

THE MISFORTUNES OF THE MANDEVILLES*

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DURING THE REIGNS of the Norman kings of England (1066–1154) the feudal aristocracy held its lands far less securely than in subsequent generations. Never again would royal authority over baronial inheritances be quite so encompassing as in the days of the Conqueror and his sons. Never again would the succession of estates be so fluid or the wealth and power of great landed families so ephemeral. The Norman kings usually allowed family estates to pass from father to eldest son, but only on the payment of an arbitrary relief. They were far less apt to forgive rebellious magnates than their successors were, and baronial revolt—or sometimes merely the intention to revolt—might result in the forfeiture of family holdings and perhaps exile or captivity as well. The Norman age is marked by the fall of great families—the earls of Norwich and Hereford, the Montgomeries, Mortains, Lacys, Baynards, Mowbrays, Malets, Grandmesnils, Abitots, and more. At a less spectacular level, the records of Henry I's reign disclose a policy of tight royal control over baronial marriage alliances and ambiguous inheritances. If a magnate died without a surviving son, the inheritance often depended on the royal will and fell to whoever among the collateral heirs enjoyed the king's favour and was willing to pay the king's price. Many important families managed to keep their lands throughout the period and even extend them—the Warennes, Clares, Beaumonts, Bigods, Ferrers, Giffards, and others—but they succeeded only by remaining faithful to the king or, if unfaithful, winning his forgiveness. Consequently, the Norman age, and particularly the reign of Henry I, was a time when new men often rose into the landed aristocracy through royal service and when the survival and enrichment of the older Conquest families depended heavily on their service to the monarch. In the skilful hands of Henry I, this policy produced thirty-three years of peace in England, and an aristocracy of both old and new families equally devoted to the royal interest—the one sure avenue to their own prosperity. It also produced grumbling exiles and unsuccessful claimants whose grievances fuelled the civil strife that followed Henry's death in 1135.

The insecurity of baronial tenure under Henry I is vividly exemplified in the history of the Mandevilles of Essex, one of the wealthiest and most influential families of post-Conquest England. Geoffrey I de Mandeville, the founder of the family's English fortunes, received from William the Conqueror an

*I am grateful to the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the Social Science Research Council, the Fulbright Commission, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, Oxford, for their help in supporting the research for this paper.

immense fief centering on Essex and including lands in ten other shires, valued collectively at about £782 per year in 1086.¹ He served at one time or another as sheriff of London and Middlesex, and (probably) Essex, and was perhaps also sheriff of Hertfordshire and custodian of the Tower of London.² His grandson, Geoffrey II, first earl of Essex, was the subject of a major book by John Horace Round, who portrayed him as 'the most perfect and typical presentment of the feudal and anarchic spirit that stamps the reign of Stephen'.³ Geoffrey II's sons, Geoffrey III and William II, earls of Essex in succession, were high in the favour of Henry II. Earl William, indeed, was one of Henry II's closest and most powerful associates and was appointed co-justiciar of England by Richard I.⁴

The most obscure of the early Mandeville lords is William I, son and heir of Geoffrey I and father of Round's 'unscrupulous magnate'. William de Mandeville's career, as related by Round and the editors of the *Complete Peerage*, is uneventful.⁵ He is said to have succeeded to the Mandeville lands on Geoffrey I's death c. 1100 and to have passed them to his son Geoffrey II on his own death c. 1129. He appears only once in a chronicle of the period, but in a position of considerable historical interest: Orderic Vitalis identifies him as keeper of the Tower of London in 1100-1 and guardian of the Tower's first known political prisoner, Ranulf Flambard bishop of Durham.⁶ In February 1101 Flambard escaped from the Tower and fled to Normandy, serving there as the chief organizer of Robert Curthose's invasion of 1101, which nearly cost Henry I his newly won crown.⁷

We know that in the aftermath of this invasion Henry I punished several barons who had chosen the wrong side, but the chroniclers tell us nothing of William de Mandeville's fate. His career can be reconstructed, however, from an analysis of the charter evidence, with results that differ markedly from the conclusions of Round. William's troubles after Flambard's escape cast light on Henry I's baronial policy, and place the behavior of Round's great anti-hero, Geoffrey II, in a new perspective.

Henry I was by no means prepared to forgive William de Mandeville his behavior in 1101. In a notification to the chief men of Essex and Hertfordshire (1103-5, probably 1103), the king granted to Eudo *Dapifer*, a trusted official and royal favourite, the three Mandeville manors of Sawbridgeworth [co. Herts.] and Great Waltham and Saffron Walden [co. Essex] until such time as William de Mandeville paid Eudo £2,210 3s. which William had owed

¹ Geoffrey held of the king in Essex, Surrey, Berks., Middx., Oxon., Cambs., Northants., Warwicks., Suff. and Bucks., and was a sub-tenant in several shires as well.

