

THE BISHOPS OF KING STEPHEN'S REIGN

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, the bishops who held office during the civil war which dominated King Stephen's reign (1135-1154) have been considered weak and ineffective, able neither to bring peace between the two sides or among warring local barons nor to protect their flocks or even themselves from the so-called 'Anarchy'. The explanation for this has been found in the bishops' lack of spiritual calibre. Bishops have also been seen as withdrawing their support from the king and ending their involvement in royal government, partly because of increasing general ecclesiastical desire for separation between Church and State and partly because of specific disputes with Stephen. As a consequence of all this, bishops are allowed little importance in modern histories of Stephen's reign.

This thesis shows that modern historiographical consensus is based in flawed interpretive frameworks which have led to misinterpretation of the nature of the episcopate and its importance in Stephen's reign. It offers more valid alternatives and then re-examines the royal, ecclesiastical and, especially, the local evidence in light of them to show that, in fact, the bishops were crucially important figures in regional politics, religion and society during the civil war. It proves as well, that they could possess considerable spiritual authority and continued to be committed to the king and active in the government of the kingdom throughout the period. Additionally, each of these also has consequences for how the episcopacy and Anglo-Norman history in general are understood. This is, therefore, a reassessment of the bishops of King Stephen's reign.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Abstract</i>	
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	
<i>Abbreviations</i>	
Introduction	1
Part I	The Anglo-Norman Episcopacy on the Eve of the Civil War
Chapter 1	The Political Context 22
1.1.	Government 24
1.2.	Military Duties and Characteristics 32
1.3.	Kingship 41
Chapter 2	The Ecclesiastical Context 48
2.1.	Historiography 50
2.2.	The Evidence 62
2.3.	The Bishop 84
Part II	Case Studies
Chapter 3	Chester. The bishop in his diocese 87
Chapter 4	Chester. The bishops and the politics of the civil war 99
4.1.	Cheshire 101
4.2.	Warwickshire 105
4.3.	Derbyshire 112
4.4.	Staffordshire 116
4.5.	Shropshire 121
4.6.	Relations with the King 124

Chapter 5	Lincoln. The bishop in his diocese	129
Chapter 6	Lincoln. The bishops and the politics of the civil war (1)	141
6.1.	Relations with the King	141
6.2.	The County	149
Chapter 7	Lincoln. The bishops and the politics of the civil war (2)	166
7.1.	Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire	166
7.2.	Leicestershire	175
7.3.	Oxfordshire	180
7.4.	Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire	184
Part III	The Bishops and the King	
Chapter 8	Bishops and royal government	191
8.1.	Charters	192
8.2.	Government	203
Chapter 9	King Stephen and the bishops	212
9.1.	1136-1139	221
9.2.	1139	226
9.3	Elections	230
9.4	Church Councils	235
9.5	1148-1154	240
Conclusion		243
<i>Bibliography</i>		246

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All errors of fact and judgement remain my own.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Anarchy</i>	<i>The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign</i> , ed. E. King (Oxford, 1994)
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
Barlow, <i>English Church</i>	F. Barlow, <i>The English Church 1066-1154</i> (London, 1979)
BL	British Library
Brett, <i>English Church</i>	M. Brett, <i>The English Church under Henry I</i> (Oxford, 1975)
Cheney, <i>From Becket to Langton</i>	C.R. Cheney, <i>From Becket to Langton. English Church Government: 1170-1213</i> (Manchester, 1956)
CHS	Collections for a History of Staffordshire
Crouch, <i>Reign</i>	D. Crouch, <i>The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154</i> (London, 2000)
CS	<i>Councils and Synods with other Documents relating to the English Church, I (870-1204)</i> , ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.N.L. Brooke (2 parts, Oxford, 1981)
Davis, <i>King Stephen</i>	R.H.C. Davis, <i>King Stephen, 1135-1154</i> (3 rd ed., London, 1993)
DB	<i>Domesday Book</i> , ed. J. Morris, 35 vols. in 40 (Chichester, 1975-86)
EEA	<i>English Episcopal Acta</i> (London, 1980-)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
GP	<i>Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi de Gestis Pontificum Anglorum</i> , ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton (Rolls Series, 1870)
GS	<i>Gesta Stephani</i> , ed. K.R. Potter with an Introduction by R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976)
<i>Giraldus Cambrensis Opera</i>	<i>Giraldus Cambrensis Opera</i> , ed. J.S.

- Brewer, J.F. Dimock and G.F. Warner, 8 vols. (Rolls Series, 1861-91)
- HH* Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996)
- HN* William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: the contemporary history*, ed. E. King, trans. K.R. Potter (Oxford, 1998)
- JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- JMH* *Journal of Medieval History*
- Letters of Arnulf* *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, ed. F. Barlow, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 61 (London, 1939)
- MA* *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. W. Dugdale and J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. in 8 (London, 1817-30)
- MRA* *The Great Register of Lichfield Cathedral known as Magnum registrum album*, ed. H.E. Savage, William Salt Archaeological Society (1926)
- OV* *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M.M. Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford, 1969-80)
- RA* *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln*, ed. C.W. Foster and K. Major, 10 vols., Lincoln Record Society, 27-9, 32, 34, 41, 46, 51, 62, 67 (1931-73)
- RRAN* *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154*, ed. H.W.C. Davis, C. Johnson, H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1913-69)
- Saltman, Theobald* A. Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1955)

- Stringer, *Reign* K.J. Stringer, *The Reign of Stephen*
(London, 1993)
- VCH *Victoria History of the Counties of*
England (London, 1900-)
- White, *Restoration and Reform* G.J. White, *Restoration and Reform*
1153-1165: recovery from civil war in
England (Cambridge, 2000)
- WN William of Newburgh, *The History of*
English Affairs, Book 1, ed. and trans.
P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy
(Warminster, 1998)

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary writers were critical of episcopal conduct during the civil war which dominated King Stephen's reign:-

'But they cowering in most dastardly fear, bent like a reed shaken by the wind, and since their salt had no savour they did not rise up or resist or set themselves as a wall before the house of Israel... some bishops, made sluggish and abject by fear of them, either gave way or lukewarmly and feebly passed a sentence of excommunication that was soon to be revoked; others (but it was no task for bishops) filled their castles full of provisions and stocks of arms, knights and archers, and though they were supposed to be warding off the evil doers who were plundering the goods of the Church showed themselves more cruel and more merciless than those very evildoers in oppressing their neighbours and plundering their goods.'¹

There was general agreement too that the king committed a great crime when he arrested three bishops at court in 1139 and that thereafter ecclesiastical moral and political support for him fell away.² Modern history, more moderate, more nuanced and more objective, is nevertheless still substantially in agreement. Bishops are rarely allowed the capacity, the character or the will to play a significant role in central or local political or religious life. If not in 1139 then after 1141, their loyalty to Stephen was passive at best, their involvement in his continuing attempts to govern the country minimal and their ideological relationship with him problematic. They withdrew from his court and also from active participation in politics. Only at the very end of the civil war and then only because there was no alternative did they have a part to play.³ In consequence, bishops have been allowed only a relatively small part in the

¹ *GS*, 157. Brian fitzCount of Wallingford, Empress Matilda's most loyal supporter, engaged in debate with Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester and thereby offers a unique insight into lay perceptions of the episcopate. He felt that Bishop Henry had changed sides too often, was untrustworthy, and had no sympathy for the plight of the population in the civil war. H. W. C. Davis, 'Henry of Blois and Brian fitzCount', *EHR*, 25 (1910), 297-303.

² *GS*, 73-81; *HH*, 718-24; *HN*, 45-51.

³ E.g., Barlow, *English Church*, 91-2. 304-6; C. Holdsworth, 'The Church', *Anarchy*, 207-30, *passim*. Footnotes here offer examples only, comprehensive references are given in the individual chapters.

history of Stephen's reign.⁴

Recent historiography has used charter evidence, painstakingly reconstructed local histories, and a more critical awareness of mid-twelfth century writers to reassess the history of the civil war. Much revision has ensued. Levels of disruption, governmental collapse and suffering are now seen as much more limited, magnate conduct and motivation more positive, and even King Stephen and Empress Matilda more worthy than previous generations had allowed.⁵ However, with one exception, this revisionism has hardly reached the Church, which is, further, still assessed in terms of evidence from the centre rather than the localities.⁶

Consequently, this thesis began as an examination of episcopal conduct in Stephen's reign through the charter and local history analysis which has proved so effective elsewhere. Case studies of the two dioceses of Chester and Lincoln and the four bishops who held them during the civil war remain its heart. They show that bishops could have considerable local political, religious and social importance. This is still the principal finding of this study. However, the two case studies now form the second part of a three part thesis because the local evidence consistently diverged from modern scholarly consensus on the Anglo-Norman as well as Stephen's episcopate and suggested a much more wide-ranging review of not only the office and its incumbents but also the political, religious and social contexts and historiographical interpretative frameworks within which they have been understood.

⁴ E.g., Davis, *King Stephen*, *passim*; Crouch, *Reign*, 295-311. One bishop is so obscure that there is still debate over whether he existed, E. Flight, 'John II, Bishop of Rochester, Did not Exist', *EHR*, 106 (1991), 921-31.

⁵ E.g., E. King, 'King Stephen and the Anglo-Norman Aristocracy', *History*, 59 (1974), 180-94; *idem*, 'The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 34 (1984), 113-54; G. White, 'Were the Midlands wasted during Stephen's reign?', *Midland History*, 10 (1985), 26-46; *idem*, 'Continuity in Government', *Anarchy*, 117-44; *idem*, 'The Myth of the Anarchy', *ANS*, 22 (1999), 323-37; M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda* (Oxford, 1991); Crouch, *Reign*, 342.

⁶ P. Dalton, 'Churchmen and the Promotion of Peace in King Stephen's Reign', *Viator*, 31 (2000), 79-120 is the exception, it is discussed below at p. 13. For assessment of the episcopacy from the centre, see e.g. Davis, *King Stephen*, 32, nt. 26; T. Callahan Jr, 'The Arrest of the Bishops at Stephen's Court: a Reassessment', *Haskins Society Journal*, 4 (1992), 97-108, 100; C. Harper Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe and the Diocese of Norwich, 1145-74', *ANS*, 7 (1985),

Bishops' supposed inactivity and incapacity in Stephen's reign has been explained by reference to three more general factors: their place in Henry I's, their moral and spiritual calibre and relevance, and the ideological relationship between Church and State. Henry I's government is generally understood as newly rational, centralised, bureaucratic and pervasive.⁷ As a result, ritual and spirituality in kingship and local government agents and powers were much reduced. Bishops, hitherto fundamental, were left less important and less powerful, centrally and locally, and more dependent on, and less able to act in the absence of, royal government.⁸ Those who did continue to serve the king did so as royal agents, as 'civil service' or 'F.O. types'.⁹ In ecclesiastical terms, modern historians have characterised such men and twelfth-century bishops in general as essentially administrators rather than pastors and religious leaders, and their power and authority as bureaucratic and governmental rather than spiritual. The latter was to be found elsewhere, in monasteries and hermitages.¹⁰ Both factors, mutually reinforcing in some ways, made the episcopacy of only limited relevance to the society it ostensibly headed. This was the background from which bishops came to the civil war; no wonder then that they were ineffective and unimportant once it began.

However, Chester and Lincoln evidence implies that bishops had both governmental and spiritual authority in local society both before and after 1135. On that basis, Part One demonstrates that modern understanding is the product of analysis of the evidence within flawed interpretative frameworks and that this has also meant that important evidence has been passed over. It then illustrates how what was true of Chester and Lincoln was in fact true of the episcopacy as a whole: bishops played a part in national and local government and in maintaining the status of kingship (Chapter One) and had their own religious

142-60, 145.

⁷ E.g., R.W. Southern, 'The Place of Henry I in English History', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 47 (1962), 127-70, repr., *Medieval Humanism and other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), 183-205.

⁸ Holdsworth, 'The Church', 215.

⁹ E.g., V.H. Galbraith, 'Notes on the career of Samson Bishop of Worcester (1096-1112)', *EHR*, 82 (1967), 86-101; S. Mooers Christelow, 'Chancellors and Curial bishops: Ecclesiastical Promotions and Power in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS*, 22 (1999), 49-69.

¹⁰ E.g., C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050-1250* (Oxford, 1989, repr. 1991), 222-3, 289; R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225*

convictions, a place in religious life and some spiritual authority (Chapter Two) during Henry I's reign. Part One therefore stands as a contribution to the histories of Henry I's reign and Church in its own right. It also sets up a new context for analysis of episcopal evidence from Stephen's reign at national (Part Three) and local (Part Two) levels. Its relationship with the latter is therefore reflexive; it stems from it but it bolsters and provides an intellectual framework for analysis of what is often difficult, opaque and scanty civil war material. It is also important because the past had a strong influence on how bishops acted and were perceived between 1136 and 1154.

Part Three engages with the evidence presented in, and the conclusions of, Parts One and Two to reassess the relationship between King Stephen and the bishops as a whole. In similar fashion to Part One, it shows that, hitherto, reconstructions have relied on a particular type of evidence, witness lists of royal charters, to the exclusion of others and have been based in a particular interpretation of the Church State relationship. In the twelfth century, Europe-wide church reform meant, among other things, corporate and institutional development within an increasingly international Church, which sought separation from and autonomy of secular powers while simultaneously looking towards and loyal to new authorities, the Papacy and canon law, outside them. Historians of Stephen's reign have relied on a model of reform's political impact which emphasises that it threatened kings' authority, power and status and that they attempted to hold it off as best they could. This model assumes that the increase of the one was at the expense of the other and that commitment to the one precluded commitment to the other.¹¹ Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians drew together the English archbishops who fought with their kings across the twelfth century (Anselm, Theobald, Becket and Langton) into a model of ecclesiastical progress at royal expense. Zachary Brooke's is the classic statement, 'The English Church starts in 1066 with the view of its master, King William I; it had come by 1215 to the view of its new master, Pope Innocent III.'¹² More recent

(Oxford, 2000), 395.

¹¹ E.g. Brett, *English Church*, 104-5; Barlow, *English Church*, 100, 103; Stringer, *Reign*, 65; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 217; Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 397.

¹² Z.N. Brooke, *The English Church and the Papacy* (Cambridge, 1932), 29. See also, D. Knowles, *The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1951), 7-9, 142-

commentators have been wary of such overarching themes but have still seen Stephen's reign at least in the same terms. Martin Brett concluded that, 'In the reign of Stephen one can speak for the first time of something like a real conflict between church and state.'¹³ Stephen was a weak king who owed a great deal to a Church which even before 1139 was making progress. Thereafter, or after 1141, the Church, either militantly taking advantage of a weakened king or forced to look to itself and the papacy in the absence of royal power, built up its own authority and autonomy to Stephen's further cost. Where all of these models are not expressed explicitly, they are still the basis for the general assumption that bishops played little part in the politics of the civil war.

The four bishops who ruled the dioceses of Chester and Lincoln during the period witnessed for the king only very rarely after 1139 and those two elected in the reign have been considered freely elected, reformed and representative of the new independence and power of the Church. All four have been reckoned neutral in the civil war. However, the local evidence implies that they were in fact committed to both Stephen and maintenance of royal government. Building from this and Chapter One, Chapter Eight shows that reliance on royal charter witness lists is flawed and that their address clauses, which have been allowed less significance, are a more secure and valuable resource. It uses them as a basis to illustrate bishops continued involvement in government and with the king throughout the civil war. From this basis, Chapter Nine outlines how the conflict model of relations between Church and State has come about (influenced to no little extent by the issues addressed in Chapters One and Two), shows that it has no place in Stephen's England and that it is better replaced by one of principled co-operation. It then re-examines the evidence traditionally cited as proof of conflict, which includes some of the most important episodes of the reign, to show that it is better understood within this new context.

As described here, Parts One and Three might seem convoluted, but, because of the nature of the evidence and historiography, this is unavoidable. Mid-twelfth

3.

¹³ E.g. Brett, *English Church*, 91; Barlow, *English Church*, 92, 94; J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda. The Civil War of 1139-1153* (Stroud, 1996), 47.

century bishops fall between two stools: better educated, more reformed, more aware of their responsibilities and more cautious of secular involvement and royal power than their eleventh century predecessors but less so than their late twelfth and early thirteenth century successors, they also held office in a period of fundamental development in the wider Church. However, they have left much less evidence of their own calibre, education, ecclesiology and political ideology than their successors or, in England at least, their predecessors. The vast majority of the material which has survived is administrative. Not only that, but readily available legal, monastic and theological material has to be used with care because mid twelfth-century working bishops might be a long way from them. Such was the rate of change in the Church that later evidence, including Becket material, also has to be approached with caution. It is difficult too, to calculate the religious authority such men might have possessed because spiritual power is by its very nature intangible except when its possessor showed signs of saintliness.¹⁴ All this is especially true of secular churchmen who have also been the subject of most criticism, contemporary and modern. Recent historians of monastic bishops have been keen to show that they could be active and successful within the world as well as committed in their religious life; few studies of secular bishops have attempted to show that the same could be true *vice versa*.¹⁵ Since 104 of the 133 bishops appointed in England between 1066 and 1215 were secular, it is they who have most influenced understanding, and are most representative of, the English Church as a whole.¹⁶

Evidence is therefore a major problem, but historiographical trends have only compounded the issue. Chapter Two outlines how current models of the episcopacy have compared churches on the basis of very different evidence, equated absence with non-existence and been dominated by the administrative. Chapter Nine addresses the historiography of the relationship between Church and State in similar fashion. They do this because only by cutting away modern

¹⁴ B. Arnold, *Count and Bishop in Mediaeval Germany: A Study of Regional Power, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia, 1991), 13 and G. Dameron, *Episcopal Power and Florentine Society 1000-1300* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 186-7 analyse the elements that made up episcopal power and note the 'sacral dimension' but cannot discuss it further or calculate its actual or relative importance.

¹⁵ E.g., M. Ruud, 'Monks in the World: The Case of Gundulf of Rochester', *ANS*, 11 (1988), 245-60.

¹⁶ Figures taken from, R. Bartlett, *England and Normandy under the Angevin Kings*, 397.

interpretative frameworks and replacing them with more positive alternatives is it possible to make something of the meagre resources which have survived. Chapter Two also attempts to redress the balance between monastic and secular bishops. Parts One and Three are therefore crucial to Part Two as well as dependent on it.

The case studies themselves are relatively straightforward. Chester and Lincoln were chosen for a number of reasons. Bishops Alexander of Lincoln and Roger de Clinton of Chester were castigated by the author of the *Gesta Stephani* as among those who, ‘... girt with swords and wearing magnificent suits of armour, rode on horseback with the haughtiest destroyers of the country and took their share of the spoil...’, while their successors have been considered as examples of the new reformed Church in civil war England.¹⁷ All four bishops’ supposed neutrality was noted above. They therefore offer an opportunity to assess the validity of traditional interpretations of episcopal character and conduct in Stephen’s reign and the Anglo-Norman period in general. Both dioceses were large - Lincoln covered six and a half and Chester three full and two half counties - and thus offer an opportunity to investigate whether bishops’ ecclesiastical and political activity and authority and how they were viewed by local society were consistent or could change according to local situations. To some extent, their size makes them unrepresentative but in terms of wider analysis they are meant rather to inform than to be typical.

