the Goldsmith belonged to Shalford, four houses of the abbot of Westminster belonged to Feering, and two houses held by Geoffrey de Mandeville belonged to Ardleigh.¹⁷

One particular Domesday entry in the borough return for Colchester gives us an opportunity to see what a thegnly urban residence may have looked like. Before 1066 a freeman called Thorbiorn had held several rural estates close to Colchester, including at Tolleshunt where he had held eight and a half hides of extremely profitable land, with no fewer than twelve salt-houses.¹⁸ His urban ‘manorial’ complex within the borough itself consisted of an *aula* (hall) with a *curia* (court), one hide of land, six acres of meadow, and fifteen burgesses, presumably with their houses.¹⁹ Such a *haga* would have provided Thorbiorn and his family with useful accommodation when they were in town, convenient for both business and social meetings, and a suitable place for trade and storage of goods. By all accounts an urban residence like this, built in a large open space between streets, may not have been dissimilar in layout to any high-status rural farmstead.²⁰

Haslam designed an historical model to map the development of the inter-connections between prosperous urban manors, like Thorbiorn’s, and their rural equivalents. He argued that late Anglo-Saxon urban centres, and in particular the burhs, were the result of a programme of successful town planning which had begun in the 970s.²¹ These areas, essentially built as ‘islands of royal power’ were nodes not just of

¹⁷ LDB fol. 106b.

¹⁸ LDB fol. 32a; ‘Thorbern of Tolleshunt’, PASE; Thorbiorn also held TRE at Faulkbourne, (Great) Braxted, and Northey Island (all Essex), LDB fols 54b, and 55a and b. It is interesting that Thorbiorn was responsible for the rare TRW listing of an annexation made by an Englishman, of a mere 22 acres at Colne (Essex), miniscule when compared with his pre-Conquest holdings (LDB fol.103).

¹⁹ LDB fol. 106b. According to Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, ‘an *aula* was the mark of a thegn’, p. 229.

²⁰ Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 451.

²¹ Jeremy Haslam, *Urban-Rural Connections in Domesday Book and Late Anglo-Saxon Royal Administration*, BAR, 571 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012).

military might, but also of political and religious domination that radiated out into the surrounding countryside. Blair recently joined the debate around thegns' involvement in towns, and citing evidence from urban archaeological sites of industrial and commercial significance, concluded that, at the very least, it was never purely military, and that *hagan* were attractive assets in many ways.²²

The presence of the élite in late Anglo-Saxon towns helps to explain the proliferation of urban churches in this period.²³ Stocker has traced the stages in development of the urban churches in Lincoln, and has been able to isolate this initial phase of parochial church building within the strip plots of English thegns.²⁴ Further analysis enabled him to identify St Clement in Butwerke as one of two churches built by Colswein between 1066 and 1086 on an urban estate comprising 36 houses. Some urban churches, for example in Oxford and in Worcester, do seem to have been founded in the precincts of *hagæ*.²⁵ Female landowners, as well as male, created new churches in towns as places where they and their retinues could worship. They also provided opportunities for patronage, for landowners to create positions for clergy in their service, and for them to display their power and largesse.

Of particular interest to this thesis is Astill's suggestion, partly building on Williams, that it was the urban thegns, who, as representatives of the previous royal regime, were ideally placed in 1066 to serve as administrators and moneyers for the Normans.²⁶ A famous example of this was provided by the family of Christina of Markyate and their relationship with Ranulph Flambard. Christina's *vita* unequivocally described her and

²² Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 237-38.

²³ Baker and Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

²⁴ David Stocker, 'Aristocrats, Burghers and their Markets: Patterns in the Foundation of Lincoln's Urban Churches' in *Life in Viking-Age Towns: Social Approaches to Towns in England and Ireland 800-1100*, ed. by Dawn Hadley and Letty ten Harkel, 120-43 (p. 137).

²⁵ For churches in *hagæ*, Baker and Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church* (on Worcester St Andrew); VCH, City of Oxford (on St Martin's, now represented by a detached tower at Carfax).

²⁶ Astill, 'General Survey'.

her family as part of the urban community of Huntingdon without this precluding the nobility of their lineage.²⁷ Christina's family exhibited the same mix of urban and rural influence that Domesday Book exemplifies as a marker of the late Anglo-Saxon nobility.²⁸

7.1.2 The Impact of the Norman Conquest

The fifty or so years which preceded 1066 and the arrival of the Normans were marked by a period of urban stability and relative prosperity in Anglo-Saxon towns.²⁹ Those of the Danelaw and East Anglia particularly prospered, built on Viking plunder and trade, they were to become some of the largest recorded in Domesday Book. Although their general development would continue, the Norman Conquest brought in its wake some rapid changes to all of England's urban centres, from which those of Eastern England were not immune. Their very prosperity made them more open to attack from the east whilst their ethnic make-up might have made them more receptive to rebellion, both factors which may have led them to experience the Norman 'yoke' more physically as they rushed to secure and stabilize these valuable acquisitions. Whilst these changes varied from town to town, the main ones can be summarized as the imposition of castles and the subsequent loss of houses, the building of French 'suburbs,' and the preferential treatment of incoming French burgesses. Perhaps not so obvious a trend was the upheaval of the urban hierarchy which saw the English urban élite suffer a denouement

²⁷ *Life of Christina of Markyate*; ed. by Talbot; *Christina of Markyate*, ed by Fanous and Leyser. See also Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, in which he explored the part played by urban communities, and in particular the English élite within them, in the process of Norman assimilation, noting how influential English survivors frequently held leading roles in the new urban administration. His subjects were all male with the exception of Christina of Markyate; Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 201-06, for interaction between surviving English burgesses and Norman colonists

²⁸ *Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. by Talbot, pp. 48-49, 82-83; Christina's father was a member of the Town Guild.

²⁹ David Griffiths, 'Towns and their Hinterlands' in *A Social History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ed. by Hadley and ten Harkel, pp. 152- 78 (p. 165).

in status, being replaced by Norman administrators, officers, and clerics, whilst at the same time, the status of hereditary burghal families was elevated.

It is noticeable that urban summaries in Domesday Book frequently make references to property that by 1086 was variously described as *vasta*, *vastata*, or *vacua*, all denoting devastation, or something that by destruction has become uninhabited, empty or deserted.³⁰ Palliser reminds us that these words only implicitly provide evidence of Norman devastation.³¹ It is now generally accepted that in Domesday waste is simply the term used to denote land not paying tax. Assuming that this would have applied to domestic property in towns as well, this thesis will work on the hypothesis that the various terms used for waste in the urban Domesday entries refer to either uninhabited dwellings or dwellings where the owners were unable to pay the tax. Thus, although such entries no doubt accounted for the loss of tax flowing into the king's coffers, they also provide us with clues to the situation in early Anglo-Norman towns, and especially the experience of the English population.

The more detailed information in the Domesday town returns show a native townspeople who had been beset by a series of unfortunate occurrences. In some cases it is keen to exonerate the Norman administration from responsibility for their evident reversal of fortune but elsewhere one can hear the frustration of urban dwellers, and especially the English survivors. The English burgesses frequently found themselves with fewer available houses but the same pre-existing tax burden whilst new French incomers were given tax waivers and more privileges. A hundred burgesses in Ipswich were described as *pauperes*, so poor that they could no longer pay any tax, just a penny assessed on each of their heads whilst new French settlers in Cambridge and those

³⁰ *Dictionary of Medieval Latin in British Sources*
<[http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#vastus; #vastatus; #vacue](http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#vastus;#vastatus;#vacue)> [accessed 7 March 2018].

³¹ D. M. Palliser, 'Domesday Book and the Harrying of the North', *Northern History*, 29 (1993), 1-23.

within the new borough at Norwich appear to have been exempt from the customary tax.³² In the pages of Domesday we perceive an attempt by the English to renegotiate their tax position. These particular entries clearly show English survivors, collectively voicing their complaints.

Some Domesday returns allude to the misappropriation of English urban property and funds by Norman sheriffs, although whether this amounted to actual oppression is open to some debate. The Huntingdon return intimates that the citizens of Huntingdon suffered grievously at the hands of their sheriff. It informs us of the plight of Burgræd and Thorkell, two priests who had held a church there along with two hides of land on which lived 22 burgesses.³³ In 1086 the two clerics were forced to claim mercy from William I since Eustace the Sheriff had misappropriated this prime piece of urban real estate and removed them from this church. The account for Cambridge is even more strident in its criticism of shrieval behaviour; Picot the sheriff had seized the burgesses' common pasture, and demanded the use of their plough-teams nine times a year, compared to the three times that had been required of them previously.³⁴ Whereas in 1066 they had held their property without the custom of providing either carts or cartage for the sheriff, they now had this further imposition placed upon them. To top it all Picot had built three water mills in such a position that they were responsible for a reduction in the pastureland available to them and the destruction of many of their homes. Sheriffs, as royal agents, had special responsibilities for towns. The questions which have arisen about sheriffs and women in respect of rural holdings will certainly be relevant in towns.

There can be no doubt of the scale of the upheaval occasioned within several of the Eastern boroughs by the imposition of Norman castles, and the resultant reorganisation

³² GDB fols 189a, and LDB fols 116a-119a, 289a, 290a and b.

³³ GDB fol. 203a.

³⁴ GDB fol. 189a.

of English towns. The urban castles of Lincoln, Stamford, Norwich, and Colchester were some of the earliest Norman fortifications built in England, with construction commencing as early as 1068 to 1070. Such colossal building projects were bound to have a deleterious effect on the surrounding townscapes – Colchester is the largest Norman keep in Europe.³⁵ Domesday records the loss of custom consequent to the destruction of 166 *mansiones* in Lincoln, five in Stamford, twenty-one at Huntingdon, and twenty-seven in Cambridge, to make way for Norman urban castles.³⁶ But, since Domesday was only interested in property on which custom was payable, the number of dwellings actually affected was probably many more.³⁷

The castle site at Lincoln was so vast that much of the Upper City, the area of the old Roman fortress, had to make way for it. Domesday records the loss of no fewer than 240 *mansiones* in an area so large that it would not only house the *bail* but also the cathedral on which work started around 1072/75.³⁸ According to Roffe, the subsequent construction of the *Butwerke* suburb to the east of the city suggests that there was increasing pressure for space within the eastern half of the Lower City. It would seem that the unnamed wife of Siward, a priest in Lincoln, may have fallen victim to the demand for land, and of course for churches – Remigius was also busy acquiring assets for his staff. In 1066 her husband had held 60 acres in the fields to the east of Lincoln and its new suburb.³⁹ Before 1086 Siward's son, Norman, had held his father's holding but by 1086 it had been seized by Unlof the priest along with Siward's wife when the

³⁵ Philip Crummy, *City of Victory: The Story of Colchester – Britain's First Roman Town* (Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1997).

³⁶ GDB fols 203a, 336d and 189a.

³⁷ Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 155.

³⁸ Michael Jones, David Stocker, and Alan Vince, *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln*, ed. by David Stocker, Lincoln Archaeological Studies, 10 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), pp. 163-73.

³⁹ GDB fols 336a-336c.

land had been temporarily in the possession of the King, probably due to non-payment of a fine.⁴⁰

In Norwich, too, much of the Anglo-Saxon town was swallowed up under the castle's ramparts, roads were blocked and existing routes of communication substantially hindered.⁴¹ It is not surprising that at least two churches were destroyed and another three enclosed when Norwich cathedral and priory were built. It is likely that the new French Borough there was also constructed above an existing English suburb. At Colchester, although the High Street was rerouted, the castle itself, which was built on another Roman fort, was less intrusive than elsewhere. Nevertheless, archaeologists have recently discovered an Anglo-Saxon chapel beneath the castle foundations.⁴²

The English burgesses not only suffered at the hands of their new Norman masters: if Domesday is to be believed, it would appear that nature too conspired against them. In Lincoln there were 74 empty houses 'non propter oppressionem vicecomitum et ministrorum, sed propter infortunium et paupertatem et ignium exustionem' (thanks to misfortune, poverty, and the raging of fire).⁴³ The explicit recognition of these as causes of urban change – and their labelling as 'oppressions' is very significant. These urban entries appear to not only be more aware of Norman changes and oppressions, but to speak directly for and to English survivors. Nevertheless, we should not simply view the complaints of the English burgesses as an expression of victimhood; they were well aware of the opportunity Domesday afforded for them to claim a reduction in their

⁴⁰ We have no way of knowing the views of Siward's widow; she might well have been happy to remarry. Nevertheless, if the marriage, and consequent usurpation of Norman's inheritance, was disapproved of by the authorities in Lincoln, this would have been viewed as the equivalent of rape or kidnapping. Some other boroughs had quite strict rules about marriage and remarriage of burgesses' daughters/wives, see the Domesday entries for Chester and Shrewsbury.

⁴¹ *Medieval Norwich*, ed. by Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

⁴² Crummy, *City of Victory*.

⁴³ GDB fol. 336c.

obligations. Although fires were a constant danger in medieval towns, their results were usually only temporary as houses could be very rapidly rebuilt; the situation in Huntingdon where 104 *messuages* were already waste in 1066 and remained so in 1086, suggests some sort of long-lasting economic blight.⁴⁴

The borough entry for Norwich reveals that some burgesses found their new situation so intolerable that 22 of them actually left the borough to live at near-by Beccles, whilst another six moved to Humbleyard Hundred just outside the bounds of the borough.⁴⁵ *Isti fugientes alii remanentes* had apparently been utterly devastated by the scourge of fires, by the excessive weight of the King's tax on them, and by the actions of the unscrupulous sheriff of Norfolk, Waleran.

The Domesday account of the abbatial township which surrounded the abbey at Bury is suggestive of where some of those fleeing might have sought sanctuary. It tells how previously cultivated land was put aside to house 30 priests, deacons, and clerics, 28 nuns, and many poor people.⁴⁶ Bury's astute and commercially-minded abbot, Baldwin, also created a new suburb of 342 houses on previously arable land; since the abbey received a quarter of the King's tax on these homes for its own supplies it probably proved most lucrative and helped the abbey's holdings to have increased in value by about 30 per cent by 1086.⁴⁷ Town dwellers would not have only sought security at Bury but, no doubt, at other monasteries in the region and further afield too. One Norwich woman, Sæflæd the wife of Ketel, deposited two wills at Bury probably just after 1066, and travelled with her husband to Rome, presumably on pilgrimage; perhaps she had intended to return to England if and when the situation had improved.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ GDB fol. 203a.

⁴⁵ LDB fol. 117b.

⁴⁶ LDB fol. 372a.

⁴⁷ Bailey, 'Introduction to Suffolk Domesday'.

⁴⁸ W. 37 & W. 38; Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 92-94.

The late Anglo-Saxon urban environment, which was built around an English élite who held property in both towns and their rural locality, was disrupted not only physically by the coming of the Normans. The élite having fled or been dispossessed, paved the way for urban thegns and burgesses to capitalize on their new situation. The Domesday Book evidence reveals the pre-1066 connections and similarities between townhouses, urban *hagæ*, and rural manors, between rural thegns, urban thegns, and burgesses. We have already seen how some English women connected to towns survived but what about those women with considerable property in towns? Did English women survive in towns and how?

Domesday Book also comments on the negative impact that the Normans had on English towns, and on the disasters, both natural and unnatural, that befell the English inhabitants in the twenty years that followed 1066. It reveals how violent that change was in some of the towns of Eastern England, and in its description of the consequences on the English appears to give a particular voice to their complaints. We have observed the activities of Norman sheriffs around English women and their property, but would the property of urban women been more vulnerable to predation by the sheriffs in towns for which they held official responsibility?