² *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ed. H. W. C. Davis *et al.* (Oxford, 1913-69), I, nos. 15, 39, 93, 111, 181*, 265; III, nos. 275-6. It cannot be confirmed from extant charters of William I or William II that Geoffrey I was sheriff of Herts.; his shrievalty of Essex is mentioned only in a forged charter of William I (*Reg. I*, no. 181*); cf. *Reg. I*, no. 93 (A.D. 1072-6) addressed to Ralph Baynard sheriff of Essex, Geoffrey de Mandeville sheriff of Middlesex, and Peter de Valognes sheriff of Herts.

³ Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville* (London, 1892), p. v.

⁴ *Complete Peerage* (rev. ed.), V, 116-20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14; Round, *G. de M.*, pp. 37-40.

⁶ Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. A. le Prévost (Paris, 1838-55), IV, 108.

⁷ See my article, 'The Anglo-Norman Civil War: 1101', *E.H.R.*, forthcoming.

as a debt to the king.⁸ Henry I had evidently seized the three manors as a pledge for William de Mandeville's debt and was now making a gift of the lien to Eudo. The most striking thing about this arrangement is that the value of the three manors, and the debt, are both extraordinarily high. At the time of the Domesday survey Sawbridgeworth and Saffron Walden were demesne manors of Geoffrey I de Mandeville, each valued at £50 per year, and at Great Waltham Geoffrey had demesne lands worth £60 per year. Altogether, these three manors, worth £160 per year in 1086, constituted almost one-third of the total Mandeville demesne in England.⁹ Moreover, they lay at the strategic center of Mandeville power and influence—in central and northern Essex and on the Hertfordshire–Essex border. Their loss effectively removed the Mandevilles from the upper stratum of the English baronage.

As for the debt of £2,210. 3s., the editors of the *Regesta* II (who render it incorrectly as £1,210. 3s.) suggest that it was the relief on the lands of William's father, who had died c. 1100.¹⁰ But no known relief of Henry I remotely approached £2,200,¹¹ and one must therefore suppose that other debts were involved as well—perhaps a substantial fine for William's irresponsibility (or worse) in permitting Flambard's escape.¹² The magnitude of the debt was matched by the severity of its collection. The Pipe Roll of 1130 shows us several instances of Henry I's permitting substantial obligations to go uncollected for years without prejudices to the debtor's lands.¹³ But in William de Mandeville's case, any hope of paying the debt must have been seriously reduced by the loss of substantial sources of his income.¹⁴

⁸ *Cartularium Monasterii S. Johannis Baptiste de Colecestria*, ed. S. A. Moore (Roxburghe Club, London, 1897), I. 22; *Reg.* II, no. 661: *Donec Willelmus de Magnailla ei insimul det licencia mea et imperio ipsi Eudoni dico MM. et CC. libras et x libras et iii solidos quas michi debet de debito suo. Quia ego dedi eas omnes predicto Eudoni.* Cf. a similar royal lien in *Early Yorkshire Charters*, II, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1915), pp. 326–9.

⁹ *Domesday Book*, I, 139b; II, 58a, 62a. Of the total 1086 Mandeville valuation of c. £782, c. £518 represented demesne lands, according to my calculations. By 1139, and perhaps much earlier, Saffron Walden was the site of an important Mandeville castle (of the motte-and-bailey type): D. F. Renn, *Norman Castles in Britain* (London, 1968), p. 337.

¹⁰ *Reg.* II, no. 661. Geoffrey I was evidently dead in 1100 when his son was constable of the Tower of London. Geoffrey attests or is addressed in several charters of William II (*Reg.* I, nos. 306, 402, 435, 454–5), all of which might be as early as 1087 but three of which might be as late as 1100. Since William de Mandeville is neither a witness nor a recipient of any known charter of William II, it seems probable that Geoffrey I died late in the reign. Some scholars have been misled by attestations of Henry I's charters by 'Geoffrey de Mandeville' [of Marshwood, Devon], who was not related to the Mandevilles of Essex.

¹¹ The relief on the earldom of Chester, for example, seems to have been £1,000: *Pipe Roll 31 Henry I*, ed. Joseph Hunter (London, 1833), p. 110.

¹² I cannot entertain the view that Henry I himself connived in the escape in order to place Flambard in Curthose's court as a 'secret agent' (see Frank Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England*, London, 1955, p. 176). The invasion of 1101, in which Flambard played the central role, was far too serious a matter to be interpreted as a stage piece to further some complex design of Henry I.

¹³ The Chester relief of 1130, for example, appears to have been assessed against Earl Ranulf I c. 1121 and to have remained unpaid at his death in or before 1129: *P.R.* 31 *Henry I*, p. 110.