Each study begins with a history of bishops’ ecclesiastical activity during the civil war before going on to their political experience. The first show that bishops continued to fulfil their ecclesiastical responsibilities. Within the frameworks set up in Chapter Two, this can be seen as the exercise of religious authority and implying the bishops’ importance in local society. Putting bishops’ religious activity first serves to emphasise that a religious dynamic was present in regional political life. This is important because it is not always explicit in the actual political evidence. The civil war history of much of the area covered by the two dioceses is still obscure and each study of local politics is therefore

¹⁷ *GS*, 157. See case studies for further references.

founded in reconstructions of local tenorial and power geography on the basis of Domesday, chronicle and monastic evidence and what secondary literature there is, before factoring in the bishops themselves. On occasion this has meant the need to recreate local political history from scratch.¹⁸ In both ecclesiastical and political histories the crucial difference from most similar work is that the focus is on bishops' external relations rather than the internal history of each diocese. It is this that enables Part Two to show how significant bishops could be.¹⁹

Several caveats must be introduced right at the outset. This thesis does not set out to deny modern historiography wholesale. Henry I's regime was new and episcopal power probably was reduced as a result. Bishops were administrators and were perhaps more worldly than they should have been. In local politics and religion they were neither always welcome nor always effective and their relationship with the king was neither perfect nor particularly successful. What follows aims rather to suggest that they or the situation were much less or much more so than has hitherto been allowed. It is also important to note what this study is not. It is neither a general nor a constitutional history of the episcopacy and its case studies are neither administrative nor estate analyses. Canon law, education, monasticism, the papacy, pastoral care, theology and so on are discussed only where they are relevant to its more specific purposes. It is not a comparative study and it makes only limited use of an extensive continental historiography. Such an undertaking would be simply too massive at this stage and, even in the new international Church, the English Church and bishops were different enough from even their Norman peers to merit some concentration on them alone.²⁰

¹⁸ Domesday Book references are by folio no. as listed in the Philimore edition. References to reconstruction are sparing for reasons of space.

¹⁹ E.g., for an excellent study of the internal politics of an episcopal honour, N.E. Stacy, 'Henry of Blois and the lordship of Glastonbury', *EHR*, 114 (1999), 1-33 and for a similarly valuable study of the relationship between bishops' and chapters' estates, E.U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth Century England: a study of the mensa episcopalis* (Cambridge, 1994). Durham is the partial exception, partial because its dominance of its immediate region was so great as for its politics to be 'internal' as much as 'external', A. Young, *William Cumin: Border Politics and the Bishopric of Durham 1141-1144* (Borthwick Paper, 54, York, 1978); idem., 'The Bishopric of Durham in Stephen's Reign', *Anglo Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), 353-69.

²⁰ As examples of comparative study, see, J. Barrow, 'Cathedrals, provost and prebends. A comparison of twelfth-century English and German practice', *JEH*, 37 (1986), 536-64; idem., 'Education and recruitment of cathedral canons in England and Germany, 1100-1225', *Viator*,

Nevertheless, historians of the European and also the Anglo-Saxon episcopate have often made use of types of analysis and sources historians of the Anglo-Norman church have yet to take on board.²¹ Two, Constance Brittan Bouchard and Timothy Reuter, have particularly influenced what follows. The first used a unique series of biographies of bishops of Auxerre written by clerks at the cathedral under their immediate successors to assess how working secular churchmen themselves understood the episcopal office. She has also described the web of relationships that formed there between the local count, nobility, bishop and chapter.²² The second has shown that, however difficult it is to prove, twelfth-century secular bishops in the Empire did have religious significance, were motivated by more than worldly ambitions and were part of the networks that made up local and regional society.²³ Norman historiography is also useful because it offers a number of collaborative studies which examine the episcopate in the widest possible terms.²⁴ While several English cathedrals have been the subject of similar works, contributions to them have tended to be discrete rather than integrated.²⁵

This is important. Episcopal history incorporates theology, ecclesiology and

10 (1989), 117-38. For the English Church as a 'unit of study', see Brett, *English Church*, 6-10. D. Spear, 'The Norman Empire and the Secular Clergy', *Journal of British Studies*, 21 (1981), 1-10 would disagree, but Brett's arguments are the more secure.

²¹ E.g., J. Nightingale, 'Bishop Gerard of Toul (963-4) and Attitudes to Episcopal Office', *Warriors and Churchmen of the High Middle Ages. Essays presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. T. Reuter (London, 1992), 41-63, for discussion of a series of episcopal biographies with a message; C. Senecal, 'Bishops as Contenders for Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England: the Bishopric of East Anglia and the Regional Aristocracy' in *Negotiating Secular and Ecclesiastical Power*, ed. A. Bijsterveld, H. Teunis, A. Wareham (Turnhout, 1999), 89-106, for episcopal involvement in local politics.

²² C.B. Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration: The Role of the Bishop in Twelfth Century Auxerre* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1979); idem, *Sword, Mitre and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca, 1987).

²³ T. Reuter, 'The Imperial Church System of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: a Reconsideration', *JEH*, 33 (1982), 82-94; idem, 'Episcopi cum sua militia: The Prelate as Warrior in the Early Staufer Era', *Warriors and Churchmen*, 74-94; idem, 'Fili matris nostrae pugnant adversum nos: Bonds and Tensions between Prelates and their 'Milites' in the German High Middle Ages', *Chiesa e mondo feudale nei secoli x-xii. Miscellanea del centro di studi medioevali*, 14 (Milan, 1995), 247-76.

²⁴ *Les Évêques normands du XIe siècle*, ed. P. Bouet and F. Neveux (Caen, 1995); *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie*, ed. S. Lemagnen, P. Manneville (Caen, 1997).

²⁵ E.g., *A History of York Minster*, ed. G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant (Oxford, 1977); *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1091-1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Hervey and M. Prestwich (Durham, 1994); *A History of Lincoln Minster*, ed. D.M. Owen (Cambridge, 1996); *Hereford Cathedral: a History*, ed. G.E. Aylmer (London, 2000).

law, theoretical and practised, contemporaneous with and historic to the period in question. It entails also some knowledge of architecture and liturgy, clerical education and training, diocesan and estate administration, monasticism and eremitism, parish institutions and popular religion, and so on. Historians of the English episcopacy must also allow for the fact that it was increasingly part of a European Church which was itself more and more dominated by the Papacy. Massive developments took place in almost all of these fields during the twelfth century. Few could claim to command even some of these but even to begin to understand the episcopate all of them must at least be taken into account. Part of the explanation for the general underestimation of the Anglo-Norman episcopate which this thesis addresses is that many studies have not taken this on board.²⁶

In Anglo-Norman historiography only Frank *Barlow's English Church from 1066 to 1154* (1979) covers all of these themes. It is comprehensive, learned and the standard work. Four other historians have particularly influenced this thesis. Kathleen Edwards (1949), C.R. Cheney (1956) and Beryl Smalley (1973) each endeavoured, among other things, to reconstruct episcopal history through cathedrals, ecclesiastical government and theology respectively. All three incorporated as many facets of bishops' lives as possible and each is notable for its profound sympathy with its subject. Martin Brett's *English Church under Henry I* (1975) is an intensely thorough reconstruction of the administrative and constitutional history of the church Stephen inherited.²⁷ These five works and technical studies make undertaking this thesis possible by allowing it to take a

²⁶ All church history is dependent on a wide range of expertise on sometimes esoteric subjects. It is not often cited here, because it is not directly relevant to the immediate issue but all students of ecclesiastical history should acknowledge their debt to it.

²⁷ K. Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1949 rev. 2nd ed., 1967); Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*; B. Smalley, *The Becket Conflict and the Schools. A Study of Intellectuals in Politics* (Oxford, 1973). R. Foreville, *L'Église et la royauté en Angleterre sous Henri II Plantagenet (1154-1189)* (Paris, 1943) is also important. Of the other general histories, Brooke, *English Church and the Papacy*, has been superseded. N. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England, 1089-1135* (New York, 1958, repr. 1969) was much criticised on publication, C.R. Cheney, *Speculum*, 34 (1959), 653-6 and C.N.L. Brooke, *EHR*, 75 (1960), 116-20. Both pick up on the author's views on the Anglo-Norman Anonymous in particular but their criticisms are general. The validity of Cantor's views on Ivo of Chartres has recently been recognised, L.K. Barber, 'Ivo of Charters and the Anglo-Norman Cultural Tradition', *ANS*, 13 (1991), 15-34, 16. Nevertheless, he is rarely cited in modern studies. D. Walker, 'Crown and Episcopacy under the Normans and Angevins', *ANS*, 5 (1982), 220-33, is, unfortunately, only very brief. H.R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154* (Harlow, 2000), is a good introduction to a wider period.

great deal for granted. Chapter Two especially assumes the administrative and constitutional history of the church in order to focus instead on episcopal religious activity and spiritual authority. None of these books is less than twenty years old now and more recent historians have not always shown the same depth of understanding as their predecessors.

Biographies have been a feature of Anglo-Norman episcopal historiography and, to some extent, this study continues in the tradition.²⁸ Biographers have always to be wary of becoming too close to their subjects; several past studies of the most castigated Anglo-Norman and Angevin bishops have indulged in special pleading on their behalf.²⁹ However, Stephen's bishops come out of this thesis much more positively than has hitherto been the case even when this is taken into account. Older biographies ranged widely across political, religious and governmental themes, but, again, more recent ones have tended to focus, most especially on administration and estate management and have made little attempt to assess bishops' *mentalité*.³⁰ By far the most important biography is Avrom Saltman's study of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. In what was almost a general history of the Church in Stephen's reign, Saltman emphasised Theobald's continued loyalty to the king. Only Keith Stringer has taken this on board and Saltman has still to receive the audience he merits; this thesis owes a great deal to his work.

Stringer's is the only general history of Stephen's reign which has examined the

²⁸ E.g., G.V. Scammel, *Hugh de Puiset, Bishop of Durham* (Cambridge, 1956); D. Nicholl, *Thurstan, Archbishop of York, 1114-1140* (York, 1964). These two represent two types of biography common in the 1950s and 1960s, the first is characterised by paternal, sardonic amusement, the second by hushed respect for its subject.

²⁹ E.J. Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury, Viceroy of England* (Berkeley, 1972); D.E. Desborough, 'Politics and Prelacy in the late Twelfth Century: The Career of Hugh de Nonant Bishop of Coventry, 1188-98', *BIHR*, 64 (1991), 1-14; R.I. Moore, 'Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate', *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), 231-5.

³⁰ Compare, for instance, M. Cheney, *Roger, Bishop of Worcester 1164-1179. An English Bishop of the Age of Becket* (Oxford, 1980) with Harper Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe', the potted biographies in the *EEA* editions, and surveys such as Mooers Christelow, 'Chancellors'. C.P. Schriber, *The Dilemma of Arnulf of Lisieux* (Bloomington, 1990) takes a different tack, reconstructing Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux's thinking by using 'paradigms', ideal lives individuals tried to hold to but which changed with each new generation. However, Schriber's model has been criticised, 'paradigms' are an artificial method of analysis, see for discussion, review by D. Bates, *French History*, 6 (1992), 101-03. Nevertheless, Schriber does at least try to get to grips with Arnulf's world view.

traditional picture of bishops critically. He argued that the English Church was keen to support strong kingship and good government but that it was loyal to a system rather than Stephen personally. Unfortunately, he had little space to develop his ideas but, nevertheless, they are important to Part Three of what follows. The most recent, and in most respects very much the best, modern study of Stephen, by David Crouch, takes a more traditional approach and devotes only very little space to the bishops.³¹ The only history of the Church in Stephen's reign *per se* is brief, focuses on the central evidence and favours the traditional view of episcopal conduct in the civil war period even though it post-dates both Saltman and Stringer's work. It includes the most explicit explanation of episcopal incapacity in terms of Henry I's reign and spiritual unimportance. It is discussed in detail where it is relevant below.³²

The several more specific studies of incidents or themes are also discussed where they are most relevant, but two are particularly important. In 1948, in what was the first study solely concerned with Stephen and the church, Isobel Megaw examined at the king's 'ecclesiastical policy' in his first three years. She picked out a series of run-ins with the church in the lead-up to the arrests in much the same way as R.H.C. Davis would later do for Stephen's 'mistakes' in general.³³ She agreed with the traditional view of the importance of the event itself. Not until Kenji Yoshitake showed that the immediate after effects of the arrests of bishops were limited in 1988 was this view questioned. Yoshitake's views are now generally accepted.³⁴ However, he saw continued relations as difficult and rather moved the date of the split between Stephen and the bishops to 1141 than questioned its taking place. Post 1141, historians are still agreed, if sometimes only by implication, that bishops had little importance to Stephen's governance.

³¹ Davis, *King Stephen*, *passim*; Crouch, *Reign*, 295-311; Stringer, *Reign*, 61-72.

³² Holdsworth, 'The Church'.

³³ I. Megaw, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of Stephen, 1135-9: A Reinterpretation', *Essays in British and Irish History in Honour of J.E. Todd*, ed. H.A. Cronne (London, 1949), 24-46; Davis, *King Stephen*, 22-33.

³⁴ K. Yoshitake, 'The arrest of the bishops in 1139 and its consequences', *JMH*, 14 (1988), 97-114, 107-8; *idem*, 'The Exchequer in the reign of Stephen', *EHR*, 103 (1988), 950-9. Not all have agreed, Callahan, 'Arrest', is a fervent restatement of the traditional position. King in his introduction to *Anarchy* also held to it, 16-17.

Because Stephen's reign was dominated by civil war and because of a general interest in peacemaking in recent years, some historians have combined the two. Christopher Holdsworth and Martin Brett both found that the chronicles were right: bishops had little impact despite their good intentions. Conciliar activity and legislation, excommunication, sanctuary creation and other forms of limitation of warfare were largely ineffective.³⁵ Edmund King has argued that the appearance of the bishops of Chester and Lincoln in the Chester/ Leicester *conventio* of c.1148 had only limited significance. For him, the language and contents of the treaty reflected lay rather than ecclesiastical attitudes and structures.³⁶ Brett and Holdsworth noted too that the Peace of God was not instituted in England during the civil war because of the historical importance of the King's Peace. For Holdsworth, as noted above, bishops' dependence on the latter left them unable to act in terms of the former. However, constrained by traditional models of reform, he did not allow for the possibility that bishops might therefore have worked for and been committed to the King's Peace. Part Three shows how important such consideration might be.

Paul Dalton has produced the most important recent work on and, so far, the only revisionist history of, the Church in Stephen's reign. His main theme, like that of this thesis, is that churchmen were more heavily involved in the civil war than is usually allowed. Some consideration of his work is therefore necessary here. Dalton explicitly acknowledged that he interpreted the source material within a continental historiographical framework of dispute settlement, peacemaking and the Peace of God. However, as has been noted, in England the Peace of God was never as important as the King's Peace. Dalton, following traditional understanding of the relationship between Stephen and the church, made no allowance for episcopal connections with the king. Chapter One and Part Three here, by showing that he and royal government were important influences on episcopal activity and thinking, imply a very different model of

³⁵ C. Holdsworth, 'Ideal and Reality: some attempts to control and defuse war on the twelfth century', *Studies in Church History*, 20 (1982), 61-77; idem, 'War and Peace in the twelfth century, the reign of Stephen reconsidered', in *War and Peace in the Middle Ages*, ed. B.P. McGuire (Copenhagen, 1987), 67-93; M. Brett, 'Warfare and its Restraints in England, 1066-1154', *Militia Christi e Crociata nei secoli X-XIII. Miscellanea del Centro di Studi medioevali*, 13 (Milan, 1992 for 1989), 129-44.

³⁶ E. King, 'Dispute Settlement in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS*, 14 (1991), 115-130, 124.

the episcopate. Dalton further argued, again on the basis of continental historiographical models, that episcopal involvement in monastic foundations was directed to the neutralisation of disputes and the creation of peace networks among the local aristocracy. Part Two demonstrates that each of his case studies can be interpreted differently and that monastic foundations and bishops' involvement in them were not inevitably motivated by the creation of peace networks or the settlement of disputes. Dalton's study and this thesis are in agreement that bishops were much more important during the civil war than is usually allowed, but they differ considerably as to the role they played, and the reasons why they were significant.³⁷

Because this thesis is a study of bishops in society, secular historiography is as important as ecclesiastical. Three themes are particularly important to what follows, the nature of government, the nature of lay piety and the nature of the aristocracy. Henry I's regime's importance has already been noted. Some recent work has highlighted that it was by no means as centralised or as hegemonizing as is often assumed and that other jurisdictions and powers, particularly aristocratic, had a collaborative and co-operative relationship with royal government.³⁸ Bishops have yet to be allowed their place in this system but Chapter One proves that they belong there. Similarly, while 'Continuity in government' has become a major theme in recent work on the civil war, bishops' importance to it too has yet to be recognised.³⁹ Historians have also emphasised the legitimacy of magnate government in the absence of royal power and contemporary ecclesiastical criticism has been dismissed, but Part Two makes clear that, in the person of the bishop, it could have considerable practical effect.⁴⁰

Lay piety in this period has always been associated with monasticism and lay

³⁷ Dalton, 'Churchmen'. Elsewhere, Dalton has similarly explicitly acknowledged that he has applied continental models to English evidence. He has been criticised for doing so. Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship: Yorkshire 1066-1154* (Cambridge, 1994), 185-6; Crouch, *Reign*, 152.

³⁸ J. Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 5; J.A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), 221.

³⁹ G. White, 'Continuity in Government', *Anarchy*, 117-44; idem, *Restoration and Reform*.

⁴⁰ Crouch, *Reign*, 324-9; White, *Restoration and Reform*, 55-6.

society has been, for the most part, reconstructed through monastic records.⁴¹ Bishops have hardly been considered in relation to either, perhaps because, at first sight, they appear in the sources only as outside administrators. Monasticism, of course, was central to lay society, but Chapter Two shows that bishops both had an important place in the relationship between donor and beneficiary and their own religious importance. Aristocratic society has been the dominant subject in historiography of Stephen's reign since the late nineteenth century. Its character, whatever it was, has always become that of the reign as a whole. In terms of the episcopacy, its importance lies in the fact that if magnates were aggressive, self-interested and aggrandising, then episcopal attitudes to them and their own reaction to bishops would be different from those resulting from them being defensive and seeking good government, order and peace and only consolidating their estates on that account. Both models have a long history, both are now informed by modern anthropology and, especially, French historiography, and both have recent proponents.⁴²

The most positive model has been dominant in recent years. It has also formed the basis for new emphasis on 'continuity in government' in, and criticism of use of the word 'anarchy' to describe, the period. It is Dalton's model in his 'Churchmen and Peacemaking'. However, his Earl Ranulf II of Chester, who has an important place in Part Two here, is very different.⁴³ Historians must be

⁴¹ E.g., for lay piety, C. Harper Bill, 'The Piety of the Anglo-Norman Knightly Class', *ANS*, 2 (1979), 63-77; E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998). For reconstruction of society, see F.M. Stenton's classic, *The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1960) for honorial communities; Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship* for legal culture; S.D. White, *Custom, kinship, and gifts to saints: the laudatio parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (London, 1988) for modern emphasis on the networks and negotiations that kept society intact.

⁴² E.g., E. King, 'Dispute Settlement in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS*, 14 (1992), 115-30; D.R. Bates, 'England and the Feudal Revolution', *Il Feudalesimo Nell'alto Medioevo, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 47 (Spoleto, 2000) 611-49, 624, 634. For the second, Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, 185-6. For anthropology, *Disputes and Settlements: law and human relations in the west*, ed. J. Bossy (Cambridge, 1983); *The Settlement of disputes in early medieval Europe*, ed. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1986); *Property and power in the early Middle Ages*, ed. idem (Cambridge, 1995). For French historiography, G. Duby, 'The Nobility in the eleventh and twelfth century Maconnais', *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. F.L. Cheyette (New York, 1975), 137-55; T.N. Bisson, 'The Feudal Revolution', *Past and Present*, 142 (1994), 6-42 and discussion following in nos. 152 (1996) and 155 (1997).

⁴³ P. Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible: Ranulf II earl of Chester and Lincolnshire in the reign of King Stephen', *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters*, ed. A. Thacker (Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society, 1991), 109-34.

wary of taking their reassessments too far. Bishops' experience, as outlined in Part Two, also implies that more negative appraisals still have much to be said for them. Compromise and negotiation should not be allowed to obscure the claims that necessitated them and 'protected spaces' and 'immunities' would not have been necessary in a generally peaceful society. Recent work by David Crouch and Judith Green suggests the same. Crouch has argued that, faced with a power vacuum, magnates sought to consolidate their estates and power in relatively autonomous blocs much like those they held in Normandy. Green, discussing Henry I's reign, has described an aggressive, competitive, militaristic society which was at the same time committed to and worked with the king.⁴⁴

The internal structure of aristocratic society is also important to how bishops interrelated with it.⁴⁵ Again it seems likely that a variety of forms coexisted. In some areas honorial power was almost certainly still very strong, in others it was developing into affinities but elsewhere local communities of interest were forming or had already formed and in some might almost be classed as gentry communities. Bishops at the very least had to interact with all these types of magnate and community and Part Two shows that they might have played an important part in some of the latter. They were, of course, also heads of similar groups themselves.