7.2 Domesday Book and Eastern Towns

Generally the scribe of Great Domesday organized his borough entries in separate chapters before the county entry proper: the returns for Huntingdon, Cambridge, Lincoln, Stamford, and Torksey all precede the List of Landholders for their respective shires.⁴⁹ However, Grantham was listed under the Lands of the King, and Louth under the Lands of the Bishop of Lincoln.⁵⁰ By contrast the LDB borough entries were usually

⁴⁹ Cambridge GDB fol. 189a; Huntingdon GDB fols 203a-203b; Lincoln, GDB fols 336a-336c; Stamford, GDB fol. 336d; Torksey, GDB fol. 337a.

⁵⁰ Grantham GDB fol. 337d, and Louth GDB fol. 345b.

included within the Lands of the King or of his barons.⁵¹ In Norfolk, Norwich, Yarmouth, and Thetford were all included within the Lands of the king,⁵² but in Suffolk, only Ipswich, Beccles, and Sudbury were held by the King, while the other towns were listed as follows: Dunwich and Eye held by Robert Malet, Clare by Richard son of Count Gilbert, and Bury St Edmunds by the abbey.⁵³ In Essex, Maldon was included in the Lands of the King but Colchester was the only Domesday borough in both volumes to be given its own chapter and was uniquely, and rather obscurely, placed after the *invasiones* at the very end of the Essex folios.

Of the towns of Eastern England none other than Colchester lists and names its burgesses. The following catalogue of Eastern towns summarizes the group entries for burgesses, and totalizes those listed in the Colchester return. As far as it can, it compares the figures for 1066 and 1086 to allow an impression to be gained of the impact of the Norman Conquest on English burgesses. It also highlights and details those urban entries which include English women.⁵⁴

⁵¹ What Galbraith called ‘above the line’ Exceptions include the borough entries in the counties of Sussex and Somerset; This paragraph owes much to Roffe’s analysis of the methodology of borough entry forms in Roffe, *Decoding*, pp. 117-20, and shown in table 4.1 on p. 114.

⁵² Norwich LDB fols 116-119a; Thetford LDB fols 118b-119a; Yarmouth LDB fols 118a-118b;

⁵³ Ipswich, LDB fols 289a & 290a-b; Dunwich, LDB fols 311b-312b; Eye, LDB fols 319b-320a; Beccles, LDB fols 283b, 370a; Clare, LDB fol. 389b; Sudbury, LDB fol. 286b, LDB fol. 40a; Bury St Edmund’s, LDB fol. 372a.

⁵⁴ Grantham, GDB fol. 337d; Louth, GDB fol. 345b. It is worth remembering how the main urban centres of Eastern England have changed from Anglo-Norman times to our own, due mainly to the volatile nature of the East Anglian coast – erosion and shingle dumping. King’s Lynn had not reached today’s prominence, but Dunwich, now little more than a beach with a small hamlet which had not quite all washed away at this time was a thriving port. For Dunwich, Rowland Parker, *Men of Dunwich: The Story of a Vanished Town* (London: Harper Collins, 1978).

7.2.1 Lincolnshire

Lincoln (GDB fols 336a, b and c)

TRE 1,150 *mansiones hospitatae*

TRW 240 unoccupied, 900 occupied⁵⁵

English women mentioned within entry:

TRE the lageman Godric son of Eadgifu

TRE those with full jurisdiction and market rights in Lincolnshire:

Queen Edith, Rothulfr son of Skialdvor, Azur son of Swealgifu, Azur son of

Burg (m/f?)

Stamford (GDB fol. 336d)

TRW 141 customary *mansiones*; 5 *wastæ*, 278.5 further *mansiones*

English women mentioned within entry:

TRE Queen Edith had 70 *mansiones* in Rutland; TRW William I

Torksey (GDB fol. 337a)

TRW the King had 102 burgesses and 111 *wastæ mansiones*

TRE there were 213 burgesses

TRE Queen Edith had held the town of Torksey, and the manor of

Hardwick adjacent to it in lordship

TRE Eadgifu the Fair had held 3 *mansiones* with sac and soc, tol and theam

at Stow near Torksey; TRW Ralph de Mortimer

Grantham (GDB fol. 337d)

TRW 111 burgesses, 77 *toftes sochmanorum teignorum*,

72 *bordars*; 7 *hortos*

English women mentioned within the entry:

TRE Queen Edith had 1 *aula*

TRE the nun Ælswyth had sac and soc but gave it to St Peter's of

⁵⁵ See H. C. Darby, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England*, p. 79, n. 1, for this calculation 'by the English method'.

Peterborough; TRW Colgrim

Louth (GDB fol. 345a)

TRW 80 burgesses

7.2.2 Cambridgeshire

Cambridge (GDB fol.189a)

TRE 373 *mansura*

TRW 49 *wastæ*

TRE Eadgifu the Fair? TRW Count Alan of Brittany had 5
burgesses

7.2.3 Huntingdonshire

Huntingdon (GDB fols 203a and b)

TRE and TRW 256 burgesses; 80 *hagas*, 104 *mansiones*
wastæ

TRE 20 *mansiones in loco castris*; TRW none

TRW 8 *mansiones wastæ*

English women mentioned within the entry:

TRE Ælfric the Sheriff had held 1 *mansio*, which William
granted to his wife and children; TRW Eustace the Sheriff

TRE Gos and Hungifu had 16 *domus* with full
jurisdiction and market rights; TRW Countess Judith

7.2.4 Norfolk

Norwich (LDB fols 116a and b, 117a and b, and 118a)

TRE 1320 burgesses;

TRW 665 English burgesses, 480 bordars, 297 *mansuræ vacuæ* and 50
domus

in the *novus burgus* there were 36 burgesses and 6 Englishmen
now 124 French burgesses and 1 *mansura vasta*

English women mentioned within the entry:

TRE Stigand's sister had 32 acres

TRW 2 unnamed women were holding 2 *mansura*

TRW Æbba (m/f?) 1 *domus*

Thetford (LDB fols 118b, and 119a)

TRE 943 burgesses; TRW 720 burgesses and 224 *mansura*

vacuæ

Yarmouth (LDB fols 118a and b)

TRW 70 burgesses

7.2.5 Suffolk

Ipswich (LDB fol. 289a)

TRW 538 burgesses; now 110 and 100 *pauperes* burgesses and

mansiones wastate

English women mentioned within the entry:

TRE Queen Edith had two parts of the Borough and a *grangia* with 4 carucates of land and 2 burgesses

TRE Leofflæd libera femina held St Laurence's church with 12 acres; TRW held by Thorkell and Eadric but claimed by Count Alan

Dunwich (LDB fols 311b, and 312a)

TRE 120 burgesses

TRW 236 burgesses, 178 *pauperes homines*, 24 Frenchmen with 40 acres of land

Eye (LDB fols 319b, and 320a)

mercato with 25 burgesses; a *parc*

Beccles (LDB fol. 283b)

mercato with 26 burgesses

TRE/TRW held by Abbey of St Edmund's

Clare (LDB fol. 389b)

mercato with 43 burgesses

Sudbury (LDB fol. 286b)

English women mentioned within the entry:

TRE held by Countess Ælfgifu with 3 carucates of land,

63 burgesses *hulle manentes*; 55 burgesses *in dominio*

Bury St Edmunds (LDB fol. 372a)

TRW 13 reeves with their *domus*, 342 *domus de dominio*

English women mentioned within the entry:

28 *nonnas*; washerwomen; various skilled craftspeople

7.2.6 Essex

Colchester (LDB fols 104a, b; 105a, b; 106a, b; 107a and b)

TRW the King had 2 *domus* and 295 instances of named burgesses, including 30 instances of named women, with a total of 406 *domus*, a further 13 houses and 1 burgess listed under rural manors

TRE Countess Ælfgifu had held 3 *domus* which belonged to the manor of Shalford; TRW Otto the Goldsmith

TRE the Abbess of Barking had held 3 houses

Maldon (GDB fols 5b, and 6a)

TRW the King had 1 *domus/aula*; 180 burgesses with their *domus*; 18 *mansura vastata*

This catalogue shows how the returns for Domesday boroughs in Eastern England, and especially those held by tenants-in-chief, are usually brief, and the number of burgesses generally given in totalized figures with no distinction of gender. Where women are mentioned, they tend to come from the highest rank – Queen Edith, Countess Ælfgifu, the Abbess of Barking. Lesser women tend to be mentioned specifically to highlight their claims to land of which they had been deprived. Overall we are unable to comment

on the ratio of men to women simply due to Domesday Book's tendency to only provide group totals. However, the Colchester return which lists individual burgesses suggests a low proportion of female holders. Is this low proportion of women real or a function of Domesday recording? Is it especially the case in Eastern England? Or of particular Domesday Book circuits or of Little Domesday Book?

7.3 English Women Across Eastern Towns

Just as Domesday Book makes little or no distinction for the gender of rural tenants, it makes little or no distinction for the gender of burgesses, with the exception of a few rare entries in the marcher towns of Shrewsbury and Chester, which itemize the fines payable by female burgesses for marriages or unlawful cohabitation.⁵⁶ However, whereas female tenants in Domesday Book usually follow their male equivalents, or appear in groups of lesser thegns, the ordering of burgesses in the Colchester return is haphazard and assigns no status to gender.⁵⁷ Generally there are few borough entries which itemize individual burgesses, and even less who itemize women burgesses, other than those of the highest nobility. The LDB borough entries are slightly more detailed as a rule than those generally given in GDB whose scribe preferred to summarize his data into totals. However, the Colchester return, uniquely for both LDB and Domesday Book, lists and names all of its burgesses, irrespective of their gender.

For comparison's sake we should look at the entries for the Domesday boroughs of York and Oxford, whose entries are fuller than most. York mentions only four urban women. Three of these are named: Modgifu who rented two houses to Nigel Fossard, Sunngifu and Godelind who held one messuage apiece from William de Percy.⁵⁸ The York entry serves also to remind us of the problem of identifying women in Domesday,

⁵⁶ GDB fols 252a and 262b; fines for marriage in Shrewsbury and cohabitation of unmarried girls and widows in Chester were 20s and 10s respectively.

⁵⁷ LDB fols 104a-107b.

⁵⁸ PASE has *Godelind* as masculine name, but note Fei., OHG (f), p. 264.

and in this particular instance, even recognising names as female; PASE assumes that *Godelind* is a masculine name, whereas Feilitzen considered it a feminine Old Germanic name.⁵⁹ The only other woman in York recorded by Domesday was the unnamed mother of Brun the priest who had held two messuages in 1066 which were in the hands of Osbern d'Arques in 1086. Domesday Book is surely being stingy with its recording of women in York, and the Oxford return is similarly miserly, listing only five: a Leofgifu who, in 1086, held one waste messuage, and who may also have been the Leofgifu who, with Harding, held a further nine messuages, four of which were waste.⁶⁰ There were also Deorwynn, Ælfgifu, and Edith with one messuage apiece. Thus, the number of women reported in York and Oxford similarly shows that women only accounted for a small proportion of urban tenants. However, the abnormally full account of Colchester gives instances of thirty women – which suggests that women are underreported elsewhere. It is evident that many more women are mentioned in the Colchester return than in those for any other Domesday town. As we have noted before English women can be found in Domesday in the detail, in the composite fiefs, in the claims, and in the unparalleled chapter for Colchester, which will now be explored in some depth.

⁵⁹ GDB fol. 298a.

⁶⁰ *DP* p. 245, according to the *Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, I, ed. by H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 1st ser., 51 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 37, Hearing de Oxeneford went to Jerusalem, probably with the First Crusade, and died there. He is probably to be identified with Hearing son of Eadnoth, a tenant-in-chief in Somerset. According to Simon Keynes in Simon Keynes, 'Giso, bishop of Wells', *ANS*, 19 (1996) 203-72 (p.245, n. 237), Harding's daughter became a nun at Shaftesbury, but he gives no source. Could she have been the Leofgifu, Abbess of Shaftesbury, of whom little is known, who was followed in 1074 by Eulalia? GDB fols 154a and b, 298a and b.

7.3.1 Colchester

Colchester is like other major ex-Roman towns, as for example, York, London, Lincoln, and Winchester in having massive walls that were then re-used by tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings for urban centres of some significance, which they then encouraged landholders of some significance to settle in, often linking up urban property with rural estates. Therefore we can expect that Colchester would have attracted some major as well as many minor property owners, and, thus, it is not surprising that one of these could have been the very rich Gode C.

It is strange that such a detailed borough entry has so far avoided close study, especially when we consider how William I chose Colchester, along with London and Norwich, as sites for his earliest and largest castles.⁶¹ Colchester has, of course, been studied in some depth by archaeologists.⁶² Nor has it been ignored by local historians, amongst whom the work of Philip and Nina Crummy has been influential. Their study included a survey of the personal names of the burgesses and moneyers, which was used to gauge the size of the Scandinavian population in Colchester.⁶³

The Colchester burgesses were surely not immune to the deprivations suffered by other English burgesses as we have noted above; its farm had increased five-fold from £15.5s.3d. in 1066 to £80 and six sesters of honey or 40s. in 1086, which is suggestive of a not inconsiderable level of extortion on Colchester's population. Alternatively, but perhaps less likely, this increase may demonstrate the resilience and prosperity of Colchester and, in this regard, it is noteworthy that the Colchester return includes no

⁶¹ LDB fols 104-107b.

⁶² For Colchester, Christopher Dyer investigates the make-up of the town's population in 'Towns and Cottages in Eleventh-Century England', pp. 91-106. For Colchester's history, Geoffrey Martin, *The Story of Colchester from Roman Times to the Present Day* ([n.p.]: Benham Newspapers, 1959); Philip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, Colchester Archaeological Report 1, CBA Research Report 39 (Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981) and Crummy, *City of Victory*.

⁶³ Nina Crummy; 'Appendix 1: Origins of Personal Names of Burgesses in Colchester Domesday and of Moneyers operating in Colchester during the period 979-1087', in Crummy, *City of Victory*, pp. 75-77; Chetwood, 'Re-evaluating English Personal Naming'.

empty houses or waste such as was recorded in other Domesday burhs, nor does Eustace's castle-building appear to have caused much dislocation.⁶⁴ However, the *Colchester Chronicle* informs us of an attack on Colchester perpetrated by Danish raiders in 1071, when the wives of citizens were carried off, and the town itself was fired.⁶⁵ In this case there may well be more than an element of truth in this story since a large Danish fleet is known to have been operating off the East Anglian coast in 1069. It may have been this event which precipitated William's granting of Colchester to Eudo *dapifer* and the subsequent building of the castle.⁶⁶

Many late Anglo-Saxon towns, and, therefore, early Anglo-Norman towns followed a similar layout.⁶⁷ Could this help our understanding of the ordering of data in the Colchester Domesday entry? One assumes that, for convenience, there must have been an underlying process of recording – perhaps street by street, as in a modern census? The Colchester entry appears to be a complete listing of all property however small and records the name of all plot holders. The later borough entries, which were included in GDB, appear to have been greatly simplified. But this ad hoc jumble of names gives rather the impression of an unorganized list; was it perhaps ordered parish by parish, where the nearest church door principle may have operated, covering areas that had built up around one of the town-gates and the nearest church?⁶⁸

Comparison with the *Winton Domesday* is instructive. The *Winton Domesday* is a twelfth-century manuscript that combines two earlier surveys of Winchester. It is the earlier of these two which concerns us here: a survey of Winchester ordered by Henry I,

⁶⁴ Crummy, *City of Victory*, and the map given on p 139.