¹⁴ William de Mandeville's standing with the king is suggested by the fact that he attests only one known royal charter, *Reg.* II, no. 682. He is an addressee in a royal writ of 1100–6 confirming a Mandeville benefaction: *ibid.*, no. 769.

The records of the next three decades enable us to trace the history of the confiscated manors through the remainder of the reign. In *c.* 1105 Henry I ordered the sheriff of Essex and Herts. to re seize Eudo *Dapifer* of the lands and sokes of Great Waltham, Sawbridgeworth, and Saffron Walden 'which William de Mandeville gave or exchanged after his father's death, no matter to whom he gave or exchanged them. . . . And it displeases me that you have not done as I ordered. And see that I hear no further complaint.'¹⁵ The disputes underlying this writ are hidden from us, but it would appear that William may have been trying to sell off his lands in order to pay his debt, and that Eudo *Dapifer's* occupancy of the manors was continuing to receive royal protection.

At some date between 1105 and 1120 at least one of the manors, and probably all of them, passed into the hands of a new holder, Othuer, illegitimate son of Earl Hugh of Chester. A royal writ of 1120-33 records a gift to Westminster Abbey of the church of Sawbridgeworth, in 'the honor that belonged to Othuer fitz Earl'.¹⁶ This person, whose name occurs variously as *Otuer*, *Otuel*, *Otwer*, *Othuer*, etc., was a royal favourite who served as tutor and companion of Henry I's son and heir, William Aetheling, and drowned with him while crossing from Normandy in the White Ship on 25 November 1120.¹⁷ Eudo *Dapifer* had died in Normandy shortly before (February 1120),¹⁸ and Othuer may possibly have obtained the manors on Eudo's death. But if so, he never lived to see them. And the fact that Sawbridgeworth was later identified with 'the honor that belonged to Othuer' suggests something more than an absentee tenure of nine months. It suggests, rather, that Othuer had received the manors prior to Eudo's death and had held them for some appreciable time. But whatever the case, the manors apparently passed to the king on Othuer's death; we find them in royal hands in 1130.¹⁹

In the meantime, what had become of William de Mandeville? After his single attestation of a royal charter on 13 February 1105, he vanishes from our records. Round, I. J. Sanders, and the editors of the *Complete Peerage*, believe that he died *c.* 1129 on the grounds that his son Geoffrey II had, by

¹⁵ *Cart. Colecestria*, I, 24-5; *Reg.* II, no. 688. Eudo *Dapifer* granted a portion of the tithes of his demesne at Sawbridgeworth to Colchester Abbey: *Cart. Colecestria*, I, 3, 6, 15, 68, 85, 146 *et passim*.

¹⁶ J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster* (Cambridge, 1911), p. 156; *Reg.* II, no. 1884 [1120-33]. Saffron Walden and Great Waltham are probably represented in *P.R. 31 Henry I*, pp. 56, 60, where royal lands in Essex, described as having been 'lands of Otuer', are pardoned 16s. of murder fines and 72s. of danegeld. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 53, where Othuer's former Essex lands are farmed by a royal official for £65. 12d. Since the official would normally expect to realize a profit on the transaction, the farm figure represents only a portion of the actual value.

¹⁷ Orderic, IV, 418. Othuer seems to have crossed to Normandy with William Aetheling in May, 1119: *ibid.*, IV, 347; *Reg.* II, nos. 1204, 1223, 1230-1.

¹⁸ *Annales Colecestrensis*, in *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, ed. F. Liebermann (Strassburg, 1879), p. 162; *Historia Fundationis* of St. John's Abbey, Colchester: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, new edition, ed. John Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinell (London, 1846), IV, 608-9. This not altogether trustworthy source adds that during the final fifteen years of his life Eudo was blind, apparently residing chiefly at his castle of Préaux in Normandy. He rarely attests royal charters after *c.* 1110. Cf. J. H. Round, 'The Early Charters of St. John's Abbey, Colchester', *E.H.R.*, XVI (1901), 728.

¹⁹ *P.R. 31 Henry I*, p. 62, where Sawbridgeworth is exempted from 46s. of danegeld as a royal demesne manor. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 53, 56, 60, and above, n. 16.