Hitherto, this Introduction has emphasised the 'public' and 'religious' aspects of the episcopate but they were also lords possessed of considerable private power. The 'baronial' part of their role was and still is the subject of much discussion. Contemporaries criticised bishops for letting their secular role take over and modern historians have sometimes explained episcopal actions in similar terms.⁴⁶ Episcopal evidence has also been among the most forthcoming on

⁴⁴ Crouch, *Reign*, 147-60; Green, *Aristocracy*, 437-9. Crouch has also looked at the experience of the weak, D. Crouch, 'The local influence of the earls of Warwick, 1088-1242: a study on decline and resourcefulness', *Midland History*, 21 (1996), 1-23. A type, loyal to king and country and working for the common good may have existed too.

⁴⁵ See most recently and for a comprehensive bibliography, D. Crouch, 'From Stenton to MacFarlane: models of society in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 5 (1995), 179-200.

⁴⁶ See *GS*, 157 as quoted above, p.1 and e.g. Megaw, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', 35-7; E.U. Crosby, 'The organisation of the English episcopate under Henry I', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 4 (1967), 1-88, 15-17.

military service and estate and honorial structures.⁴⁷ Like ecclesiastical constitutional history repetition here might add more but nothing new to modern understanding of the episcopate. This thesis is emphatically a study of bishops' external rather than internal relations. From this point of view, the evidence suggests that episcopal private power was very different from laymen's. When it was used forcefully it was used in the interests of the diocese, the flock and the kingdom, not bishops' personal ambition. When it is apparent as influence, as such power often is, it worked to the same ends. Bishops did possess considerable material resources and secular authority but they understood them as part of their office.

Charters, royal, episcopal, lay and monastic, are the basis for all three Parts of this thesis. Modern charter scholarship emphasises that behind them lay complex political and social narratives. They represent social networks and structures and were, in themselves, social mechanisms.⁴⁸ Methodologically, much of what follows is very simple. As was noted above, bishops' presence in private charters has often been passed over, but by the very fact that they are included they have to be considered in the same terms as the charters themselves. If disputes were settled, relationships negotiated and networks represented then bishops too were integral to them. Chapter Two and Part Two show further that bishops were very much a part of local society through analysis of processes recorded in private charters. Chapters Five and Six also proffer a warning. Private charter diplomatic scholarship is less advanced than understanding of their nature and it is still possible both to misinterpret the evidence and to apply the 'theory' where it does not fit the material; in this case with the result that bishops' importance is misunderstood.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ E.g. S.E. Gleason, *An Ecclesiastical Barony of the Middle Ages. The Bishopric of Bayeux 1066-1204* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1936) and on knight's service, V.H. Galbraith, 'An episcopal land grant of 1085', *EHR*, 44 (1929), 353-72; T.S. Purser, 'The origins of English Feudalism: an episcopal land grant revisited', *Historical Research*, 73 (2000), 80-93.

⁴⁸ See for fundamental discussion of how charters should be approached, P.R. Hyams, 'The Charter as a source for the early Common Law', *Journal of Legal History*, 12 (1991), 173-89; D. R. Bates, 'Reordering the Past and Negotiating the Present in Stenton's *First Century*', *The Stenton Lecture 1999* (Reading, 2000).

⁴⁹ Increasingly, editions of family charters are incorporating diplomatic comment and there are a number of studies on particular aspects of charters, e.g. *Earldom of Gloucester Charters*, ed. R.B. Patterson (Oxford, 1973); *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon, 1090-1217*, ed. R. Bearman, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, 37 (1994); D.

The *English Episcopal Acta* series is the fundamental resource for Anglo-Norman episcopal history. Without it, Part One of this thesis would have been impossible and Part Two very difficult.⁵⁰ However, Chapter Two shows that modern historians have tended to study bishops' charters in terms of the administrative process they represent. This is, of course, very necessary, but it is also limiting. It is best to be cautious too, to avoid relying only on *acta* to assess bishops. Bishops' charters are especially important because, in the absence of other material, they are the major source for their personal spirituality and religious importance. Thanks to the series, it is now possible to examine the evidence within the same frameworks of analysis modern historians have used to analyse monastic charter sources. Chapter Two simply focuses on the content rather than the form of episcopal *acta* to prove their religious activity and importance and personal spirituality. One further set of episcopal evidence has a particular importance to this thesis and is therefore worth mentioning here. Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux, though an officer of the Norman Church, was a secular bishop of the same generation, similar background and probably education to many of his English peers. He knew them and worked with and among them, he was heavily involved in royal politics but also deeply committed to reform in the church. In his retirement, he reflected on his life. His letter collection is the nearest modern historians can come to the English mid-twelfth century secular episcopate.⁵¹

With the collapse of secular government bishops were left as the only impartial, permanent and legitimate authority in the kingdom. Like kings, they were

Postles, 'Choosing witnesses in twelfth-century England', *Irish Jurist*, new series, 23 (1988), 330-46 and, especially, *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters*. However, there is, as yet, no more general work on the subject. There is therefore no substitute for perusal of large numbers of charters as diplomatic training. *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 12 vols, vols i-iii, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914-6), vols iv-xii, ed. C.T. Clay (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, Extra Series, 1935-65) is the best basis for this.

⁵⁰ For the *acta* and the series itself, see, e.g. F.M. Stenton, 'Acta episcoporum', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 3 (1929), 1-14; C.R. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries* (Manchester, 1950); J. Barrow, 'From the Lease to the Certificate: the evolution of episcopal *acta* in England and Wales (c. 700-c.1250)', *Die Diplomatie der Bischofsurkunde von 1250*, ed. C. Haidacher, W. Köfler (Innsbruck, 1995), 529-43. For a list of *acta* editions before the Series began, see *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, xxix.

⁵¹ *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, ed. F. Barlow (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., 61, 1939) C.P. Schriber has produced a translation of the letters, *The Letter Collections of Arnulf of Lisieux* (Lampeter,

expected to stand above politics. As a result, the civil war period saw an increase in episcopal incorporation in private charter address clauses and requests for and issuing of episcopal confirmations of transactions.⁵² This much is agreed, but bishops' role has often been interpreted as passive and/or ineffective and to have only developed because of the absence of royal power.⁵³ Part Two makes clear that bishops were much more than legal repositories, that they possessed their authority from the beginning and that it could be a much more active, positive and powerful force than is usually allowed. Edmund King noted in 1990 that, 'A study of charters addressed to bishops would be of great interest.'⁵⁴ Part Two shows that strong patterns emerge in bishops' presence in or absence from private charter address clauses. Some individuals and some religious houses might incorporate the relevant bishop in their charters but others might not; charters from some donors to a monastery might include the bishop but charters from others might not. Those who address bishops and those who do not can be loosely grouped according to their similar loyalties, motives and activities and experiences in the civil war. Address clauses of private charters can therefore be used to assess bishops' authority and place in local politics and religion.

Part Two and Chapter Eight show that similar patterns emerge in the address clauses of royal charters issued by King Stephen, Empress Matilda and Duke Henry. As in private charters, bishops' appearances have been passed over. Chapters One and Eight describe how this is a historiographical phenomenon with little basis in the sources themselves and go on to show that the clauses prove that bishops played an important role in royal government during the civil war.⁵⁵ Examining address rather than attestation clauses in such charters is also to shift the focus from the centre to the localities. Royal charters therefore encapsulate the aims of this thesis. By looking for episcopal evidence in the localities where modern history has shown that Stephen's reign must be

1997).

⁵² E.g., Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, 228.

⁵³ E.g. Brett, *English Church*, 146; B. Thompson, 'Free Alms Tenure in the Twelfth Century', *ANS*, 16 (1993), 221-43, 224-6.

⁵⁴ E. King, 'The Foundation of Pipewell Abbey, Northamptonshire', *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 167-78, 170.

⁵⁵ References have been held over to the extended discussions below, pp. 28ff, 195ff.

examined, by assessing that evidence in the light of new contexts which replace outdated intellectual frameworks, what follows shows that better bishops were much more important to and involved in King Stephen's reign than has hitherto been allowed.

PART I
THE ANGLO-NORMAN EPISCOPACY ON THE EVE OF CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Henry I's reign is essential to an understanding of the national and local political and governmental power, authority and identity of the episcopate in the civil war period. As noted above, Henry I's government is regularly portrayed as newly rational and centralised and as creating an ideology of 'administrative kingship'.¹ The same is true of Henry II's and the combination of the two has only emphasised the theme even more.² Ritual and spirituality in kingship and local government and local sources of power were much reduced in importance and this has long been the basis for the marginalisation of the episcopate in Stephen's reign. In fact, the episcopacy had a much more important place in government, kingdom and local society through the reign of Henry and thus on the eve of the civil war than has hitherto been allowed.³ What follows is divided into three sections, governmental, military and ideological. All three were paralleled in the reign of Stephen. However, because they often continued within a context of a general decline in authority and power on all sides then, because they were, perhaps, less clearcut and because of the vagaries of the evidence, material from 1100-1135 is essential to understanding them, all the more so because in the civil war period the past history of various powers became of some importance.

'Bishops in government' is here used to describe the bishops as a whole and as an office rather than those individuals who served the king and also happened to be bishops. This 'king's man' bishop is a historiographical phenomenon in its own right which has had influence in interpretation of Stephen's church and

¹ Southern, 'Place of Henry I'; C.W. Hollister and J.W. Baldwin, 'The rise of administrative kingship: Henry I and Philip Augustus', *American Historical Review*, 83 (1978), 867-905; Hollister, 'Anglo Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth Century Renaissance', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the twelfth century Renaissance. Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History*, ed. idem (Woodbridge, 1997), 1-17; as an e.g. of the same understanding as used by a historian of Stephen's reign, Crouch, *Reign*, 17.

² Hollister, 'Anglo Norman Political Culture', 17, saw the connection as progress.

³ Since all this could only happen within a much less administrative kingdom, it is to be hoped, therefore, that this chapter also makes a small contribution to understanding of Henry I's reign *per se*.

which is discussed in depth in Chapters Two and Nine. Here its importance lies in that a 'king's man', whether he acted centrally or locally, was a royal agent and exercised and possessed power as such. While bishops did sometimes act in this capacity their governmental and indeed 'royal' power was integral to their office, intimately linked to but semi-autonomous of the king himself.⁴

There is in fact little work on this subject; Archbishop Anselm and the Church/State conflict have dominated studies of episcopal relations with Henry I at the cost of less dramatic but arguably very important issues.⁵ Further, Martin Brett explicitly stated that he would not consider relations with the king or secular governmental activity in his English Church under Henry I. Similarly, Judith Green recognised the continued importance of the Church to the King but chose not to deal with the subject at length. The comprehensiveness and quality of these two studies may have contributed to the issue being passed over elsewhere. It might well be that others have assumed that since Brett and Green do not cover the issue then it is unimportant. Green herself assumed Brett had dealt with it, 'Little is said about the king and the church as this subject has been admirably covered by Martin Brett's book'.⁶ Only Norman Cantor and Everett U. Crosby have discussed the issues in detail but both are rarely cited by modern historians.⁷

⁴ For 'king's men', 'F.O. types' and 'civil servants' see, Galbraith, 'Notes on the career of Samson', 87. In Cheney's *From Becket to Langton*, bishops also have a 'civil servant' like mentality, *passim*. Karl Leyser contrasted the 'holy man', St Hugh, with the rest of the episcopate, 'The Angevin Kings and the Holy Man', *St Hugh of Lincoln: Lectures delivered at Oxford and Lincoln to celebrate the eighth centenary of St Hugh's consecration as bishop of Lincoln*, ed H. Mayr-Harting (Oxford, 1987), 49-73, reprinted, Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Gregorian Revolution and Beyond* (London, 1994), 157-75. Most recently, Christelow, 'Chancellors', *passim*.

⁵ Barlow, *English Church*, chapter 7.

⁶ Brett, *English Church*, 1, 113; J.A. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), 3-4, 8-10, quotation at ix.

⁷ Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England*, *passim*; Crosby, 'English episcopate under Henry I', comment in Brett, *English Church*, 100, nt. 1, this being Brett's only reference. Neither Barlow, *English Church*, nor Green, *Government*, make any reference to it.

1.1. Government

The power and identity of the Anglo-Saxon bishop had been intimately linked with his ancient and deep-rooted role in the government of the shire. The bishop was responsible for the defence of his city, contributed to that of the kingdom and with the earl and the sheriff was the leader of the shire court. His role in the latter was essential to its workings and symbolised for Frank Barlow the intimacy of the relationship between Church, king and government in late Anglo-Saxon England.⁸ He acted there by right of his office rather than as a royal agent.⁹ His was a customary and a traditional authority autonomous of but also customarily and traditionally associated with the king, royal law and royal justice.

Historiographically, it is generally accepted that there was continuity in the role of the episcopacy in government across the Conquest and in the settlement of the kingdom, but that its importance soon faded.¹⁰ The origins of this approach are to be found in William I's legislation on the Church. In a charter which dealt with several elements of the episcopal and ecclesiastical role in government the king removed ecclesiastical cases from the 'hundred' court to the bishop's own court.¹¹ For earlier historians this equated to the removal of bishops from the shire courts and to the beginnings of separation of spiritual and temporal. Ecclesiastical desire for this change and the influence of what is the most famous vignette of episcopal participation in the shire court - Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester sleeping through the secular proceedings - has been seen as showing a Church beginning to withdraw itself.¹² From 1072 there is also a significant reduction in the number of surviving royal charters that address

⁸ Barlow, *English Church 1000-1066* (London, 1963), 145-53.

⁹ E. Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester, c. 1008-1095* (Oxford, 1990), 139; Barlow, *English Church*, 97-8, 146-9.

¹⁰ See especially for that early period, H.R. Loyn, 'William's bishops, some further thoughts', *ANS*, 10 (1988), 223-35, *passim*.

¹¹ *CS*, no. 94; *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. The Acta of William I (1066-1087)*, ed. D.R. Bates (Oxford, 1998), no. 129. Traditionally dated to 1072, but more recent editors have been more cautious, *CS* gives, 1072x85, Bates suggests 1077 as a possibility. For traditional approaches see, W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England* (6th ed., 3 vols, Oxford, 1897), i, 324; C.H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1918), 30; Brooke, *English Church*, 136.

¹² *GP*, 282.

bishops while the presence of laymen is proportionally greater.¹³ Colin Morris showed as long ago as 1967 that the Conqueror's legislation meant nothing of the kind but the more traditional approach still has a good deal of influence. W.L. Warren concluded in 1987 that the, 'bishops ceased to attend as a matter of course'.¹⁴ It will be suggested below that it is likely that this assumption is the basis for passing over the episcopal presence in royal charter address clauses.

Under Henry I this loss of position and significance supposedly accelerated, paralleled by a decline in the status of the sheriff and the earl.¹⁵ Itinerant justices, increasing centralisation and the growth in importance of the king's law affected the status of local powers. The sheriff's powers were controlled and limited and his office held by men of lower social status than before. He was no longer the great semi-autonomous figure he had been after the conquest but was now much more explicitly a royal agent.¹⁶ For W.L. Warren, the shire court was no longer a comprehensive body while for Green the sheriff was 'enmeshed' by this change.¹⁷ Brett used the same word to describe the ecclesiastical experience: '... [government] enmeshed the greater churches by the multiplication of the royal agents and forms of royal action.'¹⁸ For Christopher Holdsworth, bishops' loss of status and their new dependence on new royal power entailed their weakness and lack of ability and will on the eve of the civil war. It also meant that the bishops could no longer cope when that royal authority was much reduced.¹⁹ More moderately, the most common impact of this model is a basic lack of consideration of the place of the bishop in studies of government during Stephen's reign.²⁰

¹³ Bates, *Regesta*, no. 57. Recognised anecdotally by Mason, *Wulfstan*, 140.

¹⁴ C. Morris, 'William I and the Church Courts', *EHR*, 82 (1967), 449-63; W.L. Warren, *The Governance of Norman and Angevin England* (London, 1987), 62.

¹⁵ Warren, *Governance*, 57, 62; Green, *Government*, 119. Most work on this subject has focussed on the reign of Stephen and the significance of his creations. There is an extensive literature on this subject, see for a thoughtful summary and references, Crouch, *Reign*, 84-90.

¹⁶ Warren, *Governance*, 81; Green, *Government*, 119-23, esp. 123; for important analysis of this in the earliest years of Henry II, see G. White, *Restoration and Reform, 1153-1165* (Cambridge, 2000), 91-9.

¹⁷ Warren, *Governance*, 81; Green, *Government*, 122.

¹⁸ Green, *Government*, 122; Brett, 'The English Abbeys, their Tenants and the King (950-1150)', *Chiesa e mondo feudale nei secoli x-xii. 1992. Miscellanea del Centro di studi medioevali*, 14 (Milan, 1995), 277-302, 297.

¹⁹ Holdsworth, 'The Church', 215.

²⁰ White, 'Continuity in Government', *Anarchy*, 117-43, makes no reference to this. Nor does

Hitherto the continued significance of the bishop in government has been recognised only in the case of the ordeal.²¹ His importance to its operation is emphasised in William I's writ. Modern historiography has seen the ordeal in two different ways: as a negotiatory element within local society and as the tool of government and of the ruler and as associating that ruler with God's justice. It was, as ever, almost certainly a combination of the two. It was an alternative, autonomous jurisdiction but entailed '... no innate antagonism with effective exercise of royal power, [indeed it] could be a means of exercising that power.'²² It was a traditional and spiritual power integrated into the secular governance of the kingdom. It was also much more than bureaucratic. An 1126 charter of Henry I setting out the agreed boundaries between the various jurisdictions of the Earl of Gloucester and the Bishop of Llandaff in South Wales illustrates how the ordeal could still impinge on even the greatest magnates.²³ Trial by water was to be carried out on the nearest episcopal land to Cardiff Castle and trial by iron at Llandaff itself. It is also worth noting that this charter confirmed that the bishop was to have his own Welsh reeves, that their names were to be enrolled in his writ in the presence of the earl's court and that he himself was to have a list of the Welsh officials of the earl. Episcopal power was still considerable in South Wales at least, not least in religion.

Bartlett's description of the ordeal is similar to the new thinking on Henry I and Henry II's governance noted in the Introduction. It is now apparent that the first's was less domineering and exclusive and his relations with his magnates less hostile than used to be thought. Central government was not so all pervasive as has in the past been stressed nor did it desire to be so. Other, particularly

Yoshitake, 'Arrest'. White *has* very recently recognised some role for the bishop, *Restoration and Reform*, 66-7.

²¹ . On England under Henry I see Green, *Government*, 9. See for a parallel statement on Normandy, D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), 205.

²² R. Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water. The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford, 1986), 39-41, 69; P.R. Hyams, 'Trial by ordeal: the key to proof in the early common law', *On the Laws and Customs of England: Essays in Honour of S. E. Thorne*, ed. M.S. Arnold, T.A. Green, S.A. Scully, S.D. White (Chapel Hill, 1981), 90-126; Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law. Law and Society in England from the Norman Conquest to Magna Carta* (London, 1996), 72-6.