⁶⁵ Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, pp. 26-27.

⁶⁶ Crummy, *City of Victory*, p. 145.

⁶⁷ Built by Edward the Elder c. 971.

⁶⁸ For nearest-church-door principle refer to 'The Origins of Urban Parish Boundaries' in *The Church in the Medieval Town*, ed. by Gervase Rosser and T. R. Slater (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), pp. 209-35; although it is likely that this would have post-dated the fragmentation of *hagas* like Thorbiorn's, as p. 232.

around 1110, which was to itemize and compare the royal holdings, as they had been before and after 1066. This would almost certainly have been based on one of various assessment lists which pre-dated Domesday Book, and this one in particular was drawn up for Edward the Confessor probably around the year 1057. The *Winton Domesday* follows an itinerary which may reveal the groundwork of the jurors rather than an editorial conceit. It resulted in a street by street listing, essentially running from west to east, in two cycles, the first recording the *terra regis* and the second the *terra baronum*. In practice this schema does not always appear to have been strictly adhered to, since, on occasion, property which owed the King's due was more logically included with that of the King's tenants. The entries began on the High Street moving from west to east, then the side streets to the north, moving once again from west to east, finally followed by the southern side streets in the return direction.⁶⁹

Little Domesday Book commences its description of the borough of Colchester with its two principal outliers, Greenstead and Lexden, before turning to its uniquely full listing of all the King's burgesses and all their property within the borough.⁷⁰ It lists firstly the property for which custom was paid, followed by the property of the leading Norman nobles and administrators, for which custom had been waived. It provides the names of up to 276 individuals who held a total of 354 houses between them, on which the customary tax to the king was due.⁷¹ Thereafter it is followed by a list of houses owned primarily by influential Normans and officials for whom the customary dues had mainly been waived since 1066.⁷² The list of King's burgesses appears to follow no

⁶⁹ *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday*, ed. by Martin Biddle, Winchester Studies, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 9-12; Martin, 'Domesday Book and the Boroughs' suggests a similar document existed behind the Domesday list of Colchester burgesses; Munby, 'Domesday Boroughs Revisited' considers this data was derived from a rental similar to that at Winchester, but that its route, unlike that of the *Winton DB*, is unknown.

⁷⁰ LDB fol. 104r.

⁷¹ LDB fols 104a-106a; Martin, *The Story of Colchester*, pp. 17-18; VCH, *Essex*, IX, pp. 39-40.

⁷² LDB fols 106a-107b.

scheme, or rather none that is obvious, but as has been suggested earlier it likely followed an underlying plan, perhaps similar to that followed by the scribes of the *Winton Domesday*.⁷³ Whatever the scheme, it has led to some burgesses being entered multiple times, making it difficult to assess the total number of burgesses, and their total number of plots.

The number of entries for those listed as King's Burgesses in Colchester total 275, which can be divided into 245 male listings, 23 female listings, and seven where the gender is not clear without further analysis.⁷⁴ Five of the latter refer to a burgess or burgesses called 'Goda/e', a name which we have discussed already. The other two names are Leofdæ(g)(e) and Goddæ(g)(e). They may, in fact, be presenting one and the same problem – the ending: is it masculine as in *daeg* (day), feminine as in *daege* (female servant), or in the case of Goddæ, a confused ending for Goda/e? More confusion arises from a group of names that all commence with the initial element – *Got* as in *Got cill*, *Got flet* and *Got Hugo*. The Phillimore edition assumes that these are all examples of the Old Norse name *Got*, with the addition of by-names to differentiate three individuals. This conclusion was probably reached because of the apparent space between the two elements of each name. However, this gap appears frequently in diathematic names throughout the corpus.⁷⁵ Nina Crummy, by contrast, saw that *Got cill* and *Got flet* could be plausible renderings of God(e)child (m) and Godflæd (f), both of which employ the common OE first element *God-*; *God* was frequently transcribed in

⁷³ The Goda/e listed with fourteen houses, seventeenth king's burgess, does this suggest that she lived on the north side of the high street? Or might the position of priests in the list reflect the site of the churches along the high street, of which there were six, and all with Saxon origins? 4 houses *infra muros* – at the end of a street? Overall there appears to be no discernible pattern to the data – there are two halves of one house which are not entered sequentially. In fact, if anything, several of the first entries in the list appear to be for the largest holdings, perhaps reflecting the wealthiest side of town?

⁷⁴ Totals are approximate since gender, especially of monothematic names, remains conjectural without other indications. It would be interesting, at some later date, to compare the m/f ratio with that of the *Winton Domesday*.

⁷⁵ As Stan burg, Leof flæd, Col man.

LDB as *Got*, perhaps due to a continental scribe mishearing the final *-d* as final *-t*.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, *Got Hugo*, with its mismatch of elements, still remains a mystery. When all the entries with the same name are totalled together, there are 129 male names, fifteen female names which include *Goddæ* and *Godflæd*, and two where the gender is uncertain, *Goda/e* and *Leofdae(g)(e)*.⁷⁷ Even if we take a closer look at the female entries, the names and the number of entries, all we can say with any certainty is that there were three instances of burgesses called *Ælfflæd* and these may represent one, two, or three individuals; that there were two instances of *Ælfgifu*, and these may represent one or two individuals et cetera.

⁷⁶ Nina Crummy, *Appendix 1*; Fei., p. 96; Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 40.

⁷⁷ The gender of ‘*Godcild*’ is also uncertain; here I have assumed it is more likely masculine.

Abbess of Barking	3 houses	
Ælflæd	1 house	
Ælflæd	1 house	
Ælflæd	1 house	
Ælfgifu		10 acres
Ælfgifu	1 house	
Alwynn	2 houses	
Alwynn	1 house	
Countess Ælfgifu	3 houses	
Goda/e		
Goda/e	12 houses	
Goda/e	1 house	
Goda/e		
Goda/e	1 house	
Goda/e	1 house	
Goda/e	1 house	
Goddæ/ge	2 houses	
Godgifu	1 house	
Godgyth	2 houses	14 acres
Got fleet/ Godflæd?	1 house	
Leofdæge/Leofede		
Leofflæd	3 houses	25 acres, 1 mill
Leofflæd	1 house	
Leofflæd	1 house	25 acres
Leofgifu	1 house	4.5 acres
Leofgifu	1 house	
Leofgifu		3 acres
Leofswyth	2 houses	8 acres
Queen Edith	1 burgess	
Sæfugel	1 house	
Sæwaru (Salvare m?)	1 house	7 acres
Stanburh	1 house	
Wulfgifu	1 house	
Wulfgifu		5 acres
Wulfgyth	1 house	

Table 7-1 Women Burgesses of Colchester

7.4 Gode C

A King's burgess in Colchester is listed under the name Goda/e five times, or six times if we include Goddæ in the total, implying that we could be dealing with six individuals, each called Goda/e, or one or more individuals with up to six entries between them. As female burgesses are by no means rare in Colchester, it cannot be simply assumed that any of these Godas are male and although none of the *Goda/es* in the Colchester return can be identified as conclusively female, it is quite possible that either of the two Godes already studied could have had urban property in Colchester. Moreover, we must remember that at least two of the local (Suffolk) Godes were described as *libera femina*. It would seem quite likely therefore that the King's burgess, Goda/e, was female, and bearing in mind the relative rarity of the woman's name *Gode*, the six occurrences of the name in Colchester are likely to refer to one person.

The first Colchester entry for Gode is exceptional – thirteen houses on one site – and in fact the largest single entry for any of the king's burgesses in Colchester, only equalled by the urban holding of Count Eustace, recorded separately beneath.⁷⁸ The next largest holding entered for an English burgess was for ten and a half houses held by Hardekin.⁷⁹ Fleming pointed out that some powerful thegns were not only active in the urban environment but dominated them and this could quite easily be the case with Gode.⁸⁰ The remaining entries for the King's burgess or burgesses called Gode include a further house with seven acres, a small plot of 22 acres, three more single houses, and finally one with twenty acres, all adding up to an impressive total of up to eighteen houses.

The burgess named Gode was clearly very prosperous, and should probably be identified as one woman. The extent of her property places her among the most

⁷⁸ Where Count Eustace had thirteen houses.

⁷⁹ LDB fols 104a-107b.

⁸⁰ Fleming, 'Rural Thengs and Urban Communities', p. 9.

significant landholders in the town, and that is without considering two separate, subsequent entries that are included amongst a group of individual entries for the local Norman élite, and notables, who held urban property in Colchester. These two are the more remarkable since they refer to English burgesses. The first of these, in a separate breve, reads:

Mansune habet II domus et IIII acras; Goda I domum

It is likely, as for the majority of the others in this group, that Mansune and Gode owed no tax for these houses. However, this does not explain the separate return – it could be that this return concerned houses attached to Colneis Hundred, or that it was an update to earlier entries, perhaps inferring that these properties were now derelict, and had become exempt from tax.⁸¹ At the very least this return implies some connection between its two sections, perhaps even a relationship between Mansunu and Gode. In which case it would be worthwhile taking a closer look at Mansunu: a King's burgess with only a small plot of ten acres.⁸² He possibly came from a prominent local family whose names frequently took the first element *Man-*. Other Colchester members appear to include Manstan and Manwine, and this theme reoccurs throughout the list of King's burgesses.⁸³ Nominal linkage of this unusual name locates another Mansunu with a very similar background to Gode B: a freeman of Northman's in 1066, and of Roger Bigod in 1086, holding land in several villis within Colneis Hundred. This is suggestive that there may well have been a connection between Mansunu and Gode B and C; the small size of his holding might mean he was dependant on Gode, perhaps a son? Furthermore, this entry demonstrates that lesser rural freemen could also hold urban property – the recognisable names of Suffolk freemen from the rural villis occur over and over again

⁸¹ Pamela Taylor, 'Introduction to Essex Domesday', *The Essex Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 2000).

⁸² LDB fol. 106a.

⁸³ LDB fols 104a-106b.

within the Colchester returns.⁸⁴ This accords with Fleming's point that even the most modest of thegns, with little more than the necessary five hides, commonly held messuages in towns within half a day's ride of their farms.⁸⁵

The second interesting entry is for a house held by Swein son of Robert, a post-Conquest Sheriff of Essex who witnessed documents during a period from as early as 1066 to as late as 1085.⁸⁶ Before 1066 this house had been held by Gode, when it had belonged to the estate at Elmstead which had paid the King's customary due for it. Elmstead was the nearest vill to the east of Colchester.⁸⁷ There appears to be another connection between Gode and Swein, since a *Godæ* had also held at Basildon in 1066, a manor of one hide and fifteen acres that in 1086 Swein leased to a tenant.⁸⁸

Although this case study of Gode C has alerted us to the possibility of a son called Mansunu, we never really know whether she is a widow, or (which would be more unusual) a single woman. Through her connections we have identified Gode C, if not also with Gode A, with Gode B of *Struostuna*. The extent of her property in Colchester places her amongst the most significant of the urban thegns in Colchester in 1086, and probably also 1066, if we bear in mind that entries for Domesday boroughs are stingy on information for 1066. She was a survivor in the urban environment, even though we have seen how Swein the Sheriff managed to acquire her estate at Basildon and the house attached to Elmstead.

⁸⁴ LDB fols 334a, 339b, 340a and b.

⁸⁵ Fleming, 'Rural Elites and Urban Communities', p. 3.

⁸⁶ LDB fol. 106b.

⁸⁷ Interestingly this was held by Sigeric from Swein in 1086. Legend has it that St John's Abbey was built by Eudo Dapifer c. 1095 to the south of Colchester upon the site of a house with a church where miracles had been observed; the house had previously been owned by a holy man called Sigeric.

⁸⁸ LDB fol. 42b.

7.5 Leofgifu the wife of Ælfric the Sheriff

Leofgifu (OE *leof*, masculine noun ‘friend’, or *lufu*, feminine noun ‘love’, or *leof*, adjective ‘dear’ + OE *giefu*, feminine noun ‘gift’⁸⁹) was the wife of the pre-Conquest sheriff of Huntingdonshire, Ælfric, presumably also to be identified with Ælfric, son of Godric, who was the sheriff of Cambridgeshire at some time before 1086.⁹⁰ Domesday shows how before 1066 Ælfric had held a *mansio* in the borough town of Huntingdon, probably ‘a tax-free appurtenance of office’.⁹¹ He had also held four large rural estates: two and a half hides at Orton Longueville, a five-hide manor at Yelling, and an eleven-hide manor at Hemingford Grey, all in his shrieval shire, and four and a half hides at Boxted in Essex.⁹² Apparently he had lived (*sedisset*) on the royal manor of Keyston, probably as the tenant of King Edward. Eustace succeeded him at Keyston, Orton Longueville and Boxted; Yelling and Hemingford were to have reverted to Ramsey Abbey but were annexed by Aubrey de Vere.

According to an unusually voluble Domesday entry, Ælfric died at Hastings, after which William I had granted the house in Huntingdon to his wife, Leofgifu, and their children.⁹³ Leofgifu’s entry contains the outlines of the case made for her holding; the fact that her husband had died at Hastings, meant in principle that his land was forfeit but the reference to a specific royal gift would have countermanded the forfeiture. Leofgifu was not the only sheriff’s wife treated kindly – the widow of the pre-Conquest sheriff of Berkshire, Godric, who was also reportedly killed at Hastings, was allowed to retain a hide of land which had been gifted to her by William I because she had once kennelled his dogs.⁹⁴ However, Leofgifu’s entry is further elaborated upon in the

⁸⁹ Okasha, pp. 58 & 65.

⁹⁰ Green, *Sheriffs*, p.48; note that Green identifies Ælfric as Ælfric Godricsune fl. 1084.

⁹¹ David Roffe, ‘Introduction to Huntingdonshire Domesday’ in *The Huntingdonshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1989).

⁹² GDB fols 203a, 206a, 207a, 208a.

⁹³ GDB fol. 203a.

⁹⁴ GDB fol. 57d.

‘declarations’ section which relates how Eustace had taken Leofgifu’s Huntingdon townhouse by force and given it to Odger of London.⁹⁵ Both her entries highlight the sheriff’s actions, his duty to implement royal orders, and in this specific case brought against him, the expectation that he would uphold the king’s apparent respect for widows.

It would appear that for some time Leofgifu and her children were able to live at the manor of Keyston which King Edward had lent to Ælfric when he and his family had settled in the village, as Domesday records how Ælfric’s sons continued to pay the King’s farm for it after his death. However, this manor was also removed from them when Eustace was appointed sheriff, and therefore, presumably in 1080.⁹⁶ Domesday tells us that Leofgifu was still alive in 1086 as she and her deprived son were actively claiming the house in Huntingdon.⁹⁷

Unfortunately Domesday does not tell us where they were living in 1086, or what other possessions they might still have held elsewhere, and no source informs us whether Leofgifu’s action against Eustace the Sheriff was ultimately successful. However, this case study has shown how Leofgifu and her sons survived, if without their land in Huntingdonshire. Once again we have seen the part played by William’s sheriffs concerning English widows and their lands, but this particular case study has clearly revealed an instance, when even the property of a widow respected and aided personally by the king, was dispossessed, suggesting that Eustace was acting illegally.