Michaelmas 1130, apparently paid only two-thirteenths of the relief: 'We may infer,' Round concludes, 'that his father was but lately dead.'²⁰ But a charter of Henry I, written at the Tower of London sometime before May 1116, discloses that William de Mandeville was dead at the time of its issuance.²¹ The charter confirms lands and privileges of the Mandeville priory of Hurley and is a product of Henry I's single recorded visit to the great fortress that William de Mandeville had formerly guarded. William does not attest, nor is his name mentioned. The prior and monks are confirmed in the lands which they have of the fee of Geoffrey [I] de Mandeville, 'and especially in the manors of the honor of Geoffrey de Mandeville that are in the king's hands'. This last phrase might seem to be a reference to the three alienated manors, but since they were then in Eudo's or Othuer's hands, not the king's, it must pertain instead to lands of the late William de Mandeville now held by the king as guardian of the young Geoffrey II.²²

William de Mandeville's early death requires a re-examination of the Pipe Roll evidence on which Round based his erroneous conclusion. Round assumed that Geoffrey II was charged a relief of £866. 13s. 4d. But in fact we do not know how large the relief originally was; we only know that it stood at £866. 13s. 4d. (1300 marks) in 1129 and that Geoffrey paid £133. 6s. 8d. (200 marks) in 1130, thereby reducing the obligation to £733. 6s. 8d. (1100 marks).²³ Geoffrey's father, as we now know, had died many years before, and even though the relief may not have been charged until Geoffrey came of age, it probably had been carried on the royal rolls for several years at least. The leisurely rate at which Geoffrey was paying it off should serve as a warning against placing too much reliance on Pipe Roll relief data as evidence for the frequently encountered phrase in Anglo-Norman genealogies, 'recently dead in 1130'. A perusal of Sanders' *Baronies* will disclose a suspiciously high number of barons who allegedly died c. 1129, and the death dates of several of them should probably be revised backwards. Historians have tended to underestimate the extent to which the Pipe Roll of 1130 can include, without warning, very old debts and very old information. The total amount of money owing to the king in 1130, for example, is a nearly

²⁰ Round, *G. de M.*, p. 40; *Complete Peerage*, V, 113; I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies* (Oxford, 1960), p. 71.

²¹ Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin*, p. 150; *Reg. II*, no. 1176. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 1174, a forgery, also from the Tower of London, magnifying the concessions of no. 1176; on the question of its authenticity see Pierre Chaplais, 'The Seals and Original Charters of Henry I', *E.H.R.*, LXXV (1960), 275; *idem*, 'The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase Abbots of Westminster', in *A Medieval Miscellany for Doris Mary Stenton* (Pipe Roll Soc., New Ser., XXXVI, 1962), pp. 97-98; and Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 153-4.

²² This is the interpretation of William Farrer: *An Outline Itinerary of King Henry I* (Oxford, 1920), p. 66, n. 6. More recently, Chaplais ('Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase,' p. 98 and n. 1) has impugned the authenticity of this writ (*Reg. II*, no. 1176) on the grounds that it appears to betray the handwriting of a later twelfth-century Hurley scribe. But assuming this to be the case, the writ's unexceptionable form, circumstances and contents (a general confirmation of unspecified Mandeville benefactions), and its irrelevance to the priory's later disputes over lands and customs, suggest the existence of an authentic prototype: see Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 150-1, 153-4. Quite apart from this writ, moreover, there remains independent evidence that William de Mandeville's custody of the Tower had ceased by 1116 at the very latest (*Reg. II*, no. 1175; III, no. 506; below, n. 26), and that he cannot have been alive after 1120 (his widow was widowed for a second time in that year: below, notes 26, 27).

²³ *P.R. 31 Henry I*, p. 55.

meaningless figure because it consists of debts accumulated and repeated year upon year.²⁴

These debts must be understood not only as sources of royal income but also as instruments of royal control. Henry I might reward a baron for his loyalty and good behavior by allowing his debt to run on indefinitely, accepting nominal payments or none at all. Or, as appears repeatedly in the Pipe Roll, the king might simply pardon the debt in whole or in part. But if the baron should act against the king's interest and lose the royal favour, his debt could provide colourable grounds for legal action—as the case of William de Mandeville so vividly illustrates. Two generations later Henry II would employ this same weapon against Becket.

In all his reign Henry I issued only two known charters from the Tower of London, one of which, as we have seen, concerns the Mandeville foundation at Hurley. Each charter has the same two witnesses: Ranulf the Chancellor and Othuer fitz Earl.²⁵ Once again Earl Hugh's illegitimate son turns up in connection with the Mandevilles. Hitherto Othuer has not been thought to have had a wife, or offspring, or any relationship to the Mandeville family, but it can be shown that he had all three. Not only did he come into possession of the alienated Mandeville manors; he also succeeded William de Mandeville as constable of the Tower of London. The extreme rarity of the name Othuer, and his appearance with Henry I in the Tower of London, removes any doubt that he is the Othwer mentioned in a record of Stephen's reign as keeper of the Tower under Henry I and immediate predecessor in that office of a certain Aschuill, who guards the Tower in 1136–7.²⁶ Othuer's connection with the Mandeville family can be deduced, indirectly but conclusively, from a passage in Empress Maud's second charter to Geoffrey II de Mandeville where a certain William fitz Otuel is described as Earl Geoffrey's brother.²⁷ Round himself was struck by the passage and drew the only possible conclusion: that William fitz Otuel 'was clearly a "uterine" brother of Earl Geoffrey . . . , so that his father must have married William de Mandeville's

²⁴ Total debts in 1130 are c. £66,600, but the total collected is only c. £24,500. Pipe Roll references to Robert Mauduit, chamberlain of the treasury, have led some scholars to date his death c. 1129; he actually died in 1120: *Reg. II*, p. 340; Simeon of Durham, *Opera Omnia*, ed. T. Arnold (Rolls Series, 1882–5), II, 259.