²³ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1466.

seigniorial, jurisdictions operated in concert with rather than in spite of the king's.²⁴ Magnates have been re-evaluated as willingly accepting the king's law and allowed a more significant place in the 'management' of the country than before; '...historians often write of royal intervention in the affairs of lords and men but overemphasis on royal control and on enforcement perpetuates too confrontational a view of Anglo-Norman history: kings and barons, if sometimes in opposition, also had many shared interests. For example, the honour court can be seen not as an essential threat to royal power, but rather one means by which the conquerors ruled their conquered acquisition.'²⁵ Graeme White has shown that Henry II relied on traditional jurisdictions and their holders in government over the royal court and the royal justices in his first years. For political reasons, he referred cases back to the localities rather than dealing with them in his own court. Innovation and intervention did not begin until after 1165.²⁶

Bishops were, of course, lords too and their ecclesiastical courts also dealt with political, tenurial and social issues. What follows here deals with their role in 'public' secular government but their other powers did not conflict with the king's. Indeed, it could be combinations of jurisdictions which saw cases eventually resolved. A case between Autin of Huntingdon and Ramsey abbey over the church of Shillington, saw the use of a royal writ, the lord's court and eventually the bishop's claiming the right to deal with it in his court.²⁷

Both the *Leges Henrici Primi* and the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* assumed that bishops continued to work in the shire court.²⁸ As was emphasised in the Introduction, royal charter address clauses are crucial in this respect. Bishops

²⁴ First visible in Stenton's *First Century*, 213-4, but he then follows the traditional scheme on the harshness of Henry and his exclusion of such from government, 218-24; Warren, *Governance*, 40-4. Warren also used the word 'management' to replace 'government' (44). This is useful - it is less strict and allows for a much looser control and a central authority with less impressive ambitions. Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, 5 and Green, *Aristocracy*, 221, have emphasised this more co-operative and less centralised government.

²⁵ Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, 5.

²⁶ White, *Restoration and Reform*, *passim*, 162-73, 180-90.

²⁷ *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I*, ed. R.C. Van Caenegem, Selden Society, 106-7 (2 vols., 1990-1), i, no. 233.

²⁸ *Leges Henrici Primi*, ed. L. J. Downer (Oxford, 1972), 98. For reference to this in the context of William I's church legislation, see Morris, 'Church Courts', 460.

may have been addressed relatively rarely in the charters of William I and especially William II, but they reappear in a significant number of those of Henry I, where almost half of the charters which address lay officials in the shires also address the bishop.²⁹ Historians and diplomatists of the reign of Henry I have assumed that the presence of an official or an individual in the address clause of a royal charter was 'real'- it was based on real power and authority and on a real connection between that figure and the central government. However, they have not allowed the bishops' inclusion this same substance, and hence he has not been allowed an equivalent status and role in government. This exclusion can only be due to adherence to the traditional view that bishops no longer played an important part in government. There is no other explanation. It surprised Stenton that bishops still appeared in address clauses, believing as he did that they had removed from the shire courts. He could only explain it by their occasional continued attendance.³⁰

Episcopal inclusion has also been compared to the earl's as a courtesy or a hangover of traditional diplomatic forms.³¹ However, the real decline in the earl's power was paralleled in reduced inclusion in address clauses. Earls hardly appear in Henry I's charters. In passing, in one of the most interesting of those where they do, the king ordered the earl and the bishop to question the lawful men of the hundred over the alleged misdeeds of the sheriff.³² When the conduct of royal agents was called into question impartial commissioners were necessary and the earl and the bishop were called in. Bishops' presence in address clauses did not decline in the same way as the earls'. Bishops were most often addressed on ecclesiastical issues but so too were all officials, lay or religious. This is a result of the nature of the surviving evidence rather than a function of the episcopal office. Bishops were regularly addressed with the shire in charters and

²⁹ The chronological order of the calendar of *RRAN*, ii, makes it easy to show that this was a constant throughout the reign: e.g. nos. 1186 (1118)-1389 (1123), 71 charters and writs address the bishops and another 51 only address lay officials; nos. 1390 (1123)-1605 (1129), 62 and 55 respectively; nos. 1606 (1129)-1989 (1135), 100 and 154 respectively. It should be noted that the proportion of charters addressed to bishops does not decline. For comment, see P. Wormald, 'Laga Eadwardi: The *Textus Roffensis* and its Context', *ANS*, 17 (1995), 243-66, repr. with changes, *Legal Culture in the early Medieval West* (London, 1999), 115-38, 134.

³⁰ Stenton, *First Century*, 107-9.

³¹ Crouch, *Reign*, 87.

³² *RRAN*, ii, no. 1423.

writs dealing with grants to laymen or confirmations of wardship, inheritance or marriage.³³ These and monastic financial issues were ostensibly ecclesiastical responsibilities, but had much more than religious significance.³⁴

For the most part bishops are addressed with the sheriff and the justices and barons of the county. Henry I's famous order to Urse d'Abêtot ordering him to hold the shire court only as it should be held included the bishop.³⁵ The bishop of Norwich with the sheriff and the rest of the shire were ordered to ensure ecclesiastical and secular rights of Battle Abbey. If they failed to do so the royal justice Ralf Basset would. Between 1115 and 1121 Henry I issued a writ to the shire court of Lincolnshire including the bishop and ordered that it not hear a case before the king's arrival.³⁶ As members of the shire court, bishops were also regularly informed of the autonomy of other jurisdictions. In the early part of King Henry's reign, Bishop Robert of Chester and others were ordered not to summon the monks of St Remi of Rheims to hundred or shire courts.³⁷ In each of these cases bishops were addressed as shire figures not executive agents of the crown. Sometimes though the shire did act as enforcing agent of cases resolved in the king's court. In 1109 the archbishop of Canterbury and the county of Kent were ordered to ensure the settlement of a case as it had been decided in the king's court.³⁸ A writ of 1121 issued at Clarendon ordered the bishop of Exeter, the sheriff and Devonshire to ensure that the abbot of Tavistock held his market there as had been ordered in a previous writ.³⁹ Notifications of results of cases decided at the royal court may well also have been orders to ensure that its decisions were carried out.⁴⁰

Bishops also acted as the king's executive agents as individuals.⁴¹ c.1120 x 1130

³³ Ibid., ii, e.g. nos. 729, 848, 1445, 1465, 1517-18, 1524, 1534, 1609, 1639, 1722-3, 1808-09.

³⁴ E.g., ibid., ii, nos. 669, 760; *English Lawsuits*, i, no. 231.

³⁵ *RRAN*, ii, no. 892.

³⁶ Ibid., ii, no. 1374.

³⁷ Ibid., ii, no. 900.

³⁸ Ibid., ii, no. 934.

³⁹ Ibid., ii, no. 1274.

⁴⁰ E.g., ibid., ii, nos. 1054, 1176, 1751.

⁴¹ H.A. Cronne, 'The office of local justiciar in England under the Norman kings', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 6 (1957-8), 18-38, argued that bishops were local justiciars. However, there is neither explicit evidence of this nor necessity for their position to be so defined or titled. It is best to err on the side of caution with J. Green, *Government*, 9, 107,

a writ ordered the bishop of Ely to ensure that no one docked at Cambridge save at the king's dock. If any did so, then the case was to go before the justiciar.⁴² c.1133 Henry I ordered Bishop Bernard of St Davids to command Walter son of Wisceo to restore lands of which he had disseised Gloucester abbey. He had already ordered Walter himself to do so, *Et nisi feceris episcopus Sancti David faciat*.⁴³ Bishops are also to be found in address clauses with royal justices. An 1133 writ notified the bishop of Norwich and royal justices of the status of the canons of Ipswich. In future, pleas were only to be held before themselves because the canons were the king's men.⁴⁴

Bishops are recognised as having played an important role in building Henry II's legitimacy in his first years at the centre. They also fulfilled this same essentially local role then too in the reestablishment of stability and the settlement of disputes. White has emphasised how Henry II preferred to allow local settlement of disputes rather than impose himself in order to smooth the peace process; bishops were integral to this.⁴⁵ In 1156 x 1157 the bishop of Chester's deputy, the archdeacon of Derby, and the sheriff took part in an inquest by royal command in the house of the dean of Derby.⁴⁶ A series of charters for St Benet's Holme address the sheriff and the bishop.⁴⁷ Henry II addressed a charter to the bishop of Lincoln and Simon de Senlis, earl of Northampton in 1155 for Daventry; he did not address the sheriff almost certainly because he was the cause of one of the settled disputes.⁴⁸ As duke, Henry had issued a writ to Hugh Bigod, earl of Norfolk and the bishop of

followed by P. Wormald, 'Quadripartitus', *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Studies presented to Sir James Holt*, ed. G. Garnett and J. Hudson, (Cambridge, 1994), 111-47, repr., *Legal Culture*, 81-114. Here from the latter, 110. The evidence is address clauses of royal charters. There is also a charter of Stephen's last year which regrants the status of local justiciar of Lincoln and Lincolnshire to the bishop. It states that his predecessors had held the position before him, *RRAN*, iii, no. 490.

⁴² *RRAN*, ii, no. 1729.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 1754, 1755.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, no. 1783, see also nos. 1551, 1664 and discussion of Lincolnshire below.

⁴⁵ For this period, E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government Restored, 1149-1159* (Woodbridge, 1993); White, *Restoration and Reform*. For an important discussion of the settlement of disputes in the aftermath of the civil war, J. C. Holt, 'The Treaty of Winchester', *Anarchy*, 291-316, esp. 295-306.

⁴⁶ *English Lawsuits*, ii, no. 365.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 354-5, 359, 383a and b. Nos. 366 and 370 only address the sheriff but are very much part of the same series. For background to the St. Benet Holme charters and comment on the bishop's role, see Harper Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe', 147.

⁴⁸ *Cartae Antiquae, Rolls 1-10*, Pipe Roll Society, n.s. 17 (1939), ed. L. Landon, 173.

Norwich asking them to protect the lands of Gloucester abbey.⁴⁹

Bishops were notified, as they had been in the time of Henry I, of the settlement of lay land issues: a case between Waleran fitz Walter and Robert fitz Sawin was settled by compromise before the king in his court and the resulting charter was addressed to the bishop of Lincoln. This was related to a larger settlement, of which the result was addressed to the two bishops and the sheriffs and ministers of the relevant counties.⁵⁰ The king used and co-operated with episcopal courts themselves as the complexities of the war were sorted out. Robert de Percy restored lands to Gerbert de Percy in the court of his lord Bishop Jocelin of Salisbury and this was confirmed by the king. Later Bishop Jocelin was ordered by the king to hear the case again.⁵¹ Royal gifts to laymen also still addressed bishops in Henry II's first years. His grant to Fulk fitzWarin was addressed to the bishop of Lincoln and the county of Leicester.⁵² Confirmations of lands held by laymen of other lords could also be addressed to the bishop.⁵³ Henry II also immediately appointed Bishop Hilary of Chichester as sheriff of Sussex. He almost certainly relied as much on the bishop's local knowledge and existing authority in the shire as his capacity as a royal clerk with administrative skills.⁵⁴

The extent to which Henry I, at least, still relied on a traditional authority which worked with, rather than took orders from, him is clear in a report of the reception of a charter in the court of Bishop John of Bath. The bishop received the king's writ in his own court, but did not carry out its instructions until his own advisors had investigated whether the royal decision had been based on a correct interpretation of the case.⁵⁵ It may well be that a process such as this lies behind some writs which notify bishops and shires of royal decisions and which

⁴⁹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 364.

⁵⁰ *Cartae Antiquae, Rolls 11-20*, Pipe Roll Society, n.s. 33 (1960), ed. J. Conway Davies, 477-79.

⁵¹ *English Lawsuits*, ii, nos. 374, 397.

⁵² *Recueil des Actes de Henri II*, ed. L. Delisle, E. Berger (4 vols., Paris, 1906-27), ii, no. 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 85-6.

⁵⁴ H. Mayr-Harting, 'Hilary, bishop of Chichester (1147-69) and Henry II', *EHR*, 78 (1963), 209-24, 213-15.

⁵⁵ *English Law Suits*, i, no. 226. For similar charters of Henry II in which the power dynamic and the importance of the local official is explicit, see White, *Restoration and Reform*, 171-3.

at a superficial level portray them as royal agents.⁵⁶

Both before and after Stephen's reign bishops played a part in central and local government. This continuity is in itself significant. Bishops acted as the king's executive agents but also as members of the shire hierarchy in their own right. This distinction, perhaps often blurred in actuality, was important. It meant that episcopal authority was to some extent integral to the office and autonomous of the king but still very definitely associated with the good of the kingdom and the region. They had neither lost out to the extent that has been suggested in the past to the new system, nor was their authority completely dependent upon or associated with that system. They were not enmeshed in, but complementary to and integrated with, royal authority.

1.2. Military duties and characteristics

The extent to which bishops contributed anything more than their obligatory military service to the king on the eve of the civil war has often been underestimated and where episcopal military power has been discussed it has often been assumed to be 'private' or 'baronial' in character. This is particularly true of Stephen's reign. Castles, military service and the military character of the episcopacy were also at the root of a number of conflicts between Church and State in England. Military characteristics are therefore crucial to an understanding of the episcopal office. What follows shows that bishops still played an important role in the maintenance of the kingdom's internal security on the eve of the civil war and that that role was only and intimately associated with the 'public' government of the kingdom and with the king himself.

Everett Crosby is the only modern historian to have considered the military role of Henry I's episcopate in depth. He concentrated in the main on its early years and attributed a build-up of episcopal military capacity not to the king but to bishops' personal ambitions, 'During the reign of Henry I... the bishops were

⁵⁶ E.g., *RRAN*, ii, nos. 729, 1054, 1255.

building their power and the king was able to keep them under control.' For him, the king's promotion of the military strength of the bishop was a dangerous game: granting power and wealth opened up the possibility of it being misused in the service of independent ambitions.⁵⁷ He is not alone in seeing this as proven in 1139. For Isobel Megaw, episcopal castle building was as dangerous as that of the laity and Stephen was justified in taking the chance to reduce the dangerous power of the bishops when he could. 'On the basis of their military power as well in the eyes of the king and in the life of the realm, bishops often enjoyed prestige and power that was little different from that of the most important lay lords.'⁵⁸ Ostensibly, the evidence of Stephen's reign supports this approach, especially the *Gesta Stephani's* comments about Bishops Roger of Chester and Alexander of Lincoln quoted in the Introduction.⁵⁹

That the episcopate was of importance in the consolidation of the Norman duchy in the eleventh century and again in the aftermath of the Conquest is well accepted. It was paralleled in the Anglo-Saxon tradition in an episcopal duty to defend the city and contribute to the defence of the kingdom. Bishops were also fundamental to Henry I's survival in his early years.⁶⁰ Episcopal military capacity's importance is clear too in the royal disputes with Anselm and William of St. Calais. However, generally, the increasingly financial nature of military obligations, the apparent impact of reform, apparent internal peace and the administrative rather than military style of kingship have led to a lack of acknowledgement of a continued military capacity of the episcopate in the remainder of Henry's reign.⁶¹

In fact, Henry was vulnerable throughout his reign. William Clito and the succession provided potential foci for unrest and he was keen to restrict the latent power of the great magnates in England. Their ambitions were difficult to

⁵⁷ Crosby, 'English episcopate under Henry I', 15-17.

⁵⁸ Megaw, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', 35-7.

⁵⁹ *GS*, 104.

⁶⁰ E.g., *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. R.R. Darlington and P. McGurk (3 vols., Oxford, 1998), iii, 55 for Wulfstan of Worcester in 1088 and 99 for only the natives and the bishops standing by the king in 1101.

⁶¹ H. Chew, *The English Ecclesiastical Tenants in Chief and Knights Service, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1932), 38.

keep in check and men of significance in England became involved in revolt in Normandy. Waleran of Meulan was the brother of the earl of Leicester, the most powerful landholder in the central midlands. William de Roumare went into revolt over his claims to his mother's lands in Lincolnshire and, while he was soon back in favour, the king must always have been wary of him.⁶² William was half brother to the earl of Chester who remained at peace but who also had unrequited claims and whose power was also restricted by the king. The importance of such men in the collapse of royal authority in the reign of Stephen is a commonplace. The king's attempts to deal with these problems included the imposition of 'new men' into areas where great magnates had influence. This often caused friction in itself.⁶³ Bishops could play a similar role without the attendant disruption to local society because, theoretically, their commitment to the king and absence of personal ambition could be assumed.

Evidence from the case study diocese of Lincoln is most explicit in this respect. Half the castleguard the bishop owed to the royal castle in the city was transferred to his own castle at Newark. The king also supported episcopal attempts to develop the town there.⁶⁴ The bishop's new castle was not the first on the site because the strategic significance of the Trent crossing had been recognised when the Normans arrived. By the time the new castle and town began to grow it also had internal importance. It placed the bishop right in the centre of a group of potentially difficult magnates: Earl Robert of Leicester, William de Roumare and Earl Ranulf II of Chester. Various explanations for this transfer of the bishop's military power have been put forward. For some it symbolised a withdrawal of the bishop from participation in secular affairs and

⁶² D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), 14-25. On the significance of Normandy, see J. A. Green, 'Unity and disunity in the Anglo-Norman state', *Historical Research*, 62 (1989), 128-33; D. Bates, 'Normandy and England after 1066', *EHR*, 104 (1989), 853-61; Crouch, 'Normans and Anglo-Normans: a divided aristocracy?', *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. Bates and A. Curry (London, 1994), 51-67 as introductions. For Stephen's failure to control the situation there, Crouch, *Reign*, 342. For William, *OV*, vi, 332-4.

⁶³ D. Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton and Roger earl of Warwick: new men and magnates in the reign of Henry I', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 113-24. See for the murder of William Maltravers, Richard of Hexham, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, (4 vols., Rolls Series, 1884-9), iii, 140.

⁶⁴ *RRAN*, ii, nos. 1660-1, 1770, 1772 and see below, p. 141.

was a part of the developing reform process.⁶⁵ For others it was rooted in the glorification and display of wealth and power so often associated with the bishop of Lincoln, and for some in his quest for yet more of that power.⁶⁶ It is worth noting that all three have been influenced by traditional models of the reform movement and the twelfth-century bishop. The first is inherently unlikely since the bishops still owed half their guard at Lincoln castle and can be shown to have still played a role in other forms of secular government. The second is equally so, because Henry I's interest in and contribution to Newark was so consistent as to entail that it was he that was the driving force behind episcopal growth. Much of what created the new focus of power originated with him and he included lands and rights from areas in which the bishop himself had no associations and no power and others which would bring the bishop into direct conflict with magnates the king had good reason to fear. The bishop of Lincoln possessed considerable power at Newark on the eve of the civil war, but royal policy was the source of that power and it was supposed to be used in its interests.

Similar transfers of castleguard elsewhere might be explained in the same way, rather than as the result of un-clerical ambition. Unlike his cousin at Lincoln, Bishop Nigel of Ely had to pay for the privilege and in the end used the natural island fortress against Stephen. However, the initial transfer did not necessarily entail that this would happen.⁶⁷ Ely had owed guard at Norwich as did the bishop of Norwich and the abbot of Bury St Edmunds. Stephen gave them the right to transfer their knights' service from there too, but neither used it for his own purposes nor paid.⁶⁸ St Edmunds, under a loyalist abbot, was essential to Stephen's cordon round Geoffrey de Mandeville and his containing Hugh Bigod in East Anglia.⁶⁹ At both Norwich and Lincoln, the transfer of knights' service served a purpose. In each case come Stephen's reign a dominant magnate family asserted its rights to the permanent custody of the royal castle and the city. The

⁶⁵ D. Stocker and A. Vince, 'The Early Norman Castle at Lincoln and a re evaluation of the Original West Tower of Lincoln Cathedral', *Medieval Archaeology*, 41 (1998), 223-33, 227.

⁶⁶ Crosby, 'English episcopate under Henry I', 14.

⁶⁷ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1656.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 757.

⁶⁹ Davis, *King Stephen*, 77-8, 80-1.

part of the Bigod family at Norwich was complex but there can be no doubt that they desired both an earldom and custody of the royal castle.⁷⁰ The removal of some of the bishop of Lincoln's military capacity outside the city undoubtedly preserved his ability to act against that family. The transfer of knights' service to Bury St Edmunds perhaps served royal policy better than retaining it at Norwich. It could be speculated that there was policy behind these transfers; even if there was not, neither bishops nor abbot considered that they had been released from their obligations to serve the king.