⁹⁵ GDB fol. 208a; Eustace also removed by force ten burgesses of the Abbey of Ramsey, GDB fol. 203a.

⁹⁶ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 48.

⁹⁷ GDB fol. 208a; there are several further instances of Domesday Leofgifus in the counties of Suffolk and Essex in 1086. It is probably coincidence – Leofgifu is quite a common name – that they all held urban property from King William, at Wallingford (Berks.), Colchester (Essex), and Oxford.

7.6 Hungifu

Elsewhere in Huntingdonshire we meet an English woman called Hungifu (OE *hun*, possibly from *hund*, masculine noun ‘dog’, or possibly ON *hunn*, ‘young bear’, + OE *giefu*, feminine noun ‘gift’⁹⁸) who TRE had held an estate at Great Stukeley in Huntingdonshire which consisted of three hides of taxable land, an undisclosed amount of which was in demesne and exempt from tax, and a church and incumbent priest.⁹⁹ In 1086 this manor was held by Countess Judith, niece of William I, and widow of the rebel Anglo-Saxon lord Earl Waltheof. The Stukeley vill, Great and Little, were adjacent to and just three miles outside the town of Huntingdon, where in 1066 another woman with the very similar name of Hungyth (OE *hun*, possibly from *hund*, masculine noun ‘dog’, or possibly ON *hunn*, ‘young bear’, + OE *gyð*, presumably OE *gud*, feminine noun ‘battle’¹⁰⁰) had held directly from King Edward a large urban *haga* of sixteen houses with all accompanying jurisdictional and market rights.¹⁰¹ Considering the closeness of both holdings, the rarity of these two names in Domesday Book, and occasional scribal confusion with the similar endings of insular dithematic names, it is possible that Hungifu and Hungyth were one and the same. Regardless of the uncommon nature of these names in Domesday Book, the fact that she was the antecessor of Countess Judith for both estates more or less confirms this identification.

The only other entry in the whole of Domesday for a woman with this combination of name elements is for a *sulung* and 30 acres of land in the vill of Oakleigh in Kent which had been held before the Conquest by a Hungyth from Earl

⁹⁸ Okasha, pp. 58 & 65.

⁹⁹ GDB fol. 206d; ‘Hungifu’, Fei., p. 296; Okasha, p. 41. This is probably St Martin’s Church at Little Stukeley; the Domesday entry is accompanied by a marginal letter *d* with an abbreviation sign, probably signifying that ownership of Great Stukeley was either still to be decided or was disputed.

¹⁰⁰ Okasha, pp. 58 & 65.

¹⁰¹ GDB fol. 203a.

Harold, but which was held at the time of the survey by Ralph son of Thorold.¹⁰² The distance between Kent and Huntingdonshire would make identifying this Hungyth as the same woman difficult but not impossible. Another example is given in the *IE* for the neighbouring county of Cambridgeshire, where Domesday lists five unnamed freemen who had held a hide at Toft from Ely Abbey, one of which is named Hungyth.¹⁰³ It would be quite possible for Hungifu to have held urban property and land TRE in both the adjacent shires of Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire.

However, we should recall that Hungifu had not held the sixteen houses in Huntingdon alone but with another individual who went by the name Gos. But who was Gos and what was their relationship? This name is very unusual and this example unique in Domesday Book. *Gos* (f) is the Old English equivalent of goose, and Feilitzen questioned whether it may have been a nickname.¹⁰⁴ Alternatively Gos may have been one of a series of Anglo-Saxon personal names taken from types of birds, as, for example, *Spearhavoc* (Sparrowhawk).¹⁰⁵ It may even have been a contracted form, of *goshavoc* (goshawk).

This discussion is probably rendered hypothetical by the arresting suggestion made by Lewis that Gos in Domesday Book may have represented a shortened form of Gospatric, ‘the only insular name that starts with this string of letters’.¹⁰⁶ Gospatric was probably derived from the Old Welsh *Gwas Patrick*, with the meaning ‘servant of Patrick’.¹⁰⁷ And indeed there was a Gospatric alive and well in 1066, a grandson of Earl

¹⁰² GDB fol. 9a. The term *sulung* appears only in GDB Kent and approximates to twice the area of the usual hide or carucate that is 240 customary acres.

¹⁰³ GDB fol. 202c; *IE*, 110; Fei., p. 296, considered ‘Hunuth sochemannus’ as ‘presumably a curtailed form of Hunwine’ – exhibiting the usual assumption of male rather than female, and the more obvious choice of Hungyth.

¹⁰⁴ It would be unusual to give a man a female nickname, and whilst there are examples in recent modern usage as in ‘silly old goose’, these are slightly derogatory. Apparently ON usage of *gos* (goose) was much more derogatory.

¹⁰⁵ Female examples such as Dufe (dove), Crawe (crow), Sæfugel (seafowl).

¹⁰⁶ ‘Gos ‘of Huntingdon’, PASE.

¹⁰⁷ Note that many Continental Germanic personal names begin with the first element *Gos-*, see ThLV, pp. 138-39.

Uhtæd of Northumbria (d. 1016), and a distant cousin of Edward the Confessor.¹⁰⁸

Lewis comments that the manor of Great Stukeley would have been a significant possession, straddling both sides of Ermine Street, a sought after location which would have been very useful for a great Northern lord. Roffe had already assumed that the Huntingdon holding was connected in one way or another to the rural manor of Great Stukeley.¹⁰⁹ Lewis therefore, concluded that Hungifu must have held both Great Stukeley and its urban liberty from Gospatric. It also suggests how Earl Waltheof and his countess came to hold it later: Gospatric was made Earl of Northumbria by William I in 1067 but deposed after he joined sides with the rebel earls Edwin and Morcar, when he was replaced by Waltheof. In the Huntingdonshire claims section Domesday comments that King William had been ‘obliged’ to give Stukeley to Waltheof, probably as Gospatric’s successor to the Earldom of Northumbria.¹¹⁰ It is probable, therefore, that Gos and Hungifu still held Stukeley and part of Huntingdon until 1072.

But what was Hungifu to Gos? What was the form of this relationship? If we accept Lewis’s identification of Gos as Earl Gospatric, what of his hypothesis that theirs was merely a tenurial relationship? Might it not have been something more personal? – the sequencing of their names might be suggestive – if Hungifu had been tenurially dependant on Gos, would not the order be ‘Gos and Hungifu’, as in their borough entry? Yet in the Huntingdonshire claims section they are referred to instead as ‘Hungifu and Gos’.¹¹¹ I would suggest that the variation in the ordering of their names might infer an equality of position, perhaps more like a marriage. Compare, for instance, the usual order of husband and wife couplets or mothers and sons, as in ‘Golde and, her son, Wulfric’. The identity of Earl Gospatric’s wife has so far remained a mystery, but it is

¹⁰⁸ His grandmother was Edward’s half-sister Ælfgifu.

¹⁰⁹ Roffe, ‘Introduction to Huntingdonshire Domesday’.

¹¹⁰ GDB fol. 208a; ‘Gospatric 1: Earl of Northumbria, c. 1040 - ?1074’, PASE.

¹¹¹ At the time of Domesday Eustace the Sheriff was laying claim to it, as he was of much of Huntingdon and any attached outliers, hence the marginal *d*.

likely that she was English since the couple are known to have had several children with Anglo-Saxon names.¹¹²

Could Hungifu have been this wife? That she was local to the fenlands is suggested by her holdings in Cambridge and Huntingdonshire. Were Stukeley and her other properties her dower to Gospatric? And could this then have been a marriage arranged by King Edward? Hungifu and Gos retained their holdings until Gospatric was deposed after William I's expedition to Scotland in 1072, after which he appears to have retired to Scotland where, after a brief visit to Flanders, he was granted estates in Dunbar and Lothian by Malcolm III, but died only shortly afterwards.

Hungifu, like both Gode and Leofgifu, has not only highlighted the connection between rural and urban estates but also demonstrated how rural and urban thegns were indistinguishable from each other. Her intriguing connection, and close relationship with Gospatric, Earl of Northumberland, is confirmed by her antecession for Earl Waltheof and his wife, Countess Judith. The date that Hungifu lost her lands is significant – 1072 – which adds to the impression received in earlier case

Conclusions

This chapter has observed the generally negative effects of the Norman Conquest on the English burgesses of Eastern England. By cataloguing the Domesday characteristics of these towns it has shown how the number of burgesses was reduced after 1066. The number of women burgesses appears disproportionately low and this has been shown to reflect the wider situation across the whole of Domesday Book. Nevertheless, by analysing the unique Colchester return, and the fuller detail it provides, this chapter has been able to identify several urban women, suggesting that, although they may have been underreported, there would have been more in other Domesday towns.

¹¹² William Aird, 'Gospatric, earl of Northumbria', *ODNB*. The names of their children: Dolphin, Waldeve, Gospatric, Ætheldreda, Uchtreda, Gunnhildr, and Matilda.

Unfortunately, Colchester's reluctance to give TRE figures does not allow us to distinguish new urban women from the survivors of 1066.

The research on Colchester has reminded us of the problems we encounter when trying to identify women in Domesday. In particular, the long list of Colchester burgesses has served to highlight the issue of assigning the correct gender to names – a more gender-aware approach has raised the possibility that there may have been more urban women in Colchester than was previously thought. Amid such general problems, the value and potential of case studies was once again clear. A particularly successful English urban woman with substantial property in Colchester, Gode C, proves that the importance of rural urban connections for English thegns held equally true for thegnly women. But whilst Gode survived and thrived within the urban environment, Leofgifu was fighting with the Norman sheriff for her survival, and Hungifu had already been dispossessed. These case studies have shown the negative influence sheriffs had over English women's survival in towns. Survival could be temporary and illusory. The next chapter will turn to a small group of English women who, ostensibly, should be the ultimate survivors – tenants-in-chief.

Chapter 8 English Women Tenants-in-Chief

The previous chapters have looked at English women who survived 1066 either in the rural or urban environment, or as we have seen, in both. Those who managed to retain their land as long as 1086 held their land as tenants or subtenants of tenants-in-chief or as *taini regis*. Here, it is useful to remind ourselves that usually the *taini* of Domesday represented surviving English thegns who held land of the king and who were frequently grouped with minor royal serjeants. However, there is one very small but presumably distinguished group of English women who held in 1086 as tenants-in-chief in their own right. Generally tenants-in-chief are recognized as those individuals who held their land directly from the king; in Domesday they are individually listed at the beginning of each shire, and then assigned their own separate section or chapter. But, as we will see, this order was not always strictly adhered to, causing differences in interpretation.

Pauline Stafford's list of female tenants-in-chief is a useful place to start our investigation.¹ It is not surprising to note that the majority of these women came from a continental background but it is unexpected that a few amongst their number were English. This thesis does not discuss queens, countesses or abbesses, so it is necessary first to remove them from the list.² After this we are left with a total of fifteen women tenants-in-chief in the whole of Domesday Book: to this figure I would add Isolde who is listed at the beginning of the Dorset folios, and Azelina the wife of Ralph Taillebois who is listed at the beginning of the Bedfordshire folios, giving a revised total of

¹ Stafford, 'Women in Domesday Book' (p. 91, n. 8), included Robert Malet's mother to this list on the grounds of the scale of her holding.

² Queen Matilda; Adelais of Normandy, the Countess of Aumale, William I's sister; and Countess Judith, Adelais's daughter by her first husband, Lambert de Lens.

seventeen.³ A quick appraisal of these women's names suggests that twelve of them were French and five were English.

The scribe of GDB could be inconsistent in his classification of landholders: lesser tenants in chief could appear sometimes as tenant-in-chief but elsewhere as *taini* or *servientes regis*.⁴ Stafford lists two English women, Edith and Leofgifu, both from Warwickshire, as tenants-in-chief. But although they are listed in that county's list of holders of land, their actual holdings were only included in the returns of the King's almsmen. For this reason they have been omitted from this study since by implication it would be necessary to include all other female almsmen and vavassors, some of whom, like the *taini* Beorhtgifu and Leofgifu in Lincolnshire, we have already met.⁵

In consideration of these layers of uncertainty, it is necessary to outline that for the purpose of this thesis the selection of women tenants-in-chief will be confined to those whose landholdings were assigned their own separate chapter. Thus, Eadgifu, the wife of Edward son of Swein, who has her own chapter but was not actually listed in the Holders of Land in Essex, is included.⁶ By following this criterion we are left with four English women tenants-in-chief who appear in Domesday Book. It is fortuitous that the estates of three of these women were centred in East Anglia, and are, therefore, recorded within the folios of Little Domesday Book. This in itself may be significant

³ Omitted from Stafford's list, but both are included in the summary list of landholders for their counties; Azelina also has her own separate chapter.

⁴ Note GDB fol. 218c, DB Beds. 57, 'The King's Reeves, [beadles] and almsmen'. On 'lesser tenants in chief, see Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 163, and Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 115. W. J. Corbett, 'The Development of the Duchy of Normandy and the Norman Conquest of England' in *Cambridge Medieval History*, v, ed. by J. R. Tanner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) pp. 503-13 (pp. 910-11), classed 'lesser tenant-in-chiefs' as 'E', those whose annual value of land in Domesday Book was £15-£100; John Palmer, 'The Wealth of the Secular Aristocracy in 1086', *ANS*, 22 (2000), 279-91 (pp. 286-89), amended this to £10-£90, but note that he omitted LDB in the formulation of this new classification; Williams, *The English*, p. 115.

⁵ See Section 6.1, and n.1.

⁶ However, her husband was, which suggests that he may have died during the collation of Domesday Book, but note that, although Eadgifu held as a tenant-in-chief in Essex, in Middlesex she held land as an almswoman of the king.

and might be an example of some tenurial rarity which is exhibited in LDB but which GDB had smoothed out in its drive for uniform record. These four English women are Wulfgifu wife of Finn, and Eadgifu wife of Edward son of Swein both in Essex, Ealdgyth in North Norfolk, and Eadgifu from Chaddesley in Worcestershire. Are these then the most prosperous surviving English women? On the evidence this thesis has already provided, no. But they do form a unique quartet who had not only successfully survived the Norman settlement but were significant in some other way, either in themselves or in their landholdings. It has to be stressed that while English male tenants-in-chief in Domesday Book were rare, their female counterparts were exceptional. That they have not received the attention they deserve is lamentable and sadly predictable. Roffe's list of tenants-in-chief of native descent includes no women: 'Kolgrimr, Edward of Salisbury, Thorkil of Warwick, Kolsveinn, Gospatric son of Arnketil, and Iudichael of Totnes'.⁷ Their female counterparts are left to languish forgotten in the pages of Domesday Book.

French women tenants-in-chief have similarly been neglected; although not as rare as English women tenants-in-chief – they numbered just twelve – they should still be regarded as exceptional. These new Anglo-Norman women who were presumably of Norman or French ancestry may have joined their husbands in England, or possibly, as in the case of daughters, been born here, very early during the settlement. Orderic Vitalis stated that the Norman wives remained overseas until at least two years after the Conquest but it must be likely that some were compelled to accompany Queen Matilda either on her first journey to England for her coronation which took place at Whitsun 1068, or on her subsequent trips to attend William's great crown-wearings.⁸ By 1086 French women as holders of land in the Eastern counties of England included Azelina,

⁷ Roffe, *Decoding*, p. 164, taken from an approximation of 200 tenants-in-chief; *DP*, p. 23.