²⁵ *Reg. II*, nos. 1175, 1176 (A.D. 1107–16, Apr.): *T'. Rann' cancell' per Otuelum fil' comitis apud Turrim London*: Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 150, 153 and above, n. 23. Ranulf the Chancellor attests c. 168 charters of Henry I; Othuer attests 13. On the tendency toward particular witnesses occurring in charters with which they have a local or family connection see *Reg. II*, p. xxviii. On the meaning of *Per . . . , ibid.*, p. xxvii and n. 34.

²⁶ *Reg. III*, no. 506: record of a plea *coram rege* between the prior of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and Aschuill, castellan of the Tower of London: *Othwer(us) quondam regie turris custos. . . . Aschuill(us) etiam successor Oth(wer)i in turris custodia . . . ad obitum regis Henrici*. The plea is discussed in H. A. Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen* (London, 1970), pp. 265–6. Othuer fitz Earl's connection with London is further suggested by his appearance as first witness to an agreement (c. 1111–19) between the canons of St. Paul's, London, and William de Marcy, made in the Chapter House of St. Paul's in the presence of Bishop Richard de Belmeis: *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Ninth Report*, I (1883), 31b, 66a, misdated c. 1127 by the editors. In 1130 the cost of repairing 'houses that had belonged to Othuer' was entered among the deductions from the farm of London: *P.R. 31 Henry I*, p. 144.

²⁷ *Reg. III*, no. 275 [25–31 July, 1141, at Oxford]: *dedi Willelmo filio Otvel(li) fratri ejusdem Comitiss Gaufredi. . .*

widow—a fact unknown to genealogists'.²⁸ We can now take the further step of identifying William fitz Otuel's father as Othuer fitz Earl, successor to the alienated Mandeville manors and to the Mandeville wardship of the Tower.

While William de Mandeville was suffering the royal displeasure, Othuer was basking in the royal favor. As the prince's tutor he was well known at court, attesting thirteen charters between 1107 and 1120. Besides the great Mandeville manor of Sawbridgeworth, he held Essex lands which the king farmed in 1130 for £65. 1s. (presumably Great Waltham and Saffron Walden), and lands elsewhere worth £210 at farm.²⁹ And his possession of Sawbridgeworth suggests that he may have been the intended heir to the entire honor of Eudo *Dapifer* which, including lands that Eudo acquired under William II and Henry I, commanded a cumulative yearly income of at least c. £500 in England alone. Othuer was apparently on his way to becoming one of the great magnates of the realm when his life was cut short by the disaster of the White Ship.

The shipwreck that destroyed Othuer's promising career may well have been the salvation of the Mandevilles. Once his favoured stepfather was removed, the young Geoffrey II might hope to recover the three lost manors, custody of the Tower, and perhaps some of the lucrative offices that his grandfather had enjoyed under the Conqueror. He might also hope to inherit Eudo *Dapifer's* vast honor. For the records make it clear that Eudo *Dapifer* was a Mandeville kinsman. The relationship is proven by the wording of Empress Maud's second charter to Earl Geoffrey (1141) in which Geoffrey succeeds to Eudo's Norman estates and his stewardship *ut rectum*—by hereditary right.³⁰ And the *Genealogia Fundatoris* of Tintern Abbey supplies the final piece in the puzzle: Margaret, daughter of Eudo *Dapifer* and Rohese of Clare, married William de Mandeville and was the mother of Geoffrey, earl of Essex and *dapifer* of Normandy *jure matris*.³¹

Whether William married Margaret before or after he lost the three manors to Eudo we cannot tell. In either case this remarkable marriage, uniting the victim of a substantial confiscation with the heiress of its chief beneficiary, takes on the character of a deft royal manoeuvre to punish a baron while suppressing his motives for rebellion—depriving him of land but not of hope. Henry I, in short, had arranged it that a vested interest in William de Mande-

²⁸ Round, *G. de M.*, p. 169 and n. 1; cf. *ibid.*, p. 229, where a charter of Geoffrey III de Mandeville [1157–8] is attested by William fitz Otuel *patruus meus*; and *Monasticon*, V, 579 n., 580: William II de Mandeville, earl of Essex (1166–89), confirms the grant of William fitz Otuel, *avuncull sui*, to the Cistercian nunnery of Greenfield of 33 acres at Thoresby and Aby [Lincs.], lands that had belonged to Earl Hugh of Chester in 1086 (*Domesday Book*, I, 349a).