Rochester had its own bishop but he was a dependent of the archbishop of Canterbury and the latter was responsible for the city. Henry I granted Rochester castle to Archbishop William de Corbeil but in permanent custody rather than outright ownership. As at Newark, his continued interest in the castle is evidenced by his later ensuring that it could fulfil its obligations.⁷¹ Bishop Roger of Salisbury was granted Salisbury castle but, while he held his other castles in his own right, he held it in custody.⁷² Both Rochester and Salisbury were granted to trusted, impartial powers late in the reign when the succession issue had become important. It is worth noting in this respect that both bishops were crucial to Stephen's accession.⁷³ Bishop Roger, like his nephew at Lincoln, was picked out for his castle building for his own sake, but at Salisbury at least he engaged in royal work.

Royal intervention and moulding of episcopal military power also provides an explanation of the location of the bishop of London's castle at Bishop's Stortford. This confused Pamela Taylor, because if barons had only one castle it was usually at their chief manor, but the bishop's was on an outlying estate. Later she realised that the site had national strategic importance. Bishop's Stortford castle would eventually play an important role in the containment of

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 18, 42, 50, 106, 118, 128, for a narrative of the turns and twists of Hugh's career.

⁷¹ *RRAN*, ii, nos. 1475, 1606. See also, C. Coulson, 'Peaceable Power in English Castles', *ANS*, 23 (2000), 69-95, 85-6.

⁷² *HN*, 44.

⁷³ For possible alliances over the succession problem between the archbishop and the bishop see, C. Warren Hollister, 'The Anglo-Norman Succession Crisis of 1126', *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions* (London, 1986), 145-171, 159.

the rebellious Geoffrey de Mandeville.⁷⁴ Taylor's initial difficulties stemmed from an assumption of the equation of the bishop with a lay baron. Newark too was out on a limb in terms of the estates of the bishop. A more likely site for a castle might well have been the bishop's favourite residence and centre of a large group of episcopal estates at Brampton in Huntingdonshire.

Bishops almost certainly wished to add to their status, to display their power and almost certainly to reduce the extent to which they owed them to forces outside their own jurisdiction and control, but there is no evidence of this extending to active military action.⁷⁵ Recent work on English castles has emphasised their importance as administrative centres, residences and as symbols of wealth and power.⁷⁶ The latter at least could compromise their military effectiveness. Newark castle and Bishop Roger of Salisbury's at Sherborne had large openings facing their towns.⁷⁷ Newark was an essential part of the foundation of a new town, Sherborne was primarily a palace that could also be defended (albeit very well indeed).⁷⁸ The bishop of Winchester's 'castle' at Wolvsey was first and foremost a palace. Its fortification only proceeded gradually as the conditions worsened in the lead up to the civil war.⁷⁹ It is important to note that it is in fact in this context of display and self glorification rather than militaristic tendencies that the majority of the contemporary castigation of the bishops after their arrest takes place.⁸⁰

Over-enseffment by bishops has similarly encouraged criticism of them in

⁷⁴ P. Taylor, 'The Estates of the Bishopric of London From the Seventh Century to the Early Sixteenth Century' (unpub., Ph. D. Thesis, University of London, 1976), 104-5; Taylor realised the role of the castle in, 'The Military Endowment and Military obligation of the see of London', *ANS*, 14, (1991) 287-313, 305-6, 309.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of 'display' and related issues see below, pp.81-3.

⁷⁶ M.W. Thompson, 'The place of Durham among Norman episcopal palaces and castles', *Anglo-Norman Durham*, 425-36, 425; C. Coulson, 'The Castles of The Anarchy', *Anarchy*, 67-92, *passim*, esp. 91; 'Cultural Realities and Reappraisals in English Castle Study', *Journal of Medieval History*, 22 (1996), 171-207.

⁷⁷ Coulson, 'Cultural Realities', 175.

⁷⁸ R. Stalley, 'A Twelfth Century Patron of Architecture: A study of the buildings erected by Roger, bishop of Salisbury', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd ser., 34 (1971), 62-83, 68.

⁷⁹ M. Biddle, 'Wolvsey: the *domus quasi palatium* of Henry de Blois in Winchester', *Chateau Gaillard*, 3 (1966), 28-36.

⁸⁰ *HN*, 44-6; *GS*, 79-80; *HH*, 720-1.

terms of ambition and militarism.⁸¹ However, Samuel Everett Gleason long ago showed that episcopal enfeoffment had economic and social rather than military roots. He found no evidence of the bishops of Bayeux taking independent military action with or without the support of his tenants across the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The military capacity and potential of the bishops was only ever called upon in the duke's interests.⁸² With the exception of Bishops Odo of Bayeux and Geoffrey de Coutances whose power in England was essentially secular, there is simply no evidence of bishops engaging in military activity on their own behalf in England before Stephen's reign.

Bishops did have a continued public military role in the defence of their cities through Henry I's and into Stephen's reign. At Lincoln, only half of the bishop's castleguard was transferred to Newark. His traditional role in the military governance of the site of his see was maintained and, again, it was in direct conflict with the interests of local magnates. Bishop Roger's construction work at Salisbury was almost certainly of a town wall rather than of any monument to his own glory or ambition.⁸³ The duty of defending the city is best seen in John of Worcester's descriptions of Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester's actions during the rebellion of 1088. Both the royal garrison and the citizens looked to the bishop and he exhorted them to serve their king and to defend the city.⁸⁴

Events at Bath in 1138 show that this duty was still an essential part of the bishop's office in the early years of Stephen's reign. The *Gesta Stephani* includes a description of how the bishop nearly lost his city after managing to get himself captured. His captors insisted on Bath's surrender as the price of his freedom. Its author excused Bishop Robert, but John of Worcester criticised him for dereliction of an acknowledged duty and responsibility and emphasised the righteousness of the king's anger.⁸⁵ Given John's description of Bishop Wulfstan's conduct, he had a very clear-cut understanding of the duty of a

⁸¹ Crosby, 'English episcopate under Henry I', 15.

⁸² Gleason, *Ecclesiastical Barony*, 51-2, 73, 81-2.

⁸³ Stalley, 'A Twelfth Century Patron of Architecture', 69; cf., Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury*, 86.

⁸⁴ *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii, 55. John couches Wulfstan's conduct in the least militaristic terms possible, but the leadership of the bishop is clear.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 249; *GS*, 39-41, 43.

bishop to his see and the king. The *Gesta Stephani* also describes how the bishop of Bath gave the king a tour of the wall and defences. In this case, the bishop actually owned the city but he still recognised his duty to the king. He was in command not, as Megaw understood, as royal agent, but as a bishop of the kingdom. This traditional understanding of their office may have contributed to the continued loyalty of the bishops of Exeter and Lincoln to the king in the face of adversity (indeed, it may have maintained a loyalty that could otherwise have faded!). On the eve of the civil war the governmental and military importance of the bishops was much more significant than has hitherto been recognised. That power was intimately associated with the king and public government but it was not baronial.

Anglo-Saxon England, ducal Normandy and Anglo-Norman England had no tradition equivalent to the comital power and competition which were features of some continental regions. Royal and ducal power were too present and the bishops' own lands and rights too small to have led to or to lead to such phenomena.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, bishops do appear as 'barons' in the major conflicts between Church and State in Anglo-Norman England. Both William of St Calais and Anselm argued that they should be tried according to their order. Their opponents argued that they were being tried according to their baronial status. In 1139 Stephen's representatives would argue that the bishops were arrested and their possessions seized as his lay servants.⁸⁷ All three trials have been cited in textbook descriptions of a reform period churchmen's dilemma caused by the dual character of the bishop as ecclesiastic and baron.

Bishops owed the king the military service he imposed upon them and did fealty to the king as their lord for their lands. Therefore they were barons, but the king's rights over and responsibilities for their lands were more extensive than

⁸⁶ E.g., Arnold, *Castle and Bishop*; H.L. Janssen, 'The Castles of the Bishop of Utrecht and their Function in the Political and Military Development of the Bishopric', *Chateau Gaillard*, 8 (1977), 135-57. Timothy Reuter has further shown that even where such militaristic and power hungry bishops have been found, this can sometimes be more myth than reality: '*Episcopi cum sua militia*', and especially, 'The Imperial Church System'.

⁸⁷ The best introduction combining all three remains Barlow's, *English Church*, 281-92. The best modern summary of the Durham case is, M. Philpott, 'The *De iniusta vexacione Willelmi episcopi primi* and canon law in Anglo-Norman Durham', *Anglo-Norman Durham*, 125-37.

those he held over laymen's and therefore they were not secular barons. Royal rights and responsibilities in this respect are difficult to pin down because they were never exactly defined during the period. Nevertheless, they had their origins in the king's more general responsibilities to the Church in general and in the continued understanding of the church as part of the royal demesne, inalienable without royal permission. The king's rights to custody of vacant bishoprics and abbacies and to the personal wealth of dead prelates symbolise his understanding of his relationship with the lands and rights of the church.⁸⁸ In military terms this meant that king had the right to intervene in and mould the shape of bishoprics' military capacity at will. He could also assume that the church's power was at his service. In terms of castles, the king had rights of temporary rendability in time of danger over all castles whoever held them. Stephen asserted them in his case in 1139 but, as Charles Coulson has noted, he believed that his rights over the bishops' castles were more long term than over barons'.⁸⁹

Ecclesiastical understanding of this intimate relationship was similar to this royal position. Amongst all but the most extreme reformers, the right of the ruler to the service of the temporalities of the church in time of emergency was a given. According to Hugh of St. Victor, an endowed church had always to recognise that its secular power always remained royal in character and that the royal claim was inalienable.⁹⁰ Stephen's case in 1139 has to be considered in this light. In military terms specifically, the canon law and contemporary political theory of the mid-twelfth century reinforced the 'public' and traditional relationship between episcopal military power and the kingdom. It meant that

⁸⁸ Barlow, *English Church*, 113-5; Chew, *Ecclesiastical Tenants in Chief*, 35; M. Howell, *Regalian Right in Medieval England* (London, 1962), 21, 31; Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, 231-48; G. Garnett, 'The Origins of the Crown', *The History of English Law: Centenary essays on Pollock and Maitland*, ed. J. Hudson, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 89 (1996), 171-271, 176-9.

⁸⁹ Coulson, 'Castles of the Anarchy', 74-5. Note further Coulson's comments on the idea of royal licensing of castles as inapplicable at this period and contrast with opposite statements in S. Morillo, *Warfare under the Anglo-Norman Kings 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1994) 17; Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 278-80. Coulson is the more persuasive.

⁹⁰ See for reasoned consideration of these issues, R.L. Benson, *The Bishop Elect. A Study in Medieval Ecclesiastical Office* (Princeton, 1968), 313-8, esp. 314, for Hugh himself, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis)*, trans., R. J. De Ferrari, *Medieval Academy of America*, 58 (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 258.

the military capacity of the episcopal office was perceived by its holders, by the king, and by the wider population as a public rather than a private power. It emphasises the continued commitment of the bishop to kingdom and king. It also suggests that the 'reform' model adhered to by historians of Stephen's reign does not fit the facts.

1.3. Kingship

This traditional close relationship between bishops and king and episcopal importance also survived to 1135 in the arena of kingship. Christianity, ritual, and ceremony were fundamental to, and bishops played an important part in, the construction and maintenance of ideologies of early medieval kingship. Janet Nelson has shown brilliantly how Hincmar of Rheims and his fellows moulded a system of ritual for the Carolingian emperors which defined both his and their role.⁹¹ In Anglo-Saxon England, Archbishop Wulfstan was crucial to Cnut's legitimacy and Henry Loyn has described bishops as the solvent that allowed the creation of the dominance of the king's peace.⁹² However, historians of Anglo-Norman England have agreed that Henry I's new administrative kingdom reduced the formers' and therefore the latter's importance.⁹³ Only consecration and coronation have been allowed to retain some of their past significance.⁹⁴

⁹¹ J.L. Nelson, 'Kingship, Law and Liturgy in the Political Thought of Hincmar of Rheims', *EHR*, 92 (1977), 241-79, repr., *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 131-71.

⁹² H.R. Loyn, 'Church and State in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries', *Tenth Century Studies*, ed. D. Parsons (London, 1975), 94-109, 229-30, 97, 100; idem, 'De Iure Domini Regis: A Comment on Royal Authority in Eleventh Century England', *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1992), 17-24, 22; P. Wormald, 'Giving God and King their Due: Conflict and its Regulation in the Early English State', *Settimana di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo*, 44 (Spoleto, 1997), 549-90, repr. new pagination, *Legal Culture*, 333-55, 337; *ibid.*, 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society', 225-51, 244-6 (repr. from *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. D. Pelteret (New York, 1999)). For late eleventh century Anglo-Saxon England, see *The Life of Edward the Confessor*, ed. and trans. F. Barlow (2nd ed. Oxford, 1992), lxxviii-lxxxi. and comment, *English Church*, 277-8. Barlow warns against seeing the life as promoting an 'exaggerated cult of kingship' and emphasises the commonality of the biographer's approach, *Life of Edward the Confessor*, lxxviii, lxxix. See also nt. 106 below.

⁹³ K. Leyser, 'The Anglo-Norman Succession, 1120-1125', *ANS*, 13 (1991), 225-41, repr. *Communications and Power*, 98-114, 104-5; G. Koziol, 'England, France and the Problem of Sacrality in Twelfth Century Ritual', *Cultures of Power*, ed. T. Bisson (Philadelphia, 1995), 134-49.

⁹⁴ See especially, E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political*

Karl Leyser and Geoffrey Koziol have contrasted English with imperial and French kingship. For Leyser, the Investiture Controversy was solved with relatively little fuss in England because the loss of status and power it entailed did nothing to alter the practical control and domination enjoyed and enforced by the king. This domination was emphatically bureaucratic; writs and sheriffs replaced rings and investiture. Leyser contrasted this with the Empire where much of the Emperor's limited ability to control bishops and much of his own authority lay in that ritual and status.⁹⁵ Koziol contrasted French with English kingship: in France, kingship was becoming more and more sacralized and ritualised at the same time as in England it was becoming more and more pragmatic.⁹⁶ French kingship was Christian kingship and the episcopate was fundamental in its creation. For much of the twelfth century royal power rested in the status their growing acceptance of the king provided much more than in his practical domination of the country.⁹⁷

In terms of Anglo-Norman England, for Koziol, ideology and ritual were double edged in any case. A pragmatic kingship was paralleled in a pragmatic audience. There was little respect for the pretensions of the monarchy among the magnate classes, and ritual and ceremony were as likely to be received by jokes and end in farce as promote the status of the king.⁹⁸ Although no historian of Henry's reign has explicitly acknowledged it, this approach is concomitant with a wider twelfth-century phenomenon of replacement of the sacral and consecrated by the jurisdictional as the fundamental element in the accession to, and definition of,

Theology (Princeton, 1957); Warren, *Governance*, 19-21; Green, *Government*, 3-4, unfortunately Green has little space to deal with the issue; M. Strickland, 'Against the Lord's Anointed: aspects of warfare and baronial rebellion in England and Normandy, 1075-1265', *Law and Government*, 56-78, 57. Note that here Strickland emphasises the status of Henry I as anointed king, but points to a change in Stephen's reign where the king is seen as lord, 59, in a shift to a more feudal ideology, see below nt. 101.

⁹⁵ Leyser, 'Anglo Norman Succession', *passim*.

⁹⁶ Koziol, 'Sacrality', 146-9. See for the much later appearance of the royal ability to cure scrofula in England, Barlow, *English Church*, 303.

⁹⁷ G. Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favour: ritual and political order in early medieval France* (Ithaca, 1992), 7, 131-7. See below for particular importance of this in the reign of Stephen. See also L. Grant, *Abbot Suger of St Denis* (London, 1998), 10-22 for a recent reassessment of Suger's role in the creation of French kingship.

⁹⁸ Koziol, 'Sacrality', 136-41.

both the ecclesiastical and royal office.⁹⁹ In Anglo-Norman historiography it has been further elevated into a new ideology of administrative and rational kingship.¹⁰⁰ Two other ideologies have also been put forward, chivalric and feudal; common to all three is that they replace that of Christian kingship.¹⁰¹ The most recent study of Stephen's reign sees administrative kingship as Henry I's most important legacy and the former's failure to keep it up as having a serious effect on his status.¹⁰²

Chapter Two discusses historiographical representation of the episcopal office as administrative. It is worth noting that this current context has had an effect in this respect. It has led to bishops' potential ideological commitment to service to the king being passed over. The episcopacy of a rational and pragmatic administrative kingdom was itself rational, pragmatic and administrative; this approach is at the root of those studies that see the episcopacy as king's men.

C. Warren Hollister in his 'Henry I and the Invisible Transformation of England' began by reciting the comments of the chroniclers on the nature of Anglo-Norman kingship.¹⁰³ Theirs being essentially the conventional good Christian king, Hollister goes on to discuss what for him was really important in Henry's new governmental power. It is surely likely that Henry I's kingship remained to some extent at least dependent on contemporary rather than modern

⁹⁹ See stimulating comments in Benson, *The Bishop Elect*, 385.

¹⁰⁰ Southern, 'The Place of Henry I in English History'; Hollister and Baldwin, 'Rise of Administrative Kingship'; Hollister, 'Henry I and the Invisible Transformation of England', *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting (London, 1985), 119-130; Hollister, 'Political Culture', 12-4, 17. Hollister says here: '...a remarkable and strikingly self-conscious administrative reorganisation that had the effect of centralising and systematising governance...', 14. He had used the same emphasis on systematisation in 'Henry I', 127.

¹⁰¹ J.E.A. Joliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (2nd ed., London, 1963), 4, 5, 16, concentrated on the Angevins, but dealt also with their predecessors-'Nor do I think that its [the status of the kings'] power can be explained as a survival of that of the Saxon crown, or as a borrowing from the reviving study of Roman law, still less from anything to be derived from Christian kingship.' Instead, for Joliffe, the ideological justification for and the practical basis of royal power was almost exclusively feudal. See also D. Knowles, *The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1951), 142-3. Knowles treats the secular loyalties of the bishops which come into conflict with their ecclesiastical ones as fundamentally feudal, and as existing within the 'fully developed feudal state of the Anglo-Norman kingdom'. Koziol offers the chivalric model, 'Sacrality', 132-5. See also, above, nt. 94.

¹⁰² Crouch, *Reign*, 84.

¹⁰³ Hollister, 'Henry I', 119-24.

perceptions of the reign. While 'administrative' kingship did come into being in Henry I's reign the ideology of Christian kingship and traditional definitions of good kingship remained essential too.¹⁰⁴

Stephen's accession and first years provide the most obvious evidence of the continued significance of ritual and ceremony in English kingship through the reign of Henry I. Oath taking, consecration and great courts were seen still to hold great power. In these processes the Church and the bishops were crucial. Historians have understood the apparent desertion of the king's court by the Church for much of the civil war as costing him a great deal in terms of legitimacy and it is now commonplace too to state that the Church and most laymen were bound in passive allegiance to Stephen throughout the civil war. It was Henry who had insisted on the oaths taken to Matilda, occasions charged with importance on several levels.¹⁰⁵ He did not think in terms of the rational government of a proto-state and neither did those who served him. His devotion to his duty as a Christian king and to his church were both sincere and essential to the maintenance of his kingship.¹⁰⁶

The most obvious example of the decline of the importance of the ritual and ideology of kingship is consistently seen as the problem of crown-wearing. Regular crown-wearings had been a feature of the kingship of the first two Norman reigns and also of Henry's early years, but after 1113 they became less frequent. For Green this was based in practical considerations, but she noted too the difficulties at such charged events.¹⁰⁷ For Koziol, the disputes were evidence

¹⁰⁴ This, as with much else, is recognised and emphasised by Green, *Government*, 7-8, but she has not the space to expand on it at any length.

¹⁰⁵ Crouch, *Reign*, 25 points to the different histories of the 1126 oath presented by William of Malmesbury and John of Worcester. In the former, there is competition to take the oath, in the latter there is much hesitation.