⁸ Orderic Vitalis might have reckoned this as two years, but it was probably only eighteen months. For Matilda, refer to van Houts, 'Matilda [Matilda of Flanders]', *ODNB*.

the wife of Ralph Taillebois, and the unnamed wife of Boscelin of Dives, who both had estates in Cambridgeshire, and Rohais, the wife of Richard son of Count Gilbert, whose land lay in Huntingdonshire.⁹ As there were so few female tenants-in-chief in total, this chapter will refer occasionally to these newly-arrived French women and their situation, for purposes of comparison. Does Domesday treat them similarly? Can these French women teach us anything about the survival of English women?

The increased presence of women in the greater detail found in Little Domesday Book is observed amongst the large number of tenants-in-chief in Essex – no fewer than 88, of whom two are English women. This high number would invite the suspicion that in the Essex returns royal officials could have been included with tenants-in-chief, if the section had not finished with a composite chapter for the King’s freemen. Suffolk omits the holders of land summary sheet but has 72 individual chapters, ending with a chapter for the lands of the vavassors and one for the freemen in the hand of the king. Norfolk lists 62 tenants-in-chief, of whom one is an English woman, and a further chapter to cover the ‘King’s freemen who belonged to no estate’ and the ‘King’s men in demesne’. These are large and populous shires, but even so these long lists seem remarkable. It is necessary to be aware that LDB may be classifying and recording differently, and that this might be a factor in the increased presence of women tenants-in-chief.

Lincolnshire in GDB also has a large number of tenants-in-chief at 67, but this shire only includes women landholders holding in their own right within two large group chapters, under the titles of ‘Svartbrandr and Others’, and ‘the King’s Thegns.’ Lincolnshire is the only shire in circuit six to amalgamate its results into two such groupings of lesser thegns. Huntingdonshire has 27 tenants-in-chief, but only one composite chapter for the *taini regis*. Cambridgeshire, in circuit three, has no composite

⁹ The name of Boscelin’s wife is unknown; it is, therefore, possible, although unlikely, that she came from an English background.

chapters. It lists 42 tenants-in-chief who include amongst the lesser ones, Azelina, the wife of Ralph Taillebois, and the unnamed wife of Boscelin of Dives.¹⁰ It is in the lower orders of tenants-in-chief and the group chapters that lay women tend to appear. Here too, we find Countess Judith, the conqueror's niece, although her extensive holdings in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire suggest that she should have been placed much higher up the list. This anomalous position suggests that, on occasion, other decisions were governing how material was collected, or ordered.

Generally Domesday Book lists tenants-in-chief in a specific order of which the first convention is men before women, and so even the highest woman in the land, Queen Matilda, can be listed fifty-fourth in Buckinghamshire.¹¹ The second convention is French men before English men, who can sometimes be grouped into one composite entry, as 'Guthmund and other thegns' in Dorset.¹² The third convention is that it was usual to place even lesser family members, including women, of French men, before English men. Lastly, other than in the shire return for Dorset, serjeants were generally placed before English thegns, as in Wiltshire.¹³ Frequently, in any shire, classes such as serjeants, thegns, servants, and almsmen would be placed in groups, although some shires only separate one particular group, as thegns in Northamptonshire, and servants in Buckinghamshire.¹⁴

However, this ordering and grouping of information was not always strictly followed and variations occur even amongst shires of the same circuit. There are some notable exceptions as in Middlesex, where Countess Judith is grouped together with the King's almsmen in bottom place, and in Dorset, where she is simply placed last.¹⁵ But, in her

¹⁰ Lesser Cambridgeshire landholders may have been included in the *Terra Regis*.

¹¹ GDB fol. 143a.

¹² GDB fol. 75a.

¹³ GDB fol. 64b.

¹⁴ GDB fols 219a and 143a.

¹⁵ GDB fols 126b and 75a.

comital shire of Huntingdonshire, she is accorded a middling position of twentieth ahead of the lesser tenants-in-chief: perhaps here she could still muster some respect.¹⁶ Another aberration to the general schemata occurs in the old Mercian shire of Leicestershire, where Countesses Godgifu and Ælfgifu are assigned the exalted positions of eleventh and twelfth, but it should be noted that this shire also lists English men such as Godwine the priest and other almsmen in position eight.¹⁷ All three shires of Little Domesday Book make use of composite chapters for the freemen of the king, and Suffolk also included a composite fief for the vavassors, distinguishing them from other types of freemen.

Williams has demonstrated how in some instances LDB merged lesser tenants-in-chief with the *taini* and *servientes*. She hypothesized that they might all be linked by tenure in return for service, and were as Round termed them, ‘tenants by serjeanty.’ Such serjeancies can only be readily identified retrospectively from the thirteenth century.¹⁸ Williams devoted a whole chapter to such non-royal English survivors, the majority of whom were a miscellany of royal servants and officials, but although her discussion included Wulfwynn of Cresslow, any other women were merely footnoted.¹⁹

Stafford noted how women were often clustered within these composite chapters, but also drew our attention to the rather ‘odd’ relationship observable between Domesday sheriffs and women.²⁰ The sheriff was the king’s agent in each shire, and as such was probably required to manage these women in some way for the king. We might conclude that these group returns were made by the sheriff, which then raises the question whether individual English women tenants-in-chief were able to write their

¹⁶ GDB fol. 203a.

¹⁷ GDB fol. 230a

¹⁸ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 113-15; and n. 80; J. H. Round, *VCH Hants.*, I, p. 423.

¹⁹ Wulfwynn’s son, Edward of Salisbury, was a post-conquest sheriff; see Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 85. Williams, p. 113, n. 80.

²⁰ Stafford, ‘Women and Domesday’ (p. 78).

own Domesday returns or whether the sheriffs also wrote these. In this regard it is significant that of all the French women tenants-in-chief, six were actually the wives, widows, and daughters of Norman sheriffs, suggesting that sheriffs were keen to legitimate the holdings of their womenfolk. It may also have been a requirement of Domesday for sheriffs to demonstrate transparency in their personal land transactions.²¹

This introductory section has not only highlighted the problems which can be encountered when interpreting the sources, GDB and LDB, but it has also thrown up particular problems concerning the identification of tenants-in-chief, and the drawing of consistent conclusions from the distinctions in Domesday Book. It has raised questions about the treatment and record of women tenants-in-chief who generally appear at the bottom of the pile. To some extent these problems appear, at least at first sight, to be common to women in general – thus both French and English – and so gendered. In fact, English male tenants-in-chief can be found quite high up the listing of landholders; for example, Edward of Salisbury and Thorkil of Warwick appear just below the Norman earls in their respective shires. This could of course be a representation of their greater wealth, or perhaps their status in the new regime; in Lincolnshire we find Colswein high up the rankings but lesser tenants-in-chief like Colgrim and Swartbrand just above the King's thegns at the bottom of the pile.²² But it also raises an interesting and initially important question: how far is position in Domesday Book a question of gender, or of ethnicity? The placement of lesser male English thegns and women, either Norman or English, although it does occasionally cross-cut, is generally organized such that English men are probably less 'feminized' than Norman women are 'anglicized'.²³

²¹ Domesday Suffolk (LDB fol. 310b) also includes, within the return of the Norman sheriff, Robert Malet, a vast amount of land held by his mother, Esilia Malet; Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76.

²² GDB fol. 337a.

²³ GDB fols 132b and 209a.

This chapter continues with four case studies which acknowledge all these issues, but specifically ask what made these women tenants-in-chief. Were there factors at play specific to the women themselves, to their landholding, or to their membership of an influential kindred? Or was their listing as a tenant-in-chief and their land as an individual fief useful to somebody? And if so, to whom, a male, a relative, a sheriff, a successor lurking in the wings?

8.1 Eadgifu ‘of Chaddesley’

Although this female English tenant-in-chief held land beyond the geographical area of this thesis she is introduced here since it is hoped that her experience may give insight into those of the other three. To omit Eadgifu ‘of Chaddesley’, the only English woman tenant-in-chief outside Eastern England, from this discussion would be a missed opportunity; she certainly deserves to be included as a member of this élite club.

Eadgifu (OE *ead*, neuter noun ‘prosperity’+ OE *giefu*, feminine noun ‘gift’²⁴) was listed at the very end of the holders of land in Worcestershire, in twenty-eighth position.²⁵ In this instance it is fair to say last but not least as she is the only English tenant-in-chief, male or female, in that county. If the Domesday listing had been ordered according to size of fief then she should, by rights, have been accorded the nineteenth position.

Although she is given her own chapter, it is untitled. In it Eadgifu is recorded as holding 25 hides (3,000 acres) at Chaddesley, ten of which were exempt from geld, with eight berewicks, just as she had held it in 1066.²⁶ This large manor had considerable resources, including three corn mills and three leagues of woodland, whilst outlying assets included two burgesses in nearby Worcester, and five saltpans in Droitwich. With this description Domesday gives an impression of an extremely lucrative estate that

²⁴ Okasha, pp. 58 & 64.

²⁵ GDB fol. 172.

²⁶ GDB fol. 178.

would have offered a more than comfortable existence to any lord. It is probably significant, although the meaning is lost to us, that ten hides of Eadgifu's land were exempt of geld. It is not surprising that the VCH editor concluded that Eadgifu's estate at Chaddesley must have been of 'some considerable importance' and that Round described it as 'unique'.²⁷

In 1086 the church at Chaddesley was still attended by two priests who themselves were served in turn by eight bordars, making it probable that Chaddesley was an 'old minster estate'; it certainly meets Blair's criteria for this.²⁸ Furthermore, a Taxatio value of a staggering £30 dangles the prospect that the foundation at Chaddesley may, in fact, have been a royal minster.²⁹ If Chaddesley was the site of an ancient and royal minster then there is a strong likelihood that Eadgifu may have been the widow of a favoured royal cleric, similar to the widow, presumably French, of Ralph the chaplain at Yarsop in Herefordshire, who held TRW half a hide and three virgates there as a tenant-in-chief.³⁰

It is a common misconception that Chaddesley had been a Mercian comital estate. That estate, let us call it CC 1, had been seized by Earl Leofric from Worcester Cathedral Priory, only for Countess Godgifu to restore it, but in the event to no avail since Earls Edwin and Morcar seized it back and held onto it until they were deprived of their lands in 1071.³¹ Finally, around the year 1093, William Rufus awarded it to Robert fitzHamon.³² This well-known story about CC 1 has led historians to assume wrongly that Eadgifu was therefore related to the Earls of Mercia, an error possibly encouraged

²⁷ VCH, Worcs. III, pp. 35-43.

²⁸ Julia Barrow, pers. comm.; Chaddesley is surprisingly omitted in Blair, 'Secular Minster Churches', in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. by Sawyer. For Blair's criteria, see (pp. 106). Chaddesley had a Taxatio value of a staggering £30, which may suggest it had been held by a royal cleric.

²⁹ The church at Chaddesley has an unusual and quite possibly late dedication to St Cassian.

³⁰ Barrow, *Who Served...?* p. 47; GDB fol. 187b.

³¹ Francesca Tinti, *Sustaining Belief: The Church of Worcester from c. 870 to c. 1100* (Farnham: Routledge, 2010), pp. 266-67.

³² VCH, Worcs., III, pp. 35-43.

by this manor's anomalous omission from Domesday Book.³³ But there was another manor at Chaddesley, let us call it CC 2, and one that is included in Domesday Book – this one was Eadgifu's. By the twelfth century this Chaddesley had passed into the hands of Robert fitzPayne and subsequently into those of his son and grandson, both named Richard Foliot. Robert fitz-Payne's father was 'Pagan' dapifer, steward of Hardwin de Scales and possibly a relative, and one of his major tenants in Cambridgeshire. Pagan was also a tenant of Maurice, bishop of London in Hertfordshire.³⁴

As Eadgifu still held Chaddesley in 1086, and without evidence to the contrary, it is possible that she retained it until her death.³⁵ We may wonder at the factors which ensured her survival as the only English tenant-in-chief of any gender in Worcestershire, and as the holder of such a substantial and significant estate. Was she the widow of a cleric who William I left undisturbed, or perhaps even a royal almswoman? But why was she listed as a tenant-in-chief? The easy answer would have been as a member of a major pre-1066 comital family whose other female members were treated as such in GDB. But this case-study has shown how this cannot have been the answer. If Pagan *dapifer* received Chaddesley after 1086, we may well be witnessing an estate in transition from its female English pre-1066 holder, and thus antecessor, to her Norman successor. Pagan may have been very keen to have

³³ Including Baxter, *The Earls*, p. 171, n. 88; Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 1-6; *DP*, p. 183. In 1200, Alan, abbot of Tewkesbury appears to have also confused the two Chaddesleys; he claimed that the advowson had been given to Robert fitzHamon of CC1 whereupon Hawise fitzPayne stated that the advowson of the church had been with the fitzPayne/Foliot family of Chaddesley (CC2) for generations; *Mon. Ang.*, II, 'Tewkesbury Monastery', LXXV, p. 76.

³⁴ *DP*, p. 321; *IE*, pp. 97-100.

³⁵ It probably added to all the confusion that CC2 is referred to as Chaddesley Corbet in the Phillimore version of Domesday (Domesday Book, 30: Worcestershire, ed. by Caroline and Frank Thorn (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982). The place name Chaddesley Corbet arose when Hawise fitzPayne of Chaddesley 2 married Roger Corbett II of Chaddesley 1, and thus combined the two Chaddesleys into one.

Chaddesley listed as a holding of a tenant-in-chief, and, therefore, not subject to any lordship other than that of the King.

8.2 Ealdgyth ‘of Wells’

Terra Aldit is the sixtieth chapter in Norfolk where it precedes those of three English men, Godwin Haldane, Starculf, and Edric the Falconer, and a composite entry for the *liberi homines regis*.³⁶ There is a self-contained and prosperous feel to Ealdgyth’s manor at Wells (next-the-Sea) similar to Eadgifu’s Chaddesley. At the time of Domesday this estate consisted of two carucates, two mills, and enough pasture for 200 sheep, at Wells, a small harbour town on the northern coast of Norfolk.³⁷ She also held, attached to this manor, nineteen freemen who were attached to this manor and who, in turn, held another two carucates of land and half a mill. Domesday records that although these men were attached to Wells they lived in neighbouring Warham. Ealdgyth (OE *eald*, adjective ‘old’ + OE *gyð*, presumably OE *guð*, feminine noun ‘battle’³⁸) appears to have been quite economically astute: when she had acquired the estate it had had only four pigs, and 60 sheep, totals she increased to sixteen and 200 respectively. Nowadays the small harbour town of Wells on the North Norfolk coast is a tourist honey-pot but one suspects that in the eleventh century Ealdgyth’s wealth came from fishing and coastal trading.

TRE Wells had been held by a free man named Ketel who is well-known to us due to the remarkable survival of a series of family wills, which, including his own, were preserved at Bury St Edmunds.³⁹ Another of these is the will of his mother, Wulfgyth, which was made around the year 1046. This lady is known to have had up to six children, most of whom she names in her will, including her son Ketel, and a daughter

³⁶ LDB fols 109a and 271a.

³⁷ LDB fol. 271a.

³⁸ Okasha, pp. 58, 64.