²⁹ *P.R. 31 Henry I*, pp. 53, 133–4. See above, n. 16.

³⁰ *Reg. III*, no. 275. Othuer fitz Earl's involvement in Eudo's inheritance is perhaps suggested by the fact that Othuer attests royal charters of 1119 and 1120 confirming Eudo's benefactions to Colchester Abbey, and also attests a royal charter of 1120, shortly after Eudo's death, confirming the lands of one of Eudo's tenants: *Cart. Colecestria*, I, 4–10, 21, 23–4; *Reg. II*, nos. 1204, 1230–1.

³¹ *Monasticon*, V, 269. The passage was known to Round but rejected by him (and by the editors of the *Complete Peerage*, V, 114) on the grounds that Eudo's lands did not pass directly to Geoffrey de Mandeville but were in Henry I's hands in 1130. This can hardly stand as an objection when one recalls that three former Mandeville manors were also in royal hands, and that Geoffrey's rights were in conflict with those of William fitz Othuer.

ville's disseisin should be enjoyed by William's own father-in-law—the very man from whom the Mandevilles would have aspired one day to receive not only the three manors but an immense additional inheritance as well. These hopes were dampened when, on William's death, Margaret married Othuer fitz Earl. Othuer may well have received the three manors as a marriage portion, and in succeeding to William's wife he succeeded likewise to William's constablership of the Tower. Had he lived on, he might logically have been declared the heir to Eudo's great honor. But his sudden death in 1120 reopened the inheritance question once again.

By 1130 the situation was this: the honor of Eudo *Dapifer* and the three lost manors were in the king's possession.³² The Tower of London was held for the king by Othuer's successor, Aschuill.³³ Geoffrey II de Mandeville had now come into his truncated inheritance and had received danegeld exemptions in 1129 and 1130 for lands in six shires, but he was indebted to the king for a balance of 1100 marks on his relief.³⁴ His half-brother, William fitz Othuer, makes no appearance in the Pipe Roll or in other records of the reign. He was doubtless still a minor, and his inheritance probably remained uncertain—yet promising. Some or all of Eudo's and Othuer's lands and offices might one day pass to him, or conceivably to Geoffrey II, or perhaps to neither.³⁵ In a complex inheritance of this sort everything depended on the

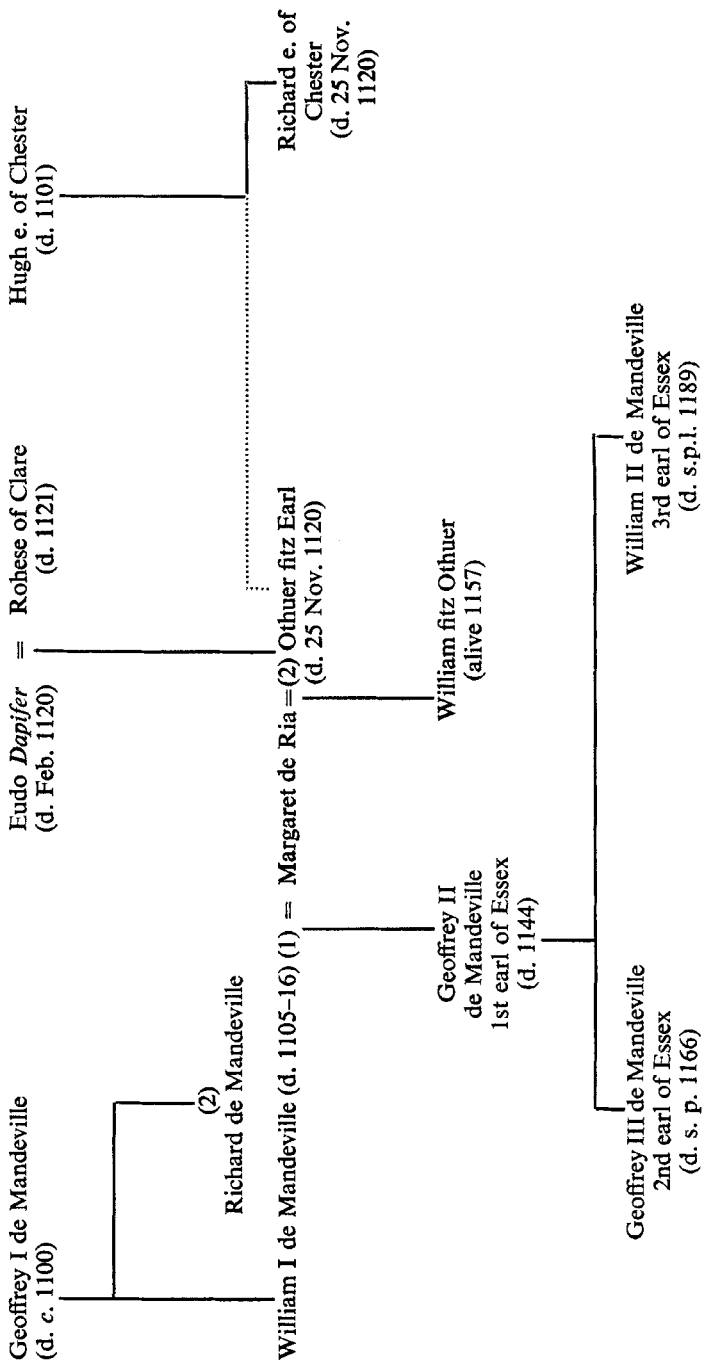
³² Eudo's stewardship may have passed to his nephew, the royal favourite Robert de la Haye (*Gallia Christiana*, XI, 'Instrumenta', col. 233: *Robertus de Haia . . . nepos Hudonis dapiferi Guillelmi . . .*) who attests as *dapifer* in Normandy after 1120: *Reg.* II, nos. 1422, 1688, 1693, 1698; and Archives de Calvados, MS. H. 1833 (1) and H. 1833 (2). Cf. *Red Book of the Exchequer*, I, 355; in 1166 Ranulf de la Haye held 5/6 of a fee of the honor of Eudo *Dapifer*.