¹⁰⁶ Barlow at one time countenanced growth of a cult of sacramental kingship based on Edward the Confessor during Henry's reign, *English Church*, 302, but is much more circumspect in *Life of Edward the Confessor*, lxviii-lxix, App. D. Here he minimises the importance of a cult of Edward with links to the king before Stephen's reign.

¹⁰⁷ H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Anglo-Norman *Laudes Regiae*', *Viator*, 12 (1981), 37-78; J. Nelson, 'The Rites of the Conqueror', *ANS*, 4 (1981), 117-32, 210-221, repr. *Politics and Ritual*, 371-401, makes important corrections; Green, *Government*, 20-1. Note here Green's references to Gaimar and Geoffrey of Monmouth. Despite the apparent ending of regular crown wearings it seems likely that the latter at least drew on Henry I's court.

of the declining power of the ritual.¹⁰⁸ However, given that these occasions were so highly charged and that the disruption of them seems more usually to have been by disputes over precedence rather than by ridicule of the king, it might instead be suggested that the avoidance of them except on the most essential occasions was precisely because of their potential power and effect. Twice the occasion was turned into farce by archbishops of York insisting on their status. For them, their place was crucial to their relationship with the archbishops of Canterbury.¹⁰⁹ For Henry of Huntingdon at least crown-wearings retained their significance until Stephen's reign and their ending then was significant in itself; it symbolised a change in the nature and the legitimacy of the kingship.¹¹⁰ It will be suggested below that crown-wearings were also an important part of Stephen's attempts to buttress his kingship.

In other ways too Henry maintained the theatre of kingship. He justified his invasion of Normandy through a speech by the bishop of Séez stating that duke Robert had failed in his duty as a Christian ruler. He cut off his long hair as a symbol of his commitment to restoring Christian government in the duchy.¹¹¹ He involved himself in church councils at least partly in aid of making clear his continued commitment to his duties as a Christian king. It is unnecessary to see such interventions as the king's support for legislation on married clergy as motivated solely by financial concerns.¹¹²

Henry's reign also saw a sustained programme of codifying and recording the kingdom's law. Recent work has emphasised that rather than nostalgic antiquarian projects this was part of an essential process of associating the king with the law and with the laws of Christian kingship. In particular, as Green says, 'What can be seen in the *Quadripartitus* is an awareness of the ideological dimension of written law as a statement of the ideals as well as the practice of

¹⁰⁸ Koziol, 'Sacrality', 137-9.

¹⁰⁹ Eadmer, *Historia Novarum*, ed. M. Rule, (Rolls Series, 1884), 219; Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, ed. B. Thorpe (2 vols., London, 1848-9), ii, 84. Hugh the Chanter, *The History of the Church of York 1066-1127*, trans., C. Johnson (Edinburgh, 1961), 129-30, has a different and less dramatic interpretation of this particular event. See also Nichol, *Thurstan*, 99.

¹¹⁰ *HH*, 725.

¹¹¹ *OV*, vi, 61, the episode is discussed further below at p. 77.

¹¹² *CS*, no. 132; Barlow, *English Church*, 129.

kingship.’¹¹³ The *Leges Edwardi* of the last years of Henry’s reign or the first years of Stephen must also be so considered in this light.¹¹⁴ Chapter 11 of the *Leges Henrici Primi* deals with those ecclesiastical cases in which the king retained a right to intervene, its emphasis is on the king fulfilling his duties. This is clear in the suggested process of dealing with the withholding of tithes. First the king’s reeve with the representatives of the bishop and the lord should approach the church; if the case was settled then, only the bishop and the lord received any financial gain. Only if there was a continued withholding did the accused owe the king. The chapter concludes with the statement that: ‘Indeed, secular justice and compulsion are necessary in the case of both ecclesiastical laws and secular ordinances because many people cannot otherwise be recalled from their evil doings and many are unwilling to dispose themselves to the worship of God and the practice of lawful behaviour.’¹¹⁵ As in late Anglo-Saxon England, the formulation of these tracts was almost certainly dominated by members of the episcopacy.¹¹⁶ In this they should be compared to the process that archbishop Wulfstan engaged in under Cnut.

On the eve of the civil war English kingship was not so administrative as has hitherto been assumed and bishops were still committed to and playing an

¹¹³ Green, *Government*, 97, 99; P. Cramer, ‘Ernulf of Rochester and Early Anglo-Norman Canon Law’, *JEH*, 40 (1989), 483-510, 493; Wormald, ‘Quadripartitus’, 112; idem., ‘*Laga Eadwardi*’, 136-7; J. Hudson, ‘Administration, Family and Perceptions of the Past in Late Twelfth Century England: Richard fitzNigel and The Dialogue of the Exchequer’, *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. P. Magdalino (London, 1992), 75-98, 76-7, App..

¹¹⁴ B. O’Brien, *God’s Peace and King’s Peace. The Laws of Edward the Confessor*, (Philadelphia, 1999).

¹¹⁵ *Leges Henrici Primi*, ch. 11.16.

¹¹⁶ Wormald, ‘Quadripartitus’, 110-11 for judicious analysis of the problem of the authorship of the work, n.91, ‘...to say that bishop William Warelwast served as a royal justice and was heavily involved in Anglo-papal diplomacy ... is not to say that he was Q. But it is to suggest that his is the sort of profile that we might helpfully bear in mind.’

important part in maintaining it. This was true too of episcopal involvement in the government and military control of the kingdom. In all three areas they were much more than 'king's men' but their authority was essentially 'public' rather than 'private'. Christopher Holdsworth argued that episcopal weakness in Stephen's reign stemmed from bishops' reduction in Henry I's reign. The contrary is in fact the case. On the eve of the civil war bishops had an important place in royal government and considerable autonomous power.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONTEXT

The focus of this chapter is Anglo-Norman bishops' personal religion, pastoral involvement, social significance and spiritual authority. Its aim is to show that there is much firmer evidence for all of them than has hitherto been allowed. As a result, like Chapter One, it also suggests a new starting point for analysis of Stephen's bishops. It was noted in the Introduction that the constitutional and administrative history of the Anglo-Norman Church has been admirably reconstructed. Repeating it might add more but nothing new to modern understanding of the episcopacy. It is therefore assumed here and discussed only in terms of its significance. However, the evidence itself is the same. What follows is divided into two sections. The first critiques modern historiography and conceptual frameworks and sets up an alternative within which the second then reassesses the evidence.

Lack of consideration of bishops' spiritual characteristics is essentially a function of the evidence. Episcopal evidence from this period is overwhelmingly administrative while that of lay piety and spirituality is for the most part monastic. Very little ecclesiological material, few letters, sermons or lives produced by and about the secular clergy survive while their educational background beyond their 'on the job' training in royal or episcopal service is for the most part unknown. This makes it very difficult to reconstruct the episcopal mentalité. While the best historians have insisted on the importance of the religious and spiritual in understanding the episcopacy, they have had to acknowledge frustration in proving it and the limitations this has imposed on their work. They have had to focus instead on administration if analysing the episcopate, and monasticism if addressing religious life.¹ Unfortunately, others have been led by the relative weights of the evidence to approach the episcopacy only in terms of administration and lay piety only in terms of monasticism. Bishops have become stereotyped as administrators. Modern consensus is that

¹ Brett, *English Church*, hits this barrier a number of times, 113, 119, 122, 233. See also Cheney, *Roger, Bishop of Worcester*, 57; Green, *Aristocracy*, 391.

this was a 'good thing' as far as it went, but it only goes so far.² Older stereotypes, the 'king's man' and the 'bad' bishop, have also retained some influence. This is very much the framework within which the standard historiographical assumptions of weakness, withdrawal and insignificance in the episcopacy through Stephen's reign have been made. However, while bishops were administrators, governors or politicians, they were also integral to religious life.

The absence of explicit evidence for non-administrative aspects of episcopal life can be dealt with to some extent by examining the very material which has so frustrated some but led others astray, namely the administrative and monastic evidence. Critical material and episcopal failings can also be made to contribute to an understanding of bishops' place in lay religion and society. Potential spiritual power can at least be assessed to some extent by analysis of that which allowed it, individual spirituality and religious significance.

Unlike in the preceding chapter, well known evidence from Stephen's reign encourages such a search. Bishops' *christianitas* was the guarantee of an agreement between the earls of Chester and Leicester; Archbishop Thurstan rallied the north in 1138; and it has been tentatively recognised that growth in papal and archiepiscopal confirmation charters was part of a search for legitimate authority. Awareness of these has not altered the general approach to the episcopacy of the reign. It has been argued that they were the product of the very particular circumstances of civil war and power vacuum rather than inherent to the office.³ Dalton, who has collated this type of evidence, professed himself lost as to the origins of, and motivation behind, episcopal action. He also looked only at isolated, dramatic incidents making no attempt to calibrate how substantial, continuous or even routine episcopal spiritual authority and social importance was.⁴ There is more to be said about episcopal activity in Stephen's reign. It can only be said if the context in which that reign began is made clear. It will also be suggested here that the origins of any religious

² Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 30; Scammel, *Hugh de Puiset*, 91.

³ Brett, *English Church*, 91.

⁴ Dalton, 'Churchmen', *passim*.

charisma Anglo-Norman bishops possessed have to be sought in their routine practice.

2.1. Historiography

It is worth rehearsing some examples of historiographical development to support the statements made above and in the Introduction. Martin Brett's frustration is clear when he writes that '...for while one can see with comparative clarity the shape of the superstructure of the church there is an almost total darkness over the central problem of the relations between the clergy and the great bulk of the laity. It is absurd in a sense to study the scaffolding of the church when one knows so little of the needs it existed to satisfy; the pastoral and sacramental mission of the church escapes while its outward forms survive.'⁵ Mooers Christelow's bishops were men who spent little time in the dioceses they had received as rewards, and treated as such.⁶ Robert Bartlett remarked *à propos* of an earnest letter from Pope Paschal II on an election, 'Ecclesiastical appointments were always encrusted with a moralistic rhetoric of this kind. If one turns to the actual composition of the episcopate in Norman and Angevin England then other qualities than wisdom, charity and humility emerge.'⁷ Colin Morris has written that, while administrative advance across the European episcopate of this period '...may suggest that the ideal of the bishop was approximating to the form it would take for the future - a pastor whose task was to instruct his clergy in their duties and to supervise their efficiency through his officers - this would be a serious misunderstanding of his office before 1200.'⁸ Such approaches are to be found at their most extreme in Emma Mason's 1976 discussion of the role of the parishioner. She concluded of ecclesiastical records, 'The distinct and not altogether unfair impression gained from such records is that to the medieval cleric the ideal parishioner was a dutifully programmed automaton with a

⁵ Brett, *English Church*, 233.

⁶ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 50, 54, 67, 69.

⁷ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 395.

⁸ Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 222-3, 289.

limitless purse.⁹

Domination by the administrative evidence manifests itself in several ways, in examination of only administrative activity, explanation of actions only in its terms, and in understanding of it as an end in itself. The first led Graham Loud to warn that, '...one should also remember that to treat the church simply as an institution and individual churches primarily as property owning corporations is to present an appallingly one-sided picture of their role in society.'¹⁰ On occasion its statistics have been used as the sole basis for calculation of episcopal commitment and activity. Mooers Christelow supported her claim that Henry I's curial bishops lacked commitment to their sees by reference to the relatively low number of surviving *acta* and Brett compared the 'feeble' number of archiepiscopal *acta* from the first half of the twelfth century with that of archbishop Theobald.¹¹ This fails to allow for the phenomenal growth of written records across the twelfth-century. It also takes no account of development in their use: Mary Cheney noted that at later twelfth-century church councils, '...the assembled prelates were encouraged to see legislation as an aid, almost a necessity, to the pastoral work which their predecessors had done for centuries in a more personal less uniform way than was now acceptable.'¹²

Administrative motives have been assumed to be behind episcopal action where others are at least possible. Bishop Robert de Béthune of Hereford's willingness to allow the foundation of cemeteries as refuges during the anarchy has been explained as really motivated by an interest in improving the extent and strength of episcopal government, rather than by immediate pastoral concern.¹³ This is hard to justify. Episcopal attempts to create secular chapters have been interpreted as rooted in a need to fund expanding secretariats.¹⁴ However, they

⁹ E. Mason, 'The Role of the Parishoner, 1100-1500', *JEH*, 27 (1976), 17-29, 17, 20.

¹⁰ G. Loud, 'Churches and Churchmen in an age of Conquest: Southern Italy 1030-1130', *Haskins Society Journal*, 4 (1993), 37-53, 40.

¹¹ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 61; Brett, *English Church*, 82. See also, Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 60.

¹² Cheney, *Roger, Bishop of Worcester*, 16; Clanchy, *From Memory, passim*.

¹³ *EEA*, 7, Hereford, xxxviii.

¹⁴ D. Blake, 'The development of the chapter of the diocese of Exeter, 1050-1161', *JMH*, 8 (1982), 1-13, 6, 9; *EEA*, 8, Winchester, xxxi; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xliii-iv; F. Ramsey, 'Robert of Lewes, bishop of Bath, 1133-66: a Cluniac Bishop and his Diocese', *Belief and Culture in the*

must be interpreted within a framework of growing awareness and confidence among the secular clergy about its role and righteousness. Some have seen administration as an end in itself and developments as a function of it. For Brett, episcopal confirmation charters for monasteries were routine and while they show the ‘...increasing elaboration of the bishop’s administrative machinery...’ it was ‘...this that seems to have played the greatest part in establishing the necessity of his consent to the transfer of churches. He was given a place because it was too inconvenient to ignore him.’¹⁵

Brett’s frustration with the evidence was noted above. He outlined his methodological approach thus: ‘...the original compiler was concerned first with what was done, here the interest is focussed much more on how it was done and so the evidence is asked questions it was not designed to answer.’ This is to examine only constitutional history.¹⁶ Returning to the ‘what’ and adding ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘who’ and ‘why’ and allowing for the rituals, ceremonies and symbolism that surrounded many of even the most administrative aspects of the episcopal office, is to approach the evidence in the context in which it was created. It is this sleight of hand that allows administrative evidence to be used to gain some insight into the religion, social significance and spiritual authority of the episcopate.

Most historians now accept that bishops’ appearance in the monastic evidence as often overbearing outside governmental authorities misrepresents what was a necessary and often harmonious relationship.¹⁷ The possible biases of conflict between orders, edificatory zeal, satire and so on are well known but not always taken on board. Barlow showed that Eadmer’s criticism of Walkelin of Winchester was rooted in his ambassadorial activities on behalf of the king against Anselm. William of Malmesbury considered him to be a good bishop once he had overcome early difficulties with his monks.¹⁸ Indeed, some

Middle Ages, ed. R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), 251-63, 262.

¹⁵ Brett, *English Church*, 146.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1, 3. See Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 158 for a similar conclusion as to the historiography of Anglo-Norman monasticism.

¹⁷ Brett, *English Church*, 134-40.

¹⁸ *GP*, 71; Barlow, *English Church*, 80

monastic chronicles present a very positive picture of the episcopate. Orderic Vitalis's descriptions are used below as evidence of episcopal religious and social integration.

Nevertheless, bishops' administrative role in, and their absence from, much of the surviving monastic material has meant that they have been understood as peripheral to the religious relationship between donor and beneficiary. Further, since monastic evidence has rightly come to form the basis of modern attempts to understand the familial, social and political networks that formed society, bishops' place in it has also come to be seen as marginal. At a lower social level the hermit has been given the same central religious role in the social network as the monastery.¹⁹ Again, this is very much a function of the evidence and again the bishop often appears as an unsympathetic outside governmental figure. Sometimes this has been emphasised further by assumption that his membership of the governmental and social elite meant an unbridgeable gulf between himself, the parish priest and his flock.²⁰ On occasion it is emphasised even more by analysis within a historiographical construct in which authority is equated with control, domination and exploitation.²¹ The bishop's relationship with local society and his place in popular religion have often been minimised because of a lack of evidence and the apparent centrality of figures and institutions contrasting with him and the forces of authority and government he represented.²² While there can be no doubting the religious and social centrality of monasticism and eremitism, to bishops as much as anyone else, the bishop had a place in both.²³

¹⁹ E.g. H. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth Century Recluse', *History*, 60 (1975), 337-52; C. Holdsworth, 'Hermits and the Power of the Frontier', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 16 (1990), 55-76; S.J. Ridyard, 'Functions of a Twelfth Century Recluse Revisited: the case of Godric of Finchale', *Belief and Culture*, 236-50.

²⁰ Barlow, *English Church*, 134; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 222-3; 289.

²¹ Far too complex an issue for this thesis and only pointed out here. Well summarized by S. Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900-1050* (Woodbridge, 2000), 21.

²² Similarly, the role of secular colleges has been almost ignored until recently. M.J. Franklin, 'The Secular College as a focus for Anglo-Norman Piety: St Augustine's Daventry', *Ministers and Parish Churches, the Local Church in Transition, 950-1200*, ed J. Blair (Oxford, 1988), 97-105; Brett, 'The English abbeys', 292.

²³ E.g. from a massive bibliography, Harper Bill, 'The Piety of the Anglo-Norman Knightly Class',; J. Ward, 'Fashions in Monastic Endowment: the Foundations of the Clare Family, 1066-1314', *JEH*, 32 (1981), 427-51; G.C. Constable, 'The Diversity of Religious Life and Acceptance of Social Pluralism in the twelfth century', *History, Society and the Churches, Essays in Honour of O. Chadwick*, ed. D. Beates and G. Best (Cambridge, 1985), 29-49;

Comparison, explicit or implicit, with the relatively substantial evidence of episcopal pastoral and spiritual commitment and activity in the early thirteenth century (and in England in the late Anglo-Saxon period) can also compound the lack of evidence.²⁴ There is no Anglo-Norman equivalent for Archbishop Wulfstan of York or Gerald of Wales.²⁵ Saving Anselm, Becket and William fitzHerbert (none of whom was canonised for episcopal activity) nor was any Anglo-Norman bishop either considered saintly or the subject of a major life by near contemporaries between bishops Wulfstan of Worcester (d. 1095) and Hugh of Lincoln (d. 1200). For the early twelfth century, therefore, there is neither equivalent access to evidence of episcopal activities and mentalities nor the vignettes of pastoral activity for which saints' lives are so useful.²⁶ Bishops' registers only appear in the thirteenth century and only then does it become easier to draw a fuller picture of episcopal activity.²⁷

Morris described flourishing mid-century ecclesiological and theological discussion of the office of bishop as focussed almost exclusively internally on personal religious life or proprietary or legal rights rather than externally on pastoral care as it would later come to be.²⁸ Bishops' education has also

Cownie, *Religious Patronage*; J. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215* (Cambridge, 1999), 184. For the bishops, e.g., A.G. Dyson, 'The Monastic Patronage of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln', *JEH*, 26 (1975), 1-25; M.J. Franklin, 'The Bishops of Winchester and the Monastic Revolution', *ANS*, 12 (1989), 47-65. For bishops wanting to retire to monasteries see e.g., St Bernard's letters to archbishop Thurstan, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. LecLercq, H.M. Rochais, C.H. Talbot (8 vols., Rome, 1957-77), nos. 95, 319, and, *Letters of Arnulf*, nos. 53, 118, 121, 124, 126.

²⁴ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 387-8, 455; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 222-3.

²⁵ *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical': Ein Werk ErzBischof Wulfstans von York*, ed. K. Jost (2 vols., Bern, 1959); *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. D. Whitelock (3rd ed., Exeter, 1976); *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer, J.F. Dimock, G.F. Warner (8 vols., Rolls Series, 1861-91); *Speculum Duorum*, ed. Y. Lefevre, R.B.C. Huygens (Cardiff, 1974); *The Jewel of the Church*, ed. J.J. Hagen (Leiden, 1979).