³⁹ W. 34; Whitelock, *Wills* pp. 89-93, with notes on pp. 201-04.

called *Ealdgyth*.⁴⁰ Alternative identities have been proposed for this girl: Æthelgyth (see Chapter 5 above) by Williams, and Eadgifu the Fair (see Chapter 4 above) by Barlow, but neither hypothesis is very satisfactory.⁴¹ Barlow gives no references for his opinion, but Williams's is based on Æthelgyth's Domesday lordship of Shimpling in Suffolk, very close to land at Chadacre that had been bequeathed by Wulfgyth to her daughter Ealdgyth.⁴² There seems to be an eagerness to assume that any influential female noblewoman from East Anglia at this time must have serendipitously been part of this family about whom we know so much.⁴³

However, this case study contends that Ealdgyth 'of Wells' offers a more logical candidate for Ketel's sister. In the first instance, let us not forget that Ealdgyth held Wells TRW as it had been held TRE by Ketel. But Ealdgyth is a common name and it would be quite reasonable to wonder if this Ealdgyth could be his widow, his sister, or even his daughter, if it was not for the evidence supplied in three of the Bury wills. The first is Ketel's own, drawn up between 1052 and 1066, on the occasion of his departure to Rome.⁴⁴ In this, he invokes a *pro anima* for a woman named Sæflæd but fails to indicate the nature of her relationship with him. The other two wills were written up at about the same time by a woman called Sæflæd, and moreover, on the occasion of her going *ouer se*.⁴⁵ She, however, does name her husband – and it is Ketel.⁴⁶ Finally,

⁴⁰ W. 31; Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 84-87, with notes on pp. 197-99.

⁴¹ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 109; Barlow, *The Godwins*, p. 78. For this family, see Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 141-43, Clarke, *The English Nobility*, pp. 156-57 and 318-19.

⁴² By contrast, Scarfe, *Suffolk*, draws attention to another nearby vill, Stanningfield, whose Domesday tenant was a woman named Ælflæd. Various women with similar but different names all in same vicinity have caused confusion. Note that in 1066 Chadacre (LDB fol. 430b) was held by Wulfric, a thane of King Edward's.

⁴³ Barlow, *The Godwins*, p. 78.

⁴⁴ W. 34.

⁴⁵ W. 37 and 38; Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 92-95 and notes on pp. 206-07.

⁴⁶ William Somner, *Antiquities of Canterbury*, 2 vols (London: Knaplock, 1640)? suggests that Ketel might have accompanied Harold Godwineson on his pilgrimage to Rome. Ketel granted Stisted to Christchurch for the sake of his father's soul and for Sæflæd's, although he did not state her exact relationship to him.

Ketel's will informs us that his stepdaughter, Ælfgifu, was to accompany them on the journey to Rome. So Ealdgyth is not his wife nor likely his daughter. A sister then?

Ketel left his 1066 Domesday estates behind and sources for him and his immediate family cease at this point. Whether he ever returned to England is not recorded. By 1086 Ketel's lands had been given by William I to several of his followers, but primarily to Ranulph Peverel.⁴⁷ His mother, Wulfgyth, had left in her will the partitions of three estates, not only to Ketel, presumably her eldest son, as indicated by his nickname, *Alder*, but also to another son named Ulfketel. Ketel's Domesday holdings include land at all three places that is Walsingham, Carleton, and East Harling. But what of his brother's share? Is he the *Ulfkil* at East Harling, or the *Ulf* at Carleton? I suggest that these Domesday entries refer to Wulfgyth's other son, and Ketel's brother, Ulfketel.

Analysis of Ketel and Ulfketel's Domesday holdings shows how they frequently held in the same places, as at Burnham Overy, and Rushford, and Ketel is sometimes commended to Ulfketel as at Corton (Suffolk).⁴⁸ Many of their holdings lay close to Ealdgyth's manor along the coastline around Wells, as at Burnham, Holkham, and Walsingham. Whilst Ketel's lands clustered mainly in northwest Norfolk, Ulfketel's lay in the south west, centred around Framlingham, although there was some considerable overlap between the two.⁴⁹ Whilst it is difficult to differentiate all the *Ulf*-s in the Eastern counties, it is likely that Ulf 'of Burnham Overy' and Ulfkil 'of Framlingham' both antecessors of Roger Bigot, the sheriff of Suffolk in 1086, are one and the same.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ LDB fols 254a and b.

⁴⁸ LDB fol. 284a.

⁴⁹ 'Framlingham Castle and its Associated Landscape including the Mere, Town Ditch and Anglo-Saxon Cemetery' <<http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk>> [accessed 8 November 2018] suggests that Framlingham Castle was built by the Bigot's in the eleventh century and erected on the site of a previous Anglo-Saxon manorial complex, of which the town ditch was possibly the boundary.

⁵⁰ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 76; and also possibly for the period 1072-1075. He may also have been sheriff of Norfolk c. 1086, p. 60.

Ulf had held land at East Carleton, and Ulfkil at Rushford, both places where Wulfgyth had left land to the brothers.

The use of alternative hypocoristic forms for Ulfketil can also be found in two Bury charters. Is it just coincidence that they refer to a place named *Welle*? In one an *Ulf of Welle* witnesses a charter of Abbot Ufi (1020/1044) and in the other, a man named Ulfketel who *habuit* in *Welle* grants a fishery there to the monastery.⁵¹ Hart identifies these possibly as Upwell and Outwell, adjacent villages in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. This could be likely since most religious houses in the region do seem to have had a share in the fishy bounty of these two villages, but that is perhaps to ignore the more obvious choice: Wells. However, geography places Ealdgyth and Wells in the same area as holdings of Ketel and Ulfketel; the latter two were brothers; an Ulfketel was linked by Bury to Wells. Is Ealdgyth their sister? Ulfketel's wife? Or could he be her father – his name preserved in that of one of his sons.

A tentative answer is provided by plotting the Suffolk estates owned by this family. It is apparent that although the bulk of their holdings were in Norfolk, Ketel had held sizeable estates in Suffolk, at Onehouse and Great Ashfield.⁵² When these are connected with those of Ealdgyth's they form a straight route from the coast in the vicinity of Felixstowe, to Ketel's manor at Rushford, near Thetford, on the county border. Furthermore, I consider that Ketel's manor of Great Ashfield must be the *Essetesford* (Ashford) which Wulfgyth had originally left to Ealdgyth, and which has been unsatisfactorily identified by Whitelock as Ashford in Kent.⁵³ In other words they follow remarkably closely the direction of today's A41, each manor a day's ride from

⁵¹ *ECEE*, nos. 132 (1043/1044) and no 86 (allegedly 1022/23 but likely forged under abbot Baldwin c. 1081). One of the grants to Bury was Ulfketel's fishery at Wells, initially granted by Cnut. Was it a royal fishery? Was it Ulfketel who signed himself as *ego Ulf dux* in no. 132?

⁵² And Ulfkils in Norfolk.

⁵³ Whitelock, *Wills*, notes on p. 125.

the next, an itinerary from the coast to the family's heartlands in Norfolk. The fact that Ealdgyth's estates are strategically sited as part of the family lands casts doubt on her identification as Ulfketel's wife. In 1086 Ulfketel was listed as a *vavassor* in Suffolk, which increases the likelihood that the Ealdgyth who was also a *vavassor* with half an acre at Creting in Suffolk was his sister.⁵⁴

Although Ulfketil was only the subtenant of Roger Bigot's for many of the lands which he had held directly in 1066, he appears to have weathered the vicissitudes of the conquest quite successfully. He was probably Ulfkil the King's reeve who seized Mundam in Norfolk for the King's hand.⁵⁵ Roger Bigot asked King William for it and subsequently Ulfkil did service for it to Roger. This confirms Round's suggestion that English reeves were able on occasion to take advantage of their position to obtain possession of forfeited estates – as here – from Ælfric who had been outlawed.

Ulfketel's identity throughout this case study has depended on the use of variant hypochoristic forms throughout Little Domesday to represent one individual. It should be noted that this family has a recorded history of their penchant for pet-names – Wulfgyth's will addresses another two, probably younger, daughters whom she calls Boti and Gode, both shortened forms of the respective names Bothild and Godgyth.⁵⁶ In 1066 Ketel held family land at Rushford with an individual called Alti.⁵⁷ Bearing this in mind, is it possible that *Alti* (*Altius*) could be a shortened form of Ealdgyth? We know that Ulfketel held land there too.⁵⁸ And who is the 'Auti' with land at East and West Harling, with both Ketel and Ulfkil, at another of Wulfgyth's bequests? If *Alti* was in

⁵⁴ LDB fol. 446a.

⁵⁵ LDB fols 176a and b, and 177a.

⁵⁶ W. 31.

⁵⁷ LDB fol. 412a.

⁵⁸ For feminine hypochoristic forms ending in *-us*, ThLV, p. 177.

fact a shortened version of Ealdgyth it would help explain why neither Redin nor Feilitzen could account for this form.⁵⁹

Looking for the men as well as the women of a family throws light on the latter and sometimes too on the former. Another female of this family was Ingreda; her story underlines how far family connection is very important when considering these women. As the wife of Godric *dapifer*, she was perhaps the daughter of another Ingreda who was married to Edwin, the brother-in-law of Wulfgyth and uncle of Ketel.⁶⁰ Edwin's will was also deposited at Bury.⁶¹ By 1086 Ingreda's husband, Godric, was in possession of the land of her father, Edwin, presumably through their marriage. We have already met Godric *dapifer* as the farmer of royal estates in Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Essex – including those estates of Eadgifu the Fair. It is even possible that Godric is Ketel's brother – Ketel does mention a brother called Godric in his will.⁶² Godric and Ingreda fulfilled Edwin's bequest of Little Melton, Norfolk, to St Benet's. The family connection between Ingreda and Ealdgyth is strengthened through this benefaction which was later renewed by Ketel.

Ingreda was not a tenant-in-chief, so why was Ealdgyth? Is it because Ingreda's husband was still alive? Or because she had a husband? Or was Ealdgyth a tenant-in-chief because she held her land in 1066 in her own right, that she was left Wells by her brother, and not as anyone's wife? Was she a single woman? Or does she survive as a tenant-in-chief because there were male family survivors who ensured it? Or do we see the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds trying to claim lands held by this family, and anxious that her land was specified in this way because they hoped to get it, and not as tenants?

⁵⁹ Although von Feilitzen does give *Alt-* as a DB form of *Eald-* he failed to connect the two under *Alti-*.

⁶⁰ Could Ingreda be the *LE*, II, 90, *aurifrisatrix* (orphrey-embroideress) Ingrith? *DP*, p. 219; Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 108-09.

⁶¹ *W*. 33.

⁶² *W*. 34.

This case study has thrown up far more questions than answers. Wulfgyth and Ketel were both men of Stigand whereas Ulf and Ealdgyth appear to have been more attached to the new regime – survivors to 1086 whereas Ketel was not. Could Ulf and Ealdgyth have been children, perhaps younger children, of a different father to Ketel? Perhaps Ketel’s closeness to Stigand and his fall was a factor in his downfall, or even his possible relationship with Harold Godwineson. Ulfketel, an official of King Edward’s, had become a vavassor of William I’s in Suffolk; he had transferred his skills, perhaps as port-reeve, from one regime to the next. This might explain how both he and his sister Ealdgyth were listed as tenants-in-chief in Norfolk.

8.3 Wulfgifu wife of Finn

Little Domesday lists Wulfgifu eighty-fourth in the holders of land in Essex, ahead of four other small landholders – all men in fact, and all apparently English – Edward, Thorkell, Stanhard, and Godwin, and before the *Liberi homines regis*.⁶³ Her chapter title provides further information about her identity: *Terra Vlueve uxoris Phin*. In 1086 Wulfgifu (OE *wulf*, masculine noun ‘wolf’ + OE *gyð*, presumably OE *guð*, feminine noun ‘battle’⁶⁴) held three hides and a mill at Pitsea for which no TRE holder is actually given, so she may well have been holding it already in 1066. Pitsea, in South Essex, is situated on the Thames escarpment at the head of Pitsea Creek which would have been navigable at this time. Pitsea is overlooked by an area of high ground, now called Pitsea Mount, which provides a commanding view down Holehaven Creek to the estuary. Elsewhere in Essex she held a five-hide manor at Latchingdon that her husband Finn had held TRE. Latchingdon was approximately five miles distant from Maldon.

It is significant that Wulfgifu’s husband had the Danish name Finn; he probably belonged to one of the Danish families who had arrived in Essex with Cnut and

⁶³ LDB fols 1a, 98a and 98b.

⁶⁴ Okasha, pp. 58, 66.

Thorkell the Tall. Cnut, and his Earl, had given much of the county in which they had been victorious to their supporters, men like the stallers Osgot Clapa, and Tofi the Proud.⁶⁵ The results of this can be seen in the number of men specifically identified as Danish within Domesday Essex, like Othin the Dane and Anund the Dane.⁶⁶ Finn is described as *Dacus* in Essex and *Danus* in GDB Buckinghamshire where he had held 2 hides and a virgate at Cheddington in 1066.⁶⁷ In Essex he had held the Latchingdon manor mentioned above plus a manor of two and a half hides at Langham, and a further estate of one and a half hides at Barrow, both in the south east of the county.⁶⁸ In Suffolk he had held 13 burgesses in Ipswich and had the patronage of a man named Leofstan who had held fifty acres at Boynton.⁶⁹ After the Conquest he acquired several small estates in Suffolk but appears to have died before 1086, when he was, more often than not, an antecessor of Richard, son of Count Gilbert.⁷⁰ A closer look at Richard's returns for Suffolk shows the emphasis Richard places on this predecessor's holdings; he legitimates his claim and Finn's status as lord by referring to the 'land that Finn held after 1066', to 'Finn's *honor*, his *feudum*, and *terra Fin*.⁷¹ These entries show how that at first Finn had flourished under the conqueror; for example he had acquired a manor at Badley with two carucates and twenty acres. To this he was then able to add men and land leased from the sheriff, 26 freemen with a carucate and 45 acres. Finn appears to have been acquisitory: he annexed men at Bocking and removed six acres from Hemingstone Church. Ely was forced to claim back some of their demesne land and a sokeman at Hitcham (Suffolk) which Finn had been holding unjustly. However, Marten

⁶⁵ Fei., ON Finn, ODan/OSw, p. 251; Marten, 'Meet the Swarts' (pp. 17-19, and n. 10). This area had been consistently targeted by the Danes culminating with the Battles of Maldon, and Assendun.

⁶⁶ LDB fols 25a and b.

⁶⁷ GDB fol. 153a.

⁶⁸ LDB fols 41a and b, and 395a.

⁶⁹ LDB fol. 395a.

⁷⁰ 'Finn the Dane', PASE.

⁷¹ LDB fols 392b-395b. For the Ely legal plea of 1072/5 in Bates, *Regesta*, 117.

has suggested that he lost his lands in 1075 as a result of joining the rebellion of Earl Ralph since his Domesday entries show a tell-tale third time point.⁷² Did he throw it all away? It is significant that the lands of another rebel, Wihtgar, were also granted to Richard, son of Count Gilbert, as his reward for quelling the revolt.