³³ *Reg.* III, no. 506. Aschuill, like Othuer, is an extremely uncommon name. I suggest that the person in question may be Hasculf de Tany who attests the royal charter to London c. 1130 (*Reg.* II, no. 1645). In 1141 the Empress granted to Earl Geoffrey de Mandeville, among other things, custody of the Tower of London, and *feodum et servicium terre quam Hasculf de Tania tenuit in Anglia die qua fuit vivus et mortuus, quam tenet Graeling et mater sua . . .* (*ibid.* III, no 274). On the Tany family see L. R. Buttle, 'The de Tany of Stapleford Tawney', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, N.S., xx (1930-1), 153-72; William Dugdale, *The Baronage of England* (London, 1675-76), I, 508-9; Sanders, *Baronies*, p. 4, and Round, *G. de M.*, p. 91, n. 3. A concord between Gilbert abbot of Westminster and William of Bocland [1115-17] is attested by, among others, Othuer fitz Earl, Richard de Mandeville (younger brother of William I de Mandeville), and *Asciulus de Taneyo*: Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 154-5. The names 'Hasculf' and 'Othuer' both occur in the Avranchin family of Subigny; in 1143 Hasculf son of Othuer de Subigny founded the abbey of La Lucerne near Avranches: *Gallia Christiana*, XI, 'Instrumenta', cols. 112-13. Othuer fitz Earl's father, Hugh d'Avranches, had been hereditary vicomte of the Avranchin, and the Tany's came from the same district (Tanis, s.w. of Avranches: Abbé Desroches, in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, XIV, 1844, 50-51).

³⁴ *P.R.* 31 *Henry I*, pp. 55 and *passim*. The peculiarities of Henry I's danegeld exemptions are well illustrated by the fact that in 1129 Geoffrey II had been pardoned a total of £19. 8s. on lands in Essex, Bucks., Warwicks., Berks. and Middx., whereas in 1130 he was pardoned 18s. for lands in Oxford only. Taken altogether, these exemptions exclude the Mandeville Domesday holdings in Suff., Surrey., Herts., Cambs. and Northants., but the apparently erratic nature of the pardons prevents us from drawing any conclusions from these omissions.

³⁵ Certain of Eudo's lands, however, had already passed to the counts of Boulogne, the lords of St. Clare and others: J. H. Round, *Peerage and Family History* (New York, 1901), pp. 163-4; William Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees* (Manchester, 1923-5), III, 167-8. The rival claims of King David of Scotland and Simon de Senlis to the earldom of Huntingdon and Northampton involved a similar conflict between the offspring of an heiress's first and second marriage, and the resolution was likewise dependent on the royal favour: *Complete Peerage*, VI, 640 ff.