²⁶ *The Vita Wulfstani of William of Malmesbury*, ed. R.R. Darlington (Camden Soc. 40, 1928); Mason, *Wulfstan*; *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. D.L. Douie and H. Farmer (2 vols., London, 1961-2); *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. and trans. R.M. Loomis (New York, 1985); *St Hugh of Lincoln*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting (Oxford, 1987). There were other lives, eg. another by Gerald of Wales of Remigius of Lincoln, *Opera*, vii, 1-80; *The Life of Gundulf Bishop of Rochester*, ed. R. Thomson (Toronto, 1977); Ruud, 'Monks in the World'. None are as wide ranging or of the likes of Wulfstan and Hugh. For reliance on these two, see, eg., Barlow, *English Church*, 115, *passim*.

²⁷ Brooke, 'Episcopal Acta', 46.

²⁸ Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 222-3.

sometimes been understood as administrative. Cheney said of the generation which followed that focussed on in this thesis that they could learn all they needed to know about their office from their Gratian.²⁹ Ecclesiastical legislation too has been characterised as focussed on the clergy to the near exclusion of the laity and sometimes this has been combined with comment that if the growth in administrative government was aimed at improving clerical celibacy and the quality of provision to the laity, then it failed.³⁰

There is, of course, some truth in these assumptions. In the series of biographies of the bishops of Auxerre used by Constance Bouchard the first time that 'spirituality' becomes associated with, and much emphasis is placed on, pastoral activity is in the life of a bishop active in the 1160s and 1170s. Prior to that, although his predecessors had been praised, the only even potential saint was an ascetic monk who regularly went on retreat and eventually resigned.³¹ Mid-twelfth century spiritual life was very much dominated by the new monastic orders. Sainly bishops were described in monastic terms. Bishops themselves wished to leave their office for monasteries or retired to them. Very few earlier bishops were sanctified in the twelfth century and very few twelfth-century bishops were made saints themselves. Contemporary portraits of 'good' bishops on the other hand are of administrators, builders and legislators and their descriptions rarely feature personal piety or pastoral activity beyond the dictates of convention.³² Historiographically, there is some consensus as to when new awareness of the spiritual worth of the episcopal life and new emphasis on the pastoral within it so apparent in the thirteenth century developed in the twelfth, the 1170s. This is rather late for Stephen's reign.³³ It is this that has to be reconsidered here.

²⁹ Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 30; Christelow, 'Chancellors', 52.

³⁰ Barlow, *English Church*, 127; Brett, *English Church*, 122; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 222-3.

³¹ Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 77-80, 92-7.

³² E.g., *OV*, ii, 239, iii, 23, 51-97, vi, 173, 359; *GP*, 69, 132, 151-2, 172, 195, 205, 302.

³³ Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 127; Barlow, *English Church*, 256-7; Morris, *Papal*

2.1.i. The Ecclesiological Context

It is always dangerous to ascribe dates to long-term processes. and comparison of periods on the basis of relative weights of evidence is a relatively crude method of analysis.³⁴ Just because the ideal was monastic does not mean that secular bishops could not be convinced of the religious basis for, and committed to the full exercise of, their own office. St Bernard, Hugh of St Victor, Robert Pullen and others pushed bishops to live a pure life as an example to their flocks and for the better exercise of duties which they also emphasised.³⁵ Legislative and actual reaffirmation, reform and extension of episcopal power were aimed at the better government and provision of Christian worship. The bishop was the fundamental element for reform for Archbishop Lanfranc and in the legislation of the Lateran council of 1123.³⁶

Contemporary monastic and theoretical material is problematic; it tended to trickle down only slowly if at all. Bouchard found that the canons of Auxerre never used it, but relied instead on the Church Fathers and the Bible.³⁷ As far as can be ascertained, this is pretty much true of the Anglo-Norman sources too. The conceptualisation of the office in the *Gesta Stephani* is based in the same few sources.³⁸ This has led some to conclude and others to assume that secular clerks had only relatively crude conceptualisations of their offices and only a very general idea of what a bishop did.³⁹ Assessing episcopal conceptions of office is made more difficult for this generation of secular bishops because their educational attainment is very difficult to assess.⁴⁰ Only very few of them are

Monarchy, 287.

³⁴ Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 26; and see comment by Mary Cheney, above, nt. 13.

³⁵ Benson, *The Bishop Elect*, 379-82. *OV*, ii, 273, for a candidate refusing a see because of his own character faults.

³⁶ Barlow, *English Church*, 125-8; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 221; I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073-1198 Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1990), 229-30.

³⁷ Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 1; and for Europe generally, Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 221.

³⁸ *GS*, 46, 73, 105, 155-7.

³⁹ Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 1.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals*, 21; Barrow, 'Education and Recruitment'; L. Musset, 'Observations sur la formation intellectuelle du haut clergé normand (vers 1050- vers 1150)', *Mediaevalia christiana. Hommage à Raymonde Foreville* (Tournai, 1989), 279-89. Barlow, *English Church*, 217-67, remains the best study of scholarly activity and education in England in

known to have attended the schools and some have claimed that the curriculum there was administrative too.⁴¹

There can be no doubt that few 'administrator' bishops would have been educated to a standard that would be considered the norm well before the end of the century, but it would be a mistake to underestimate their intellectual and spiritual capacity. Richard fitzNigel's *Dialogus* is suffused with the Bible; Becket's educational attainment was limited, but his commitment cannot be doubted.⁴² Henry of Huntingdon is proof enough of what learning could be gained at as yet unformed cathedral courts and/or schools under anonymous masters. Laon can be described as offering training in mission as much as in administration.⁴³ The intellectual energy and ability expended on the Investiture Contest, the Canterbury and York dispute and indeed administration itself was huge. The most basic sources formed the basis of didactic material and learned models of the office as well. Anselm, St Bernard, Gilbert Foliot and Gerald of Wales all used them.⁴⁴ Edward Peters has shown that Foliot's attack on Becket was founded in the most basic essentials of the office.⁴⁵ Peters also elegantly summarized the office's development over the centuries.⁴⁶ The importance of that development in the current context is that much of what would later be articulated as theory was already inherent.⁴⁷ The sparse use of the most fundamental ecclesiological sources need not entail either a lack of commitment

this period. Of the three secular bishops of this thesis, only Alexander is known to have attended the schools, and that only briefly, J.S.P. Tatlock, 'The English Journey of the Laon Canons', *Speculum*, 8 (1933), 454-65, 461. Nevertheless, Roger de Clinton helped defend Stephen's legitimacy at Rome and cites Justinian in one of his charters, *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xxxix, no. 24; Robert de Chesney knew Arnulf of Lisieux in his youth, perhaps at school and corresponded with Gilbert Foliot on the Digest, *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 4; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, ed. C.N.L. Brooke and A. Morey (Cambridge, 1967), no. 106.

⁴¹ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 50-1.

⁴² *Dialogus de Scaccario. The Course of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. C. Johnson corrections by F.E.L. Carter and D.E. Greenway (Oxford, 1985), xvii, e.g., 1, 26, 43; Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 39-44.

⁴³ Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 21.

⁴⁴ *The Letters of St Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. W. Frohlich (3 vols, Kalamzoo, 1990), iii, no. 429; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, nos. 9, 25, 28, 104, 216, 238, 411, 420, 505, 512, 520; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, no. 112; *Jewel of the Church*, 51; *Speculum Duorum*, 233, 279.

⁴⁵ E. Peters, 'The Archbishop and the Hedgehog', *Law, Church and Society. Essays in Honour of Stephan Kuttner*, ed. K. Pennington and R. Somerville (University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 167-84, *passim*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 173, 180.

⁴⁷ Smalley, *Becket Conflict* 114-17.

to them or the inability to engage in sophisticated thought and action on the basis of them.

The importance of such basic models suggests too one more potential source for contemporary understanding of the episcopal office: conventional description of its incumbents. Mooers Christelow referred to C. Stephen Jaeger's use of them to reconstruct the twelfth-century imperial episcopate. He argued that emphasis there on courtliness was representative of the aims of the episcopate and to some extent reality.⁴⁸ Mooers Christelow rightly states that Anglo-Norman bishops were not courtly bishops, but goes on to insist that they were instead administrators. Whether Jaeger's methodology is justifiable is debatable, but it is worth pointing out that conventional representations of Anglo-Norman bishops are in fact predominantly pastoral rather than administrative. This is true of both monastic and secular commentary. William of Newburgh, who didn't like bishops generally, praised Archbishop William FitzHerbert of York as a most gentle pastor.⁴⁹ It is also true of the more practical letter.⁵⁰ Most prominently, it is apparent in accusations of fleeing their flocks levied against absent bishops. As has already been mentioned this 'convention' was the basis for Gilbert Foliot's case against Becket. Anselm too had to defend himself against his own monks.⁵¹ Accusations of desertion reappeared in Stephen's reign. As above, they are relatively simplistic theologically. The conventional milieu within which bishops thought and operated was very much one which emphasised their responsibilities to their dioceses.

The contrast between the ecclesiological and intellectual context within which the bishops of Henry I's reign developed and worked and the late twelfth century can be overdone. Episcopal conception of office could be well formed from the most fundamental sources and did not depend on an extended learning

⁴⁸ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness, Civilising Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), *passim*; Christelow, 'Chancellors', 69. See also Reuter, 'Fili Matris', 273-4 and Nightingale, 'Bishop Gerald of Toul'. Nightingale shows how conventional descriptions could be manipulated to impart a message.

⁴⁹ E.g. *OV*, iii, 23-5; vi, 13-15; 369, 531 and also his list of the archbishops of Rouen, iii, 51-97; Hugh the Chantor, 71. For William of Newborough's dislike of bishops, *WN*, 48, 59, 65 and on William, 113.

⁵⁰ *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, nos. 95, 392; *Letters of St Anselm*, ii, no. 154.

⁵¹ *Letters of Anselm*, iii, no. 311.

experience. It would be a mistake to underestimate the spiritual capacity, religious purpose and religious role of bishops on the basis of their educational achievements. The survival of Herbert of Losinga's sermons has long been accepted as marking the possibility that some of his peers were similarly active.⁵²

2.1.ii. The Anglo-Norman Context

There is evidence of a new self awareness and confidence among the Anglo-Norman secular clergy and episcopate in the early twelfth century. Elements of this have been recognised, but collating them serves to bring out their full meaning. Lanfranc's and Anselm's legislation assumed and enforced the centrality of episcopal authority.⁵³ At least partly, the administrative developments of the next century represent a new impetus engendered by that work. A new series of councils began in 1125 after a hiatus of seventeen years; four then followed in the next ten. This would continue into Stephen's reign.⁵⁴ Some contemporaries denigrated the councils' effectiveness and this has influenced modern assessment.⁵⁵ However, Henry of Huntingdon's antagonism at least originated in his marital status. Repeated legislation has been read as necessitated by previous failure, but it might just as well be seen as a consistent attempt to deal with a very deeply rooted problem.

The very number of new councils suggests commitment. So too does Archbishop William de Corbeil's campaign for legatine powers to bolster his authority. His successors came to rely on them. It was his good relationship with the king that meant councils could take place and their canons receive royal backing. As is stressed elsewhere in this thesis, commitment to reform and continued loyalty to the king were not incompatible and could be complementary. Historians of councils of other periods have asserted their

⁵² Brett, *English Church*, 116-17.

⁵³ Barlow, *English Church*, 125-8; M. Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), 140-4.

⁵⁴ CS, nos. 130, 132, 134, 136.

⁵⁵ GP, 121; HH, 451, 473, 485; Brett, *English Church*, 75-82; Barlow, *English Church*, 129. He is more enthusiastic at 123.

importance in developing a corporate culture among high churchmen, 'Repeated meetings over time, collective action and the articulation of common concerns fostered a conscious solidarity on the part of the bishops and a sense of responsibility for the leadership of their whole society...'⁵⁶ Regardless of their effectiveness the Anglo-Norman church councils cannot but have achieved this. In Normandy, by contrast, a series of similar councils ended in 1119, and not until 1172 was another held. Then and thereafter they only took place under the auspices of an external legate. The early series had much to do with the acknowledged competence of the episcopacy of the duchy.⁵⁷ That dynamism only appeared in England later.

Elections to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1114 and 1123 saw conflict between the secular and regular clergy reflecting as much on their understanding of their respective orders as on immediate events. The secular episcopacy saw itself as best suited to a position that entailed much activity in the world.⁵⁸ This new confidence is manifested in a sermon by Godwin, the secular precentor of Salisbury, defending the property rights of secular canons and emphasising that each order of the church had a righteous purpose.⁵⁹ It is apparent too in Hugh the Chantor's history of the Canterbury/York dispute where he ranges himself against monks as an order as well as against Canterbury itself.⁶⁰ A similar confidence and conflict is apparent in the debate over the re-introduction of the Feast of the Conception. Osbert of Clare was taken aback at the interest shown by the secular bishops in, and affronted by their discussion of, doctrine and their claims that there was no authority for the Feast.⁶¹

A letter from St Bernard to Bishop Ascelin of Rochester emphasises this new

⁵⁶ J. Nelson, 'National Synods, kingship as office and royal anointing: an early medieval syndrome', *Studies in Church History*, 7 (1971), 41-59, repr., *Politics and Ritual*, 239-57, 241.

⁵⁷ R. Foreville, 'The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Church and Government. Essays presented to C.R. Cheney on his 70th birthday*, ed. C.N.L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G.H. Martin, D.M. Owen (Cambridge, 1976), 19-39, 32; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 209-12.

⁵⁸ D. Bethell, 'English Black Monks and episcopal elections in the 1120s', *EHR*, 82 (1969), 673-98; Brett, *English Church*, 72-4; Barlow, *English Church*, 82, 85.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals*, 7. The sermon has not been published, Oxford, Bodleian. Lib. Digby MS, 96.

⁶⁰ Hugh the Chantor, 43, 70. See also, *OV*, vi, 319.

⁶¹ *The Letters of Osbert of Clare*, ed. E.W. Williamson (Oxford, 1929), no. 7. For the Feast, E.

status and authority in the case of a bishop about whom almost nothing is known. St Bernard had written asking that Archdeacon Robert Pullen be given leave to attend the schools. This letter is lost as is Ascelin's reply. Nevertheless, St Bernard's response to the latter does survive. It is apologetic and full of respect for the episcopal office. He wrote that he never advised Robert to go against the bishop's will and is the latter's servant and always ready to uphold his authority. This is the most abashed of all St Bernard's letters. It suggests that Ascelin had been firm and that where his authority was concerned he was not to be overawed by even such a figure as Bernard.⁶²

It was noted above that the most recent commentaries on the Anglo-Norman episcopate have reasserted the 'king's man' model. In the last chapter it was asserted that, despite their continued commitment to government and king, the bishops were not so because their commitment had much deeper roots and local episcopal power a much more autonomous basis than the phrase allows. Such curial bishops could also be committed to their dioceses. The quickest way to show this is by looking up each of Mooers Christelow's curial bishops in Frank Barlow's comprehensive *English Church 1066-1154*. Bishop Walkelin of Winchester learnt to tolerate and love his monks, was a great builder and appointed learned and holy men. He also consulted Ernulf, later bishop of Rochester, on the legalities of a matrimonial case.⁶³ William Giffard refused consecration except by Anselm and ended by going into exile. On his return he devoted himself to his diocese.⁶⁴ William Warelwast rebuilt his cathedral, founded three houses of canons regular, was interested in education and may have had a resident poet.⁶⁵ Bishop Osmund of Salisbury may not have been the great liturgist he was once thought to be but he was devoted to his church.⁶⁶ William of St Calais and even Ranulf Flambard had good reputations at Durham

Bishop, *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford, 1918), 238-59; Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury*, 137-42.

⁶² *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, no. 205. On Ascelin, see Barlow, *English Church*, 97; Saltman, *Theobald*, 98-9.

⁶³ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 53, 61; Barlow, *English Church*, 62, 87, 168.

⁶⁴ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 63; Barlow, *English Church*, 78-9.

⁶⁵ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 65; Barlow, *English Church*, 80.

⁶⁶ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 61-2; Barlow, *English Church*, 63. On Osmund's record, D. Greenway, 'The false Institutio of St Osmund', *Tradition and Change. Essays in Honour of Marjorie Chibnall*, ed. D. Greenway, C. Holdsworth, J. Sayers (Cambridge, 1985), 77-102.

while Bishop Roger did not neglect Salisbury.⁶⁷ Robert Bloet was good to Lincoln and his court produced Henry of Huntingdon; he also appears judging Christina of Markyate's case.⁶⁸ Even the original 'king's man', Galbraith's Bishop Samson, was not wholly bad. Orderic Vitalis' portrait of him is of a man who knew his own character, the duties of a good bishop and the difficulty in reconciling the two.⁶⁹ Mooers Christelow does allow that some promoted ex-royal clerks did leave the royal service, but hers is a smaller number than it might be. For instance, Archbishop Thurstan did attend court regularly but in the interests of his see and not those of the king.⁷⁰

These are not simply lists of ecclesiastical acts to balance against secular ones, but represent a commitment to the exercise of a different office based in a very different authority. The Anglo-Norman episcopate was much more aware of its responsibilities and committed to its office, and the context in which the evidence must be addressed much more similar to the late Anglo-Saxon and early thirteenth-century Churches, than has hitherto been allowed.

2.2. The Evidence

2.2.i. Administrative

Any study of the Anglo-Norman episcopate must begin with an assessment of the exponential growth in administration, exemplified in household size, number of *acta* produced and extension into the localities through archdeacons and rural deans, which characterised the twelfth century. What is important is that all this

⁶⁷ W.M. Aird, 'An absent friend: the career of Bishop William of St Calais', *Anglo-Norman Durham*, 283-98; J.O. Prestwich, 'The Career of Ranulf Flambard', *ibid.*, 299-310. On the latter see also R.W. Southern, 'Ranulf Flambard', *Medieval Humanism and other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), 183-205; Moore, 'Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate'. On Roger, Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury*.

⁶⁸ *HH*, 418, 470, 586-8; *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. C.H. Talbot (Oxford, 1959, repr. 1987), 64-71.

⁶⁹ Galbraith, 'Notes on the Career of Samson', 86. Galbraith quotes at length from R.W. Southern's sketch of Samson in *St Anselm and his Biographer. A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge, 1963), 140, 142. Barlow, *English Church*, 71-2; *OV*, ii, xxxviii, 301-3.

⁷⁰ Christelow, 'Chancellors', 65; D. Nicholl, *Thurstan*, 41-75; P. Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and*

had a purpose: the increase and better ordering of the church. It can neither be called bureaucratic nor yet have become an end in itself because it was still very much in the process of formation and engaged in with a great deal of commitment and expertise. The papacy, the episcopacy and the archidiaconate might have developed into bureaucratic and corporate institutions by the thirteenth century, but this was still a long way off. Its immediate success rate should not be judged too harshly because it was still forming. The history of the English church of this period must be approached as a dynamic process as much as a constitutional model.

a) Cathedrals

English historiography has traditionally approached cathedrals in constitutional, architectural or liturgical terms but not through a combination of all three.⁷¹ Only by doing so is it possible to arrive at a fuller understanding of their and their bishops' place in society. Explaining expansion of, and attempts to found new, secular chapters in terms of secretariats is to ignore these aspects. It does have some basis in contemporary criticism: William of Malmesbury held it against Walkelin of Winchester, Arnulf of Lisieux was vitriolic about Bishop Froger's attempts to replace an Augustinian with a secular chapter at Sées and Hugh de Nonant's motives at Coventry have always been suspect.⁷² Prebends also very quickly became prizes for royal and ecclesiastical officials. However, the size and resources of the chapter were as representative of and important to the service of God as its architecture.⁷³ St Hugh was praised for revitalising the psalmody at Lincoln, insisting on the canons' participation and beginning the

Lordship, Yorkshire, 1066-1154 (Cambridge, 1994), 152; Hugh the Chantor, 99.