Why then does Finn's wife, the widow of a rebel, hold as tenant-in-chief? An initial answer might be her status as a widow, moreover the widow of a man who had flourished under the new regime, and as such respected by the King. Perhaps Finn had not participated too heavily in the Earl's Revolt. Welldon-Finn speculated whether Finn might have held some sort of royal office that would partly account for Wulfgifu's good fortune.⁷³ But if Finn was a disgraced rebel who had met his end as long before 1075 it is hard to explain how his widow not only survived but retained his status as a tenant-in-chief. It is even harder to explain why William would have added a further three hides and thirty acres of woodland to her estate at Pitsea. Perhaps the explanation lies not in Wulfgifu's status as the widow of Finn, but in her relationship with some other, now unidentifiable, male connection? A birth family whose significance, although lost to us, accounted for the marriage of the Danish conquerors into it earlier in the eleventh century? Could the unidentifiable male have been her father, a father from whom she may have inherited Pitsea? It is to be noted that the Domesday entry for Pitsea makes no reference to Finn as its TRE holder. If Wulfgifu had inherited Pitsea from her father she would have been a tenant-in-chief in her own right, and not as the widow of a tenant-in-chief.

The Domesday note that the extra three hides given to Wulfgifu at Pitsea were to *remanent regi* leaves us in little doubt that the King was keeping some control over her

⁷² Marten, 'The Rebellion of 1075' (pp. 177-79). In particular Richard claimed for his own, Whaddon in Cambridgeshire which has been identified as Fageduna, the site where he had overcome Earl Ralph.

⁷³ R. Welldon-Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Eastern Counties* (London: Longmans, Green, 1967), pp. 27-28.

holding. Was there some specific significance to Pitsea? It would seem unlikely that Wulfgifu was farming them for the King. An explanation may be suggested by the toponymy of the site. Did these additional hides include Pitsea Mount, an area of high ground that is still wooded today? If so, they would have been an ideal site for a watchtower or beacon, and perhaps a defensive resource that William was reluctant to lose to Finn's successor? This can only be a guess but nevertheless the hypothesis that some serjeancy may have been attached to Pitsea is strengthened by the granting of the tithes from Pitsea (*t.HII*) by Ailward the Royal Chamberlain to St John's at Colchester.⁷⁴ William Rufus granted Wulfgifu's estate to Eudo *Dapifer* around the years 1099 to 1100, implying that she may well have retained them and lived for up to 30 years after the conquest. One could wonder if Wulfgifu's father had been a *dish-thegn* of King Edward, but perhaps it was Finn's father who held that position; Eudo was granted Wulfgifu's manors which had been held by Finn the Dane of his father on his honour.⁷⁵ William would certainly not have wished to alienate his daughter, and especially a daughter who might have taken on some of her father's duties with the estate.⁷⁶

8.4 Eadgifu wife of Edward

This final case study concerns the English female tenant-in-chief, Eadgifu, whose Domesday entry immediately follows Wulfgifu's above, and precedes those of three English men and a composite entry for the King's freemen.⁷⁷ It is included amongst entries of apparent royal officials, and placed between those of Grim the Reeve and Thorkil the Reeve. Her chapter was actually listed in the county summary sheet under

⁷⁴ Round, *VCH, Essex, I*, pp. 348-49; Pitsea was to remain in the King's gift until Henry VIII gave it to Sir Thomas Cromwell, and it became Cromwell Manor.

⁷⁵ *ECE*, no. 124; Bates, *Regesta*, 117. See also, Mortimer, 'The Beginnings of the Honour of Clare' (pp. 128-30).

⁷⁶ *ECE*, no. 124.

⁷⁷ For this OE personal name, see section 8.1.

the name of Edward, whereas her return within the text is afforded no title. Instead, the chapter relates how the land is now held by Edward's wife Eadgifu. It would appear that between the composition of the summary sheet and the writing up of the text Eadgifu's husband, Edward had died. Just how recent this transfer had been and the subsequent confusion is perhaps seen in the scribe's omission of a chapter title in the actual folios. Eadgifu's holding is admittedly small, at only half a hide, and its locality is no further identified than that it lay within Chafford Hundred in central South Essex. Nevertheless, the chapter entry gives us the clue to the identity of her husband Edward, by adding the patronymic son of Swein.

It would be easy to mistakenly assume that Eadgifu's husband was the son of Swein of Essex, sheriff of Essex for a period covering 1066 to 1075, in which office he followed his father Robert fitzWymarc.⁷⁸ But Marten has convincingly argued that the Swein here referred to is Swein Swart who held one manor in Suffolk at Boynton and several, including one at Aveley, in Essex.⁷⁹ The Swart 'surname' is used in the Suffolk folios perhaps for the very purpose of distinguishing Swein of Essex and Swein Swart. Swein's son is therefore the Edward who had held a hide and 40 acres at Aveley in 1066.⁸⁰ Marten proposes that he was probably also the Edward with TRE manors at St Osyth, Alresford, Chatham, and Patching (all Suffolk).⁸¹

The Swarts, like the family of Finn, were of a Danish background, and their Domesday holdings, like Finn's, were also listed with a third, and interim, value, suggesting their forfeiture between 1066 and 1086. However, as in this case Earl Ralph was the recipient, the Swarts must have lost their land at some time between 1066 and 1075, and, therefore, before the date of the Revolt of the Earls in 1075, in which

⁷⁸ Green, *Sheriffs*, p. 39.

⁷⁹ Marten, 'Meet the Swarts'. Note Aveley (*Ælfgyth's lea*) in Keith Briggs and Kelly Kilpatrick, *A Dictionary of Suffolk Place Names*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ LDB fol. 24b.

⁸¹ LDB fol. 32b.

Edward, son of Swein, was a major participant.⁸² The Swarts' early patronage of Westminster demonstrates their eagerness to ally themselves with King Edward; they granted land at Wennington and Aveley to his foundation.⁸³ Swein even named his son, Edward, for the king. Edward's death around 1086 does not seem to have disadvantaged Eadgifu, and she is one of only two members of the Swart kinship group who appear to have thrived after the conquest. The other was Swarting, probably a cousin of Edward's, who managed to increase his holdings in Buckinghamshire.

Another Domesday Eadgifu who held five hides TRW at Lisson Green (Middlesex) as an almswoman of the king which had been held TRE by Edward son of Swein, is surely our Eadgifu.⁸⁴ Although Edward had planned Lisson Green to revert to St Paul's after Eadgifu's death it is later found in the hands of the family of Otto *aurifaber*, a tenant of both the King in Essex and Cambridgeshire, and of Bury St Edmund's.⁸⁵ Otto was a goldsmith in London during the reign of the conqueror.⁸⁶ The name *Otto* suggests he may have had a German background and it is quite possible that his family were some of the German artificers who had been encouraged by Edward the Confessor to settle in England.⁸⁷ It is noticeable that many of the moneyers who had been employed by both Edward and Harold in Winchester and Lincoln, did have typically Germanic names.⁸⁸

After the Conquest William I was to find the knowledge and expertise of such men invaluable and he rewarded them handsomely.⁸⁹ But as there is no obvious trace of a pre-conquest moneyer called Otto, it seems likely that Otto arrived in England after the

⁸² Marten, 'Meet the Swarts'.

⁸³ *ECE*, 50.

⁸⁴ GDB fol. 130b.

⁸⁵ *DP*, p. 320; *ECE*, 97; Susan Kelly, Charters of St Pauls, p.103; LDB fol. 3b; GDB fol. 190a.

⁸⁶ van Houts, 'The Women of Bury St Edmund's', p. 60.

⁸⁷ Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066*, p. 16.

⁸⁸ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 205.

⁸⁹ GDB fol. 190a; LDB fols 3b and 98a.

conquest, and was a particular favourite of William, perhaps brought over the Channel by him. By 1086 Otto was in receipt of substantial dues from the farming of royal estates, some that had been held TRE by Earl Ælfgar, as at Litlington in Cambridgeshire, and Shalford and Finchingfield in Essex, and some that had been held by Ælfgar's wife, Countess Ælfgifu, such as at Sudbury and Cornard.⁹⁰ But another estate of Ælfgar's had been Gestingthorpe in Essex and this Otto held as tenant-in-chief.⁹¹

There has been some confusion over the number and sequence of Otto's wives, which probably stemmed from Round's mix-up between Otto and his son, who was also named Otto, but for our purposes it is sufficient to say that Eadgifu, the widow of Edward son of Swein, married as her second husband Otto the Goldsmith. To her second marriage she bought the land at Lisson Green and two hides beyond the walls of the city of London which her first husband had promised to St Paul's after her life.⁹²

In 1087 Otto was the goldsmith commissioned to decorate William I's tomb in St Stephen's, Caen. Could his marriage to Eadgifu at about this time – Edward only died around 1086 – have been part of his remuneration for this commission?⁹³ According to Orderic Vitalis, Otto was commissioned by William Rufus to cover his father's tomb in gold, silver, and precious stones.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is evident that Otto had also been a favourite of Queen Matilda since his manor at Shalford, and the two town houses attached to it in Colchester, had come from her estates.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ GDB fol. 190a; LDB fols 3b, 4a; 286b and 287a; he held Sudbury and Cornard in the king's hand jointly with William *camerarius*.

⁹¹ J. H. Round, VCH, Essex, I, pp. 350-51; Marion Gibbs, *Early Charters of St. Paul's*, pp. 136, n. 1, and p. 280.

⁹² *Westminster Abbey Charters 1066-c. 1214*, ed. by E. Mason, Jennifer Bray and Desmond J. Murphy, London Record Society, 25 (London: London Record Society, 1988).

⁹³ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 158, 314-15, n. 89, saw the possibility of the involvement of either Queen Edith or Matilda in the match but Edith was long dead.

⁹⁴ Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 490; OV, IV, pp. 110-11.

⁹⁵ Mason, *Westminster Charters*, no 488.

Otto's son, who, for the sake of clarification, will be called here Otto junior, inherited Lisson, the Middlesex estate which it has been assumed his father had received with Eadgifu. The estate was subject to a dispute with St Paul's, to which Lisson had been promised but in actuality it was to remain in the fitzOtto family until 1237.⁹⁶ It has generally been assumed, following Round that Otto junior was a child of an earlier marriage but the descent of Lisson suggests otherwise. He may rather, in fact, have inherited Lisson direct from his mother. Otto junior received the office of *cuneator* and the family lands, including Lisson, around 1102 to 1107, at a time when his father had been dead at least three years. This would suggest that he only came of age around this time, in which case he would have been young enough to be Eadgifu's son. This makes it clear to us that the Ottos were also influential moneyers as well as goldsmiths. Martin Allen has suggested that Otto the elder was directly preceded by Theobald of Lisson Green, *aurifaber et insculptor cuneorum monete tocius Anglie*. I wonder whether Theobald was in fact Otto junior's master, perhaps a paternal uncle, and therefore only a temporary holder of the prestigious *cuneator* serjeanty.⁹⁷

We now return to the familiar question: why was Eadgifu, the wife of Edward, son of Swein, a tenant-in-chief? In some ways her background is similar to Wulfgifu's whose chapter immediately precedes hers. They were both recent widows of royal officials of King Edward's. Perhaps this gave their land some sort of protection but one that remained under the watchful eye of the sheriff, and as such was entered in Domesday by the sheriff; or was it the element of rebellion that placed both under the scrutiny of the sheriff? There is no doubt that in both Wulfgifu's and Eadgifu's holdings we are seeing estates in transition and the sheriff is marking their protected/vulnerable

⁹⁶ LDB fol. 106b.

⁹⁷ Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 117-18; the *cuneator* serjeanty – manager of the King's dies – was associated with Lisson Grove until 1237.

status. In Eadgifu's case we can also see the intervention of King William in a new marriage, which although it might imply he was looking out for a widow of a royal servant of King Edward, was more likely a rewarding of a goldsmith, moreover one who had been a favourite of Queen Matilda. Whatever the real reason, the fact that Eadgifu was a royal almswoman does suggest that William was more inclined to protect these widows and their holdings, than to punish them for the actions of their husbands. Giving Eadgifu the status of tenant-in-chief protected her land from predation whilst preserving its eventual availability for William I to grant as he wished. It was not in the interest of either William or Otto that it should revert to St Paul's as had been the wish of Eadgifu's first husband, Edward son of Swein.

8.5 French Women Tenants-in-Chief

At this juncture it may be advantageous to consider the French women tenants-in-chief, but first it is necessary to flag up that with these French women, and in particular Azelina, the widow of Ralph Taillebois, we are seeing the early workings-out of the process of Anglo-Norman female inheritance: her land is divided into her marriage portion, her dower, and those lands which presumably were her birthright.⁹⁸

An important factor in two of the English case studies, and in Azelina's own case, is the very recent demise of their husbands, and in the case of Azelina's daughter, her father.⁹⁹ These are nearly all estates in transition and here, too, the case of Azelina provides a useful comparison since some of her lands, those neither described as her

⁹⁸ Azelina's lands GDB fols 153a, 208c, 218a and b.

⁹⁹ Ralph's daughter's held as tenant-in-chief, see GDB fol. 142d. For the holding of his niece, see GDB fol. 138c. It seems likely that Ralph had died just before 1086. The church of St Paul in Bedford had received a deathbed donation from Leofgeat the priest of one of the three virgates that he had held at Biddenham. Perhaps it was at his own impending death that Ralph Taillebois gave in alms the other two virgates, plus another that had also been held there in 1066 by Mærwen. Domesday refers frequently to the testimony of men whom the scribe still labelled 'Ralph's men'. It would appear that Ralph left no surviving son but the women of his family appear in Domesday in possession of lands that he had provided for them, Azelina his wife, his daughter, and his niece, who was probably the daughter of a third brother, William.

marriage portion or dower, might represent holdings she held in her own right which she had inherited from her birth family.

It is likely that the landholdings of these French women fell under the supervision of the sheriff, who reported direct to the crown. In the case of the Taillebois women, the new sheriff happened to be Azelina's son-in-law, Hugh de Beauchamp, in whose interest it was to enter Azelina as a tenant-in-chief, and thereby ring-fence her maritagium in order to pre-empt any other claims; he was already disputing some of her dower holdings, incidentally suggesting that Azelina might have made her own return.

Conclusions

Eadgifu of Chaddesley, Ealdgyth of Wells, Wulfgifu wife of Finn, and Eadgifu wife of Edward are unique: the only English women tenants-in-chief in the whole of Domesday Book. Eadgifu of Chaddesley who survived with her manor intact from 1066 to 1086 may have been the widow of a cleric, and may also have been an almswoman of William I. Ealdgyth was probably the Ealdgyth listed as a vavassor in Suffolk, and her brother possibly held official positions for both Edward the Confessor and William I. Wulfgifu may have been the daughter of an Anglo-Saxon dish-thegn, and Eadgifu, the widow of Edward, was a royal almswoman. It appears that William I took his role as protector of the widows and daughters of the officials of the previous regime very seriously, even when those husbands were known rebels. Chaddesley and Pitsea appear to have been significant holdings in themselves, and although no special significance has been found for Lisson Green, it is evident that William coveted it as a reward for a favoured official. It is clear that although William may have safeguarded these women and their lands in his role as a king, and thus protector of widows, he was nevertheless acting in his own interests. How far his interests acquiesced with those of his sheriffs is difficult to gauge. Whether, in the end, these were the actions of sheriffs asserting their interests or those of the king pre-empting sheriff's incursions is debateable.

The connections between sheriffs and French women tenants-in-chief were close, usually familial. Comparison to English women tenants-in-chief has shown how many of their estates were in transition following the recent, usually very recent, deaths of fathers or husbands, and that Domesday presents a fixed position that was, in fact, far from settled. It has also demonstrated how these women may have been assigned the status of tenant-in-chief for lands which they had inherited from their birth families and held in their own right.