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will of the king, and so far as we know, Henry I remained uncommitted at his death in 1135. Perhaps it is significant that in Henry's final year Geoffrey II began attesting royal charters.³⁶

Round's portrait of Geoffrey de Mandeville in the opening years of Stephen's reign is that of a powerful, typically acquisitive magnate, hereditary castellan of the Tower, who 'put himself and his fortress up for auction' and played one side recklessly against the other to his own advantage.³⁷ Professor R. H. C. Davis, by redating Stephen's and Maud's charters to Geoffrey, has provided a needed and convincing revision of Geoffrey's role in the 'Anarchy'—a role that was far more a product of circumstance, far less ruthless, than Round supposed.³⁸ It can now be seen that in King Stephen's opening years Geoffrey represented a family that had suffered major losses of territory, office and status. Whatever hopes he may have had of recovering his family's fortunes were as yet unrealized. He did not occupy the Tower of London in 1135; indeed, his famous tenure as castellan was far shorter than has been supposed, beginning sometime between 1137 and 1141 and ending in 1143.³⁹ Geoffrey was probably in possession of the Tower by early 1141, prior to Stephen's defeat at Lincoln,⁴⁰ and about midway through the year his occupancy was confirmed by the Empress.⁴¹ But the custodianship was not secured by formal royal grant until Christmas, 1141, when Geoffrey, having defected from Maud, was received back into royal favour. Only then did Stephen state, '*Dedi ei et concessi custodiam turris Lond(onie)*'—words that strongly suggest an original royal grant.⁴²

The strife of 1140–1 enabled Geoffrey to recover all his family's losses and more. In 1141, or perhaps shortly before, he regained the long-alienated manors of Sawbridgeworth, Saffron Walden and Great Waltham.⁴³ Sometime between December 1139 and December 1140 Stephen created him earl of Essex, and in mid-1141 Maud gave him not only the custody of the Tower but also a pardon of all debts incurred under Henry I and Stephen, the shrievalties of Essex, Hants., and London and Middlesex, the office and Norman lands of Eudo *Dapifer*, and much else—all *sine pecuniae donatione!*⁴⁴ A knowledge of the family's earlier misfortunes lends special significance to

³⁶ *Reg. II*, nos. 1915 (Falaise), 1916 (Argentan), 1917 (Rouen). Geoffrey II was evidently participating in Henry I's 1135 campaign against William Talvas: Orderic, V, 45–47.

³⁷ Round, *G. de M.*, pp. 98 and *passim*.

³⁸ R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey de Mandeville Reconsidered', *E.H.R.*, LXXIX (1964), 299–307; cf. *idem*, 'What Happened in Stephen's Reign?' *History*, LXIX (1964), 1–12.

³⁹ *Reg. III*, nos. 506, 274; Stephen arrested Geoffrey and deprived him of his castles in September or October 1143: Round, *G. de M.*, p. 202. Geoffrey died in 1144.

⁴⁰ R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen* (London, 1967), pp. 59, 63.

⁴¹ *Reg. III*, no. 274: *Concedo illi et heredibus suis custodiam turris Londonie*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 276. On this passage Round comments (*G. de M.*, p. 149): 'The latter expression is somewhat strange in view of the fact that Geoffrey had been in full possession of the Tower before the struggle had begun, and, indeed, by hereditary right.'

⁴³ For Saffron Walden: *Reg. III*, no. 274; for Sawbridgeworth and Great Waltham, *ibid.*, no. 913 [1140–3], and *Monasticon*, IV, 148–9. Henry II, in a charter of January 1156, confirmed to Geoffrey III de Mandeville all the lands of his ancestors, including, specifically, Saffron Walden, Sawbridgeworth and Great Waltham: *Et vadium quod Rex Henricus avus meus habuit super predicta tria maneria sua imperpetuum ei clamavi quietum sibi et heredibus suis de me et de meis heredibus*: Round, *G. de M.*, p. 236; cf. p. 241: 'The release of the lien . . . is a very curious feature.'

⁴⁴ *Reg. III*, nos. 274–6.

Maud's words when she granted her earl 'all his holdings, to be held as well and freely as Geoffrey his grandfather held them, or William his father, or whoever afterwards held them, at any time, in fee and heredity by him and his heirs of me and my heirs'.⁴⁵ Round remarks on the 'intensely hereditary character' of these grants,⁴⁶ but in view of the Mandevilles' earlier troubles one can hardly wonder at Geoffrey's insistence that his tenure, and that of his heirs, be made as secure as words permitted.

Geoffrey de Mandeville was triumphant. The complex inheritance questions of the previous reign had all been resolved in his favour. The chief victim of the settlement was his half-brother, Othuer's son, who had to make do with a fragment of his father's fortune. Maud's second charter to Geoffrey includes a grant to William fitz Othuer of escheated lands worth £100 per year, to be held in fee and heredity. Maud explains with unintended irony that she is giving him this modest estate 'because of her love of his brother, Earl Geoffrey'.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Reg. III*, no. 275.

⁴⁶ *G. de M.*, p. 53 and *passim*.

⁴⁷ *Reg. III*, no. 275: *pro amore fratris sui Comitis Gaufrredi*—the usual contemporary formula for identifying an intercessor.