Chapter 9 Conclusions

When we move beyond the historical divide created by the Norman Conquest and continued by generations of historians we discover English women who lived across the Conquest. These were the women this thesis set out to study – and these were the questions it sought to answer. How did English women survive the Conquest? How did their experience of conquest compare with that of English men? And how did the ways in which women acquired property – marriage, inheritance, purchase – differ from men, and how far did they affect women’s experience of that event and its aftermath?

It has traditionally been assumed that in order to live through the Conquest English women had to adopt strategies simply expressed as religion, concubinage, intermarriage, or flight, but these options were not available or acceptable to all. There were many who stayed and survived – and many of these would have been widows. What evidence is available to study women survivors? Occasionally we glimpse part of their stories in Domesday Book, as in the case of Leofgifu, the wife of Ælfric the sheriff who fought at Hastings, or those who became widows when their husbands joined in and fought in the series of Eastern rebellions, like Finn the Dane. A prosopography database has allowed these women to be studied as a group. But in its search for history as lived, this thesis has demonstrated how the biography of these English women was both ‘possible and important’.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶⁶ Stafford, ‘Writing the Biography of Medieval Queens’, p. 106.

This thesis has not avoided the problems affecting sources and women: Domesday Book is notoriously difficult to use for the English, but more so for English women. However, I have been able to show how, by careful analysis of names, English women can be identified. An investigation of one of the most important women in Domesday Book, Eadgifu the Fair, highlighted many of these issues but demonstrated how these could be successfully overcome by close analysis of her Domesday successors, and in Eadgifu's unique case her epithets. Moreover, a comparative study of her Domesday estates, when used with a combination of other sources, highlighted the question of the mother-daughter relationship and how this affected property transfer. At the same time it confirmed her identity as Edith Swanneck, the first wife of Harold Godwineson.

Using Domesday Book with a more gender-aware and woman-aware approach has indicated how many more women are, in fact, recorded in this invaluable source than has been previously thought. Analysing Domesday Book on this basis has highlighted how these women could be grouped into English women who were holding land in 1066 and English women who held land in 1086, and a rare number who succeeded in retaining their land across the whole period. It also called attention to some categories of English women, such as urban women and tenants-in-chief, which have previously been overlooked. The study of Domesday has, however, also highlighted the problem of producing overall statistics on the basis of this source. Although this thesis proposes some overall conclusions, it has also highlighted the importance and potential of case studies as a way forward in the use of this invaluable text.

Using the particular tools of nominal linkage and antecessorship to identify individual women in Domesday Book, and then combining these findings with contextual evidence taken from charters and other sources, has resulted in a series of detailed and informative

case studies of women such as Æthelgyth, an important cross-conquest survivor who, as far as I am aware, has not been studied before. The discovery of two previously unknown male relatives for Æthelgyth, a son, Thurkil, and a possible father, Toli, has demonstrated the usefulness of case studies to build further on an identification. Case studies have also been used to identify influential English women whose significance was previously unrecognized: Gode A and Gode B, and Beorhtgifu, women who successfully found ways of building positions for themselves in the years following the Conquest. These studies, incidentally but critically, demonstrated how the application of geographical proximity and comparative value of estates are not always effective tools for the identification of individual women. If both Godes were, as seems likely, one and the same woman, she is an example of an English woman who held a variety of large and small properties, and which she held under varying tenurial configurations. Analysis of the Colchester return in the Essex Domesday folios has identified many urban English women, and has highlighted the extent to which they were underreported in Domesday, even if the reasons why are obscure. Case studies of Gode ‘of Colchester’ and other urban women have provided an opportunity to study this category of English women and to engage with the urban/rural debate as initiated by Fleming, and the implications of this debate for women.⁸⁶⁷ Furthermore case studies of the four English women who Domesday recorded as tenants-in-chief have asked whether the significance of these women lay in themselves or in their holdings.

The use of case studies has allowed for greater contextualisation, and whilst they have not identified hard and fast strategies, they have highlighted common mechanisms by which English women survived after 1066. Domesday was frequently interested in those estates which women held or had held in their own right. We forget that Domesday

⁸⁶⁷ Fleming, ‘Rural Elites and Urban Communities’.

recorded a snapshot in time, a fixed point, when in fact many of these estates, including those of French women, were in transition after the very recent deaths of fathers or husbands. Connections with royalty proved helpful for the daughters and widows of servants and officials of Edward the Confessor, and for the almswomen and vavassors of William I. It was also advantageous to belong to a regional, perhaps well-placed urban family, which could benefit from connections to be made with Norman officials, including sheriffs. This thesis engaged with the questions that Stafford raised with regard to English women and Norman sheriffs.⁸⁶⁸ The sheriff's influence could be two-edged, and many women, especially those in towns, had reason to fear his predatory eye on their property. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to disentangle the interests of the king from those of the sheriff in ways which would enable us to ask the question *cui bono* in a more refined way.

Many of the case studies, and particularly those built upon information from Little Domesday Book, have shown the importance of the third time point in relation to the timing of the dispossession of English women; the years around the early 1070s look especially significant. Two reasons have been proposed – that William's resolve to protect the widows of the previous regime was weakening, and that some women were dispossessed as a consequence of their own or their family's acts of rebellion, questions which would benefit from further research.

Particularly surprising, but rewarding, has been the implication which results from this thesis, that by using a combination of Domesday Book and other sources, identities can be suggested and case studies produced for many, if not most, of the English woman in Domesday – these women were important and influential enough to be reported and there is

⁸⁶⁸ Stafford, 'Women In Domesday'.

no need for them to remain simply names. A larger prosopographical study of all these women would allow for further contextualisation of the data, for comparisons across larger areas, and for more definite conclusions to be drawn. The historiographical 'Divide' has proved so entrenched that until now English women who lived through this most pivotal period in our history have been allowed to remain hidden, even and although such a great resource as Domesday Book is available to reveal both them and their stories.

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Appendices

Appendix A Potential Additions

These are a few examples of names where I was unable to make a decision on their gender.

Aghete (GDB fol. 361a)

Jen., p. 123, *Haket* (m)

cf. Dutch/German *Aghete* (f)

Agneli (LDB fol. 125b)

Cf. ThLV *Aganild*, wife of *Ægelmer* or CG. *Aganhild* (f)

Godeleof (GDB Cambs. Appx. N; *IE* 97-98; *ICC* 9)

It seems likely that the juror Godlive of Longstanton would have been male – all other known jurors are male. It may be that he was Godeleof the moneyer of Thetford and Stamford, but it is just possible that this juror and then maybe others were female; cf. OE Godleof (f) and OE God-liþe or God-leofu (Okasha, pp. 59-60) and ThLV Godlif (p. 165); Fei., p. 279, refers to Guthlif sochemannus (*ICC* 92b) but does not comment on any feminine version of the name.

Ingara (GDB fol. 196a)

It has been assumed Ingvar (m) but it could be a mistranscription of the feminine name Ingvor; DB latinizes it as Ingara (*Ingeuuar*) here, and Inguuara in Essex. Fei., p. 298, considered these endings as an erroneous association with OE – waru (f), or ON Ingvor (f) but Björkman thought it was feminine (Fei p. 298)

cf. ThLV (p. 199) ON *Isvor*, *Iswar* (f), wife of Gunni the priest, and *Cart*.

Rames. III, 286, *Isware vidua*

Leofsuna/e (LDB fol.337a, 340b) (*Leffsuna*, *Leffsune*, *Leffsunus*)

Cf. Leofsunu (m) where –sunu (son) and Leofsund (f) where –sund (safe)

Notes

These are only a small selection of names which have proved difficult to gender; others have been highlighted, for an example, in the Colchester return. There are many OE dithematic names which can be male or female for example Leofcild, Goddæg, Leofdæg. Unless the Domesday Book text specifically comments on gender it has been traditional to assume all instances of these names as male. Occasionally LDB reveals that a name normally considered masculine belonged to a woman.

The problem of gender is not confined to dithematic names: the masculine/feminine endings of OE monothematic names sounded the same and only varied in their written endings –*a*/–*e*. A name such as *Pote* (LDB fol. 105b) has an OE feminine ending but has been assumed by Phillimore to be the male equivalent *Pota*. Without clarification in the text it is impossible to know the correct gender of many short names.

Furthermore, it is difficult to distinguish many monothematic names, from hypochoristic versions of longer names, for example *Bota/e* from *Boti* the short form of *Bothild*. Another example which occurs frequently in the East Anglian counties in LDB is *Tovi* which is usually translated as male but which, as in Norfolk, represents a shortened form of *Tovild* (*Tofa*-hild); there is a similar monothematic name *Tofa/e* or *Tova/e*. Through the course of this research it has become obvious that the actual gender of many hypochoristic forms ending in –*i* represent shortened feminine names which otherwise end in –*hild*. One can no longer assume that obscure, monothematic, or hypochoristic name forms automatically have to be masculine.

Appendix B Appellations of Eadgifu the Fair

Suffolk	TRW	Hundred	Vill	Appellation
397a	Richard, son of Count Gilbert	Risbridge	Thurlow	no app
284b	King William	Thedwestry	Tostock	<i>divitis</i>
284b	King William	Thingoe	Saxham	<i>divitis</i>
285a	King William	Stow	Finborough	no app
285a	King William	Bosmere	Blakenham	<i>faire</i>
285a	King William	Bosmere	Langhedana	*
285a	King William	Bosmere	Offton	*
285a	King William	Bosmere	Badley	*
285a	King William	Bosmere	Darmsden	*
285a	King William	Bosmere	Sharpstone	*
285a	King William	Bosmere	Ashbocking	<i>faire</i> used to refer to all *
286a	King William	Blackbourn	Norton	<i>Edied quæda libera femina</i>
397a	King William	Blackbourn	Hunston	<i>Ediet</i>
286a	King William	Risbridge	Thurlow	<i>eadē</i>
295a	Count Alan	Samford	Wenham	<i>faire</i>
295a	Count Alan	Samford	Holbrook	no app
295a	Count Alan	Samford	Beria	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Bentley	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Dodnash	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Brantham	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Woolverstone	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Bentley	<i>idem</i>
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Pannington	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Wherstead	no app
295b	Count Alan	Samford	Kalweton	<i>eode</i>
296a	Count Alan	Samford	Boynton	no app
296a	Count Alan	Samford	Wenham	no app
410a	Hugh de Montfort	Thedwestry	Beyton	<i>divitis</i>
430b	Countess of Aumale	Samford	Harkstead	<i>faira</i>
431a	Countess of Aumale	Samford	Gusford	no app

Camsb.	TRW	Hundred	Vill	Appellation	ICC/IE
189b	King William	Staploe	Exning	<i>pulchra</i> inserted as superscript	
193d	Count Alan	Flendish	Fulbourn	<i>pulchræ</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
193d	Count Alan	Flendish	Cherry Hinton	<i>pulchra</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
193d	Count Alan	Flendish	Teversham	no app	
193d	Count Alan	Flendish	Teversham	no app	
193d	Count Alan	Chilford	Horseheath	no app	
193d	Count Alan	Chilford	Horseheath	no app	
193d	Count Alan	Chilford	West Wickham	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
193d	Count Alan	Chilford	Barham	no app	
193d	Count Alan	Chilford	Barham	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Barham	no app	
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Linton	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Little Linton	<i>pulchra</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Little Abington	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Babraham	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Babraham	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Chilford	Pampisford	no app	
194a	Count Alan	Whittlesford	Whittlesford	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194a	Count Alan	Whittlesford	Duxford	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194b	Count Alan	Thriplow	Fowlmere	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194b	Count Alan	Thriplow	Harston	no app	
194b	Count Alan	Thriplow	Little Shelford	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194b	Count Alan	Armingford	East Hatley	no app	
194b	Count Alan	Armingford	Croydon	no app	
194b	Count Alan	Armingford	Croydon	no app	
194b	Count Alan	Armingford	Wendy	no app	
194b	Count Alan	Armingford	Bassingbourn	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194c	Count Alan	Armingford	Whaddon	no app	
194c	Count Alan	Armingford	Whaddon	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194c	Count Alan	Armingford	Meldreth	no app	
194c	Count Alan	Armingford	Melbourn	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194c	Count Alan	Wetherley	Grantchester	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194c	Count Alan	Wetherley	2 mills	no app	<i>pulchra</i> , <i>Count Alan's predecessor</i>
194c	Count Alan	Wetherley	Haslingfield	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194c	Count Alan	Wetherley	Haslingfield	<i>pulchra</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
194c	Count Alan	Wetherley	Haslingfield	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194b	Count Alan	Wetherley	Orwell	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194d	Count Alan	Wetherley	Ratford	no app	
194d	Count Alan	Wetherley	Witewell	no app	
194d	Count Alan	Wetherley	Wimpole	<i>pulchra</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
194d	Count Alan	Wetherley	Arrington	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194d	Count Alan	Longstow	Eversden	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
194d	Count Alan	Longstow	Toft	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
195a	Count Alan	Longstow	Bourn	no app	
195a	Count Alan	Papworth	Papworth Everard	no app	
195a	Count Alan	Papworth	Boxworth	no app	
195a	Count Alan	Papworth	Swavesey	no app	
195a	Count Alan	Papworth	Fen Drayton	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
195b	Count Alan	Papworth	Willingham	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
195b	Count Alan	Northstow	Longstanton	no app	
195b	Count Alan	Northstow	Landbeach	no app	
195b	Count Alan	Chesterton	Dry Drayton	no app	
195b	Count Alan	Cheveley	Woodditon	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
195b	Count Alan	Cheveley	Cheveley	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
195b	Count Alan	Staine	Swaffham Bulbeck	no app	
195b	Count Alan	Staine	Swaffham	no app	
195b	Count Alan	Staine	Swaffham (Wilbraham)	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staine	Swaffham (Quy and Stow)	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staploe	Badlingham	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staploe	Exning	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staploe	Burwell	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staploe	Burwell	no app	
195c	Count Alan	Staploe	Fordham	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Staploe	Soham	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Staploe	Wickham	<i>pulchra</i>	<i>where the count holds himself</i>
195d	Count Alan	Radfield	Stretchworth	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Radfield	Westley Waterless	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Radfield	Burrough Green	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Radfield	Weston Colville	no app	
195d	Count Alan	Radfield	Balsham	no app	
196d	Richard son of Count Gilbert	Armingford	Whaddon	<i>pulchra</i>	
198a	Hardwin of Scales	Whittlesford	Duxford	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
198d	Hardwin of Scales	Longstow	Kingston	<i>pulchræ</i>	
198d	Hardwin of Scales	Longstow	Caldecot	no app	
199a	Hardwin of Scales	Chesterton	Dry Drayton	no app	
199d	Aubrey de Vere	Chilford	Abington	<i>pulchra</i>	
200a	Guy de Raimbeaucourt	Wetherley	Barton	<i>pulchra</i>	
200a	Guy de Raimbeaucourt	Longstow	Eversden	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
200c	Picot	Armingford	Guildden Morden	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
201b	Picot	Northstow	Rampton	no app	<i>pulchra</i>
201b	Picot	Northstow	Lolworth	no app	
201c	Picot	Chesterton	Childerley	<i>pulchræ</i>	
201d	John son of Waleran	Flendish	Fulbourn	no app	