⁷¹ E.g. Brett, *English Church*, 186-98; G. Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln* (London, 1988). W. Cohn, 'Romanesque sculpture and the spectator', *The Romanesque Frieze and its Spectator*, ed. D. Kahn (London, 1992), 45-60, 49 points out that people wouldn't be able to make out the detail of the work on the west front of Lincoln cathedral. For the need for an integrated approach, Y. Kusaba, 'Henry of Blois, Winchester and the twelfth century Renaissance', *Winchester Cathedral, 900 years, 1093-1993*, ed. J. Crick (Chichester, 1993), 69-79, 69. Edwards, *Secular Cathedrals* did emphasis the liturgical, 19-20. Richard Gem has stressed the need to study architecture in context, e.g. 'The Bishop's chapel at Hereford: the roles of patron and craftsman', in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque*, ed. S. Macready and F.H. Thompson, Soc. of Antiquaries Occ. Papers, n.s. 8 (1986), 87-96. For an interesting introduction to this subject see, A. Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Cathedral: the social and architectural dynamics of construction*, trans. M. Thom (Cambridge, 1994).

⁷² GP, 71; *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 34; Desborough, 'Politics and Prelacy'.

⁷³ Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 289.

year himself, but Bishop Alexander had introduced the system back in 1132.⁷⁴ Archbishop Thomas of York was remembered as a great singer and composer and Bishop Simon of Worcester asked Osbert of Clare to prepare lessons for his cathedral.⁷⁵ J.R. Green got it right long ago. Describing what he saw as a 'religious revival' in the first half of the twelfth century, which he called a 'moral revolution' and compared with the Reformation, the Puritans and the Methodists, he included in his lists of monastic foundations how, 'In the midst of the city [London] Bishop Richard busied himself with the vast cathedral that Bishop Maurice had begun; barges came up the river with stone from Caen that moved the popular wonder, while street and lane were being levelled to make space for the famous Churchyard of St Paul's'.⁷⁶

Cathedrals could be at the centre of diocesan and local religious life. M. J. Franklin has shown that several exercised rights as parish or mother churches to their cities. However, for the most part his examples are monastic and there is much less evidence for secular cathedrals playing the same role.⁷⁷ Durham and Rochester were at the centre of local religion and society as well.⁷⁸ Monastic cathedrals combined the attractions of both orders. In terms of contemporary lay piety secular cathedrals lacked somewhat in comparison. Lichfield, Lincoln and Salisbury were new foundations and therefore had no similar rights. Lincoln had no cultic tradition. It is perhaps worth noting that all three cathedrals were dedicated to the increasingly popular cult of the Virgin Mary (Lichfield, the only one with a past, to St Chad too). Cathedral and bishop had a local religious as well as governmental significance in society. It is in this context and that of new self-awareness among the secular clergy outlined above that increasing the strength of chapters or founding or refounding them has to be considered.

⁷⁴ *Fasti ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300* by J. Le Neve, iii, Lincoln, ed. D.E. Greenway (London, 1977), 152-3. See *EEA*, 15, London, xlv for Bishop Maurice doing the same.

⁷⁵ *Letters of Osbert*, nos. 12-13.

⁷⁶ J.R. Green, *A Short History of the English People* (London, 1881), 92-3. Green's work was, it is worth remembering, emphatically a social history.

⁷⁷ M.J. Franklin, 'The Cathedral as Parish Church: the case of southern England', in *Church and City 1000-1500. Essays in honour of Christopher Brooke*, ed. D. Abulafia, M.J. Franklin, M. Rubin (Cambridge, 1992), 173-98, 173-4, 182, 186, 190-1.

⁷⁸ D. Matthew, 'Durham and the Anglo-Norman World', *Anglo-Norman Durham*, 1-25; H. Tsurushima, 'The Fraternity of Rochester Cathedral Priory about 1100', *ANS*, 14 (1991), 313-

The two case studies which were the genesis of this chapter offer important evidence in this regard. Bishop Roger de Clinton's transfer of his see from Coventry to Lichfield and the role that Lincoln cathedral played for the local community during the civil war are discussed in Chapters Three and Six respectively.⁷⁹ Lincoln at least also provides substantial evidence of its religious importance. Each county traditionally sent a procession to it at Pentecost.⁸⁰ Bishop Alexander borrowed a famous, richly embroidered pallium that had belonged to Queen Emma from his cousin the bishop of Ely to show in the cathedral.⁸¹ What this represented has been lost but it is likely that it was a relic of some kind. Later twelfth century attempts to gain for Lincoln its own saint may well have had their beginnings under him.⁸² Alexander also tried to set up Gilbert of Sempringham as a confessor for the diocese: '...having regard to both his [Gilbert's] wisdom and his integrity the bishop thought it proper and necessary to make over to Gilbert the keys of binding and loosing...he also wished to appoint Gilbert to discover and judge both his own sins and those of his people.'⁸³ Richard Belmeis I made similar efforts at St Pauls.⁸⁴

b) Archdeacons

The archidiaconate is important here for two reasons. Firstly, it was an important link between bishop and locality and secondly it quickly came to symbolize all that was worst about episcopal administration. It also required nothing more than the subdiaconate since it was conceived as an administrative rather than a spiritual office.⁸⁵ Some archdeacons no doubt deserved criticism. Archdeacon Walkelin of Suffolk who named his son after one pope and wanted

37.

⁷⁹ See below, pp. 90, 164.

⁸⁰ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 26, 116-19.

⁸¹ *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake (Camden Soc., 3rd ser. 1962), 122, 922; E.U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth Century England: a study of the mensa episcopalis* (Cambridge, 1994), 169.

⁸² *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 1-80, 24.

⁸³ *The Book of St Gilbert*, ed. and trans. R. Foreville and G. Keir (Oxford, 1987), 25. For description of Alexander as pastoral bishop, *HH*, 474-5.

⁸⁴ *EEA*, 15, London, 1, nos. 19-22.

⁸⁵ On the archdeacon, Barlow, *English Church*, 140; C.N.L. Brooke, 'The Archdeacon and the Norman Conquest', in *Tradition and Change*, 1-19; B. R. Kemp, 'Archdeacons and Parish Churches in England in the Twelfth Century', in *Law and Government*, 341-65; idem., 'Informing the Archdeacon of Ecclesiastical Matters in Twelfth Century England', in *Medieval Ecclesiastical Studies in Honour of Dorothy M. Owen*, ed. M.J. Franklin and C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 1995), 131-51.

his daughter called after another was a recurring irritant to his bishop.⁸⁶ Archdeacons married with children like himself and Henry of Huntingdon were unlikely to exert themselves in enforcing clerical celibacy. Nevertheless, there can be no doubting at least Henry's religious and intellectual quality. He can also be shown to have judged cases in his own synod.⁸⁷ He should be taken as warning against acceptance of conventional criticism of his office. He was not the only highly educated resident and/or ecclesiastically active archdeacon; he corresponded with the same Archdeacon Walter of Oxford as Geoffrey of Monmouth.

He and his fellows were made members of the cathedral chapter as elsewhere. Archdeacons had not yet become autonomous figures in their own right but were still close to the bishop as members of his household and his deputies in the localities.⁸⁸ As with administration in general, this was still a period of dynamic development of their office. It was only at this time that it became fully established and it is for this reason that there is only limited evidence of archidiaconal activity.⁸⁹ Henry's contemporary at Buckingham can be cited for the commitment that could be shown by an archdeacon. David was also nephew to Bishop Alexander and is therefore a case of healthy nepotism in himself. Like Henry he held his synod and he was also ordered to institute a priest to a church and to ensure that he was adequately provided for and to hear a case between Gloucester abbey and the earl of Pembroke.⁹⁰

This last reflects the integration of the archdeacon into local lay society and

⁸⁶ *Letters of John of Salisbury*, nos. 14-15; Harper-Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe', 149; Robinson, *The Papacy*, 195. It is worth noting that a history with such a different and such a large focus as the last of these should pick out Walkelin for comment. 'Bad' secular clergy still stand out today.

⁸⁷ *HH*, nos. 1, 2.

⁸⁸ E.g. Chester diocese: *The Stone Cartulary*, ed. G. Wrottesley, C.H.S. vi (pt. 1) (1885), fol. 13; *The Cartulary of Tutbury Priory*, ed. A. Saltman, C.H.S., 4th ser., v (1962), no. 10; *The Cartulary of Haughmond Abbey*, ed. U. Rees (Cardiff, 1985), nos. 212, 1097; *MRA*, nos. 169, 186, 301.

⁸⁹ E.g. Chester diocese. The five archdeaconries are usually stated as being named and defined only by 1151. However, a charter of 1146x1148 includes them all. *The Cartulary of Worcester Cathedral Priory*, ed. R.R. Darlington, Pipe Roll Society, new series 38 (London, 1968), no. 191.

⁹⁰ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 54; *Historia et Cartularum Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestrensis*, ed. W.H. Hart (3 vols, Rolls Series, 1863-7), iii, 170, 706-8; Kemp, 'Archdeacons and Parish Churches', 341, 345.

suggests that the archdeacon might command considerable authority and status. Archdeacons also often came from this society themselves. Henry of Huntingdon and the future bishop, Robert de Chesney at Lincoln were from local English and Norman families respectively. Henry's love of his county, town and home is clear in his writings.⁹¹ Archdeacon Nicholas of Bedford remembered in the 1170s that he first knew Ascelin as the parson of Apsley church (Bedfordshire), then inducted Robert the clerk at the behest of the church's lay patrons, was present when Bishop Robert de Chesney of Lincoln made the prior of Dunstable the parson and lastly, inducted the priest Nicholas on the presentation of the prior.⁹² He had played a part in local life for forty years or more.

Archdeacons regularly witness the charters of the middle and lesser nobility. They might also become involved in the grants there represented.⁹³ Therefore, despite the canonical status of their office, they may have been considered to possess some spiritual authority. The local administrative and governmental role of the archdeacon also gave him a religious importance and made him an integral part of local society and politics. This is clearer in the civil war case studies which follow where the earls of Chester and Leicester excluded the eponymous archdeacons from their territories and attempted to erect alternatives to them. Archdeacon Walkelin of Suffolk may have been uneducated and may have looked crass, to say the least, to the likes of John of Salisbury but it is just possible that he named his children after popes in all sincerity! When archidiaconal activity is noted in Part Two it is in this context that it must be understood.

c) Administration

Historians attempting to examine the pastoral activity and spirituality of twelfth-century bishops have often had to resort to prescriptive sources, either lists of bishops' duties or theoretical studies of their office. Barlow used Gilbert of Limerick while Carolyn Schriber used the canons of the Council of Lillebonne

⁹¹ *HH*, xxiii-viii; for Robert, see below, p. 147.

⁹² *Digest of Dunstable Cartulary*, ed. G.H. Fowler, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Publications, 10 (1936), no. 161.

and Gratian's *Decretum* to outline Arnulf of Lisieux's responsibilities.⁹⁴ Actual proof of such activity is harder to come by. It is true that most of the surviving administrative and judicial material deals with, '...the rights and property of churches, not the faults of men...' It is this that has frustrated some historians.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, governmental intervention of itself emphasised the position of the bishop at the head of his flock. Where it came from was where it would be looked for come the civil war. However, these sources do incorporate evidence of pastoral activity. When the bishop judged or settled the respective rights of mother churches and chapels, tithe disputes, burial rights, presentation rights and so on he could still have a considerable effect on the religious lives of his parishioners. When an interdict lay on a diocese this importance was emphasised by his absence.⁹⁶

Bishops' importance has long been recognised in the case of marriage.⁹⁷ St Anselm wrote to Gerard archbishop of York that the respite granted by the bishop of London through the former's advice and the latter's intervention to a man who had married a woman who had taken the veil had caused such scandal in the city that they would have to do something about it.⁹⁸ Christina of Markyate's future was twice brought before her bishop. Both times they found for her and accepted her vocation (although bishop Robert was later bribed to change his mind). Indeed, Christina's life can serve to show the potential centrality of bishops to contemporary popular religion. In addition to her own bishops Robert and Alexander, Ranulf Flambard attempted to seduce her, Archbishops Thurstan and Ralph were strong supporters and the former went so far as to offer her the nunnery of St Clement's in York. Five bishops played a significant role in Christina's life.⁹⁹

Episcopal judgements also affected the direction of parishioners' tithes and their

⁹³For examples of Henry of Huntingdon witnessing laymen's charters, see below, p. 137.

⁹⁴Barlow, *English Church*, 23, 134; Schriber, *Dilemma*, 52.

⁹⁵Brett, *English Church*, 150.

⁹⁶*OV*, vi, 481.

⁹⁷Barlow, *English Church*, 167-71.

⁹⁸*Letters of St Anselm*, ii, no. 238. Lanfranc also corresponded with other bishops on matrimonial issues, *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. H. Glover and M. Gibson (Oxford, 1979), nos. 23, 29.

⁹⁹*Life of Christina*, 41-5, 65-73, 85, 111, 127, 147.

chance to attend churches of their choice.¹⁰⁰ When Herbert the priest attracted the parishioners of the mother church of Stibbington to his chapel its holder, Thorney abbey, complained to the bishop. He found for the abbey in this instance and the parishioners were forced to return to the mother church.¹⁰¹ Episcopal influence was not always so opposed to the goals of its flock. Haughmond abbey, holder of Shawbury, a mother church in north west Shropshire, brought three chapels before the bishop of Chester in order to assert its rights over them. He found for the abbey and mother church again. However, that was not the whole story. The new chapels had been founded by the lords of the fee and the bishop had seen the founding grants made and consecrated the new churches. This suggests that all sides had agreed to the need for expanded provision in the area and that the issue was rather one of making clear the continued rights of the mother church than contesting them. A further charter in which the bishop reduced the episcopal dues owed by one of the chapels because of its poverty adds substance to this scenario.¹⁰² Bishop Jocelin of Salisbury would display the same care in Stephen's reign.¹⁰³

Judgements on burials and cemeteries affected both communities and individuals. Bishop Richard Belmeis I of London recognised that the land of Munslow was subject to Much Wenlock priory, its mother church, but granted Stephen priest of Munslow certain tithes and the right for his parishioners to choose their place of burial.¹⁰⁴ Bishop William Turbe asserted the rights of the church of St Margaret's, Lynn founded by his predecessor, Herbert de Losinga, for visiting sailors. No other church was to accept their offerings or give them burial.¹⁰⁵ The aim here may have been financial but it would have been essential to the sustaining of a church for sailors because it would have had no permanent parishioners.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. *EEA*, 18, Salisbury, no. 52; Norwich, no. 82.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1, Lincoln, no. 63; Brett, *English Church*, 206.

¹⁰² *EEA*, 14, Coventry and Lichfield, nos. 23-4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 18, Salisbury, no. 76.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15, London, no. 26. Bishop Richard acted as sheriff in Shropshire, but this charter suggests that his authority extended to spiritual affairs.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 6, Norwich, no. 120.

In admittedly later examples (but not so late that they are not still before sometimes assumed dates for conscious commitment to such activity), Bishop Walter of Chester allowed an abbey a cemetery as long as it was at no cost to the parish church's, while Bishop Gilbert Foliot of Hereford allowed two lay individuals a cemetery at their chapel as long as it was used for only one body.¹⁰⁶ There was clearly a story behind this at least. Earlier Henry of Winchester acting as legate had settled a dispute between the churches of St Andrew and St John in Northampton over the burial of bodies of knights. They were to be interred in their respective parishes save where permission had been granted for elsewhere.¹⁰⁷ Such decisions were important at an individual level. Bishop Richard Belmeis II of London consecrated a cemetery at a hermitage.¹⁰⁸ On the death of the hermit Wulfric of Haselbury in 1154 there was some dispute as to where he would be buried. The priory of Montacute saw its chance to become a pilgrimage centre but bishop Robert of Bath ensured that the body was buried in the hermit's cell as the local people wished. They were much calmed by this.¹⁰⁹

These last and the case of Christina of Markyate show that bishops were a part of popular religious life. Bishops were not so far divorced from their flock as has sometimes been assumed. Frank Barlow suggested that the most the majority of the population saw of its bishops was at the head of his retinue as he passed by.¹¹⁰ He may have done much more from his horse than this suggests. Sainly bishops got off their horses to serve their flock, but it was the getting off rather than service itself that attracted the attention of hagiographers.¹¹¹ St Hugh's biographer tells of a young bishop who frightened a group of children by throwing holy water over them from a rearing horse.¹¹² Bishops did carry out their duties but episcopal authority and dignity depended to some extent on its representation.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 14, Coventry, no. 62; 7, Hereford, no. 100.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 8, Winchester, no. 84.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 15, London, no. 58.

¹⁰⁹ Ramsey, 'Robert of Lewes', 260.

¹¹⁰ Barlow, *English Church*, 135. Note that he has to take his example from the *Vita Wulfstani*, see above nt. 26.

¹¹¹ *Magna Vita*, 127; Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 93.

¹¹² *Magna Vita*, 128.

Episcopal tastes in monasticism are also instructive. In England, they founded the only new houses for women between the conquest and the mid-twelfth century.¹¹³ Bishop Alexander of Lincoln also played a significant role in the formation of the Gilbertine order.¹¹⁴ Both provided opportunities for those often excluded from more common provision. Martin Brett has noted that not all parish priests were as poor as their parishioners.¹¹⁵ Charter evidence shows bishops might witness private charters alongside priests. While there was undoubtedly a gap between bishop and priest, socially their worlds did overlap.¹¹⁶

It is important to emphasise that when a bishop dedicated a church or cemetery a liturgical programme was followed. Lanfranc discussed with John archbishop of Rouen the vestments to be worn on such an occasion.¹¹⁷ At the dedication of the small Bampton (Oxfordshire) chapel there were three bishops present.¹¹⁸ When Bishop Robert de Sigillo of London consecrated and dedicated the priory church of Earls Colne in 1148 he asked in a loud voice (*cum satis alta et multotiens repetita voce*) whether anyone claimed or disputed possession of its lands and rents.¹¹⁹ Episcopal actions on these occasions brought the bishop's priestly status to the fore and saw him exercising his religious authority for and in front of the general populace. His spiritual role and authority rather than his administrative machinery were engaged. This is especially relevant with regard to analysis of the monastic evidence.

¹¹³ S. Elkins, *Holy Women in Twelfth Century England* (London, 1988), 13-19, 28, 62-5.

¹¹⁴ *Book of St Gilbert*, 25; B. Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order* (Oxford, 1995), 84-5, 202-3.

¹¹⁵ Brett, *English Church*, 216-17.

¹¹⁶ Eg. Bishop Robert de Chesney of Lincoln, BL, Harleian Ch. 52 G 20; BL, Cotton Vespasian E XVIII, Kirkstead Cartulary, fol 71r. Lots of priests witnessed a layman make a donation through his hands in, *Transcriptions of Charters Relating to Gilbertine Houses of Sixle, Ormsby, Cately, Bullington and Alvingham*, ed. F.M. Stenton, Lincoln Record Society, 18 (1922), Sixle, no. 10.

¹¹⁷ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 14.

¹¹⁸ The example is Brett's, *English Church*, 129.

¹¹⁹ *EEA*, 15, London, no. 46.

2.2.ii. Monastic

a) Charters

It was noted above that most episcopal administrative evidence is monastic. More specifically, the majority of *acta* are confirmation charters. It was also noted that for Brett they were very much routine and while they showed, ‘...increasing elaboration of the bishop’s administrative machinery...’, it was, ‘...this that seems to have played the greatest part in establishing the necessity of his consent to the transfer of churches.’¹²⁰ Brett’s approach fails to allow for the involvement of bishops in the ritual that often accompanied confirmations and grants. It also fails to make full use of one of the best available sources for episcopal spirituality and religious function. As elsewhere in this thesis, the charter material must be examined in context.

Bishops were keenly aware of their duty to uphold and promote monasticism and this is made most clear in the preambles to their *acta*. These are conventional and rhetorical but as C.R. Cheney pointed out, they were, ‘...conventions deliberately chosen by the bishops’ draftsmen, expressive of a whole background of ideas.’¹²¹ There is too much variety, and interesting variety at that, for them to be completely conventional and they appear in originals as well as copies.¹²² They are not just pious formulations but are statements explaining the basis for the bishop’s actions and stressing his office’s duties. They suggest a self-conscious awareness of those duties and a commitment to the support of the monastic order. Charters of Bishop Robert of Lewes of Bath, a monk himself, asserted that, ‘...the glory of bishops is in providing for and protecting the poor of the house of God.’ and that, ‘...our office compels us to work for and protect monks...’ Roger de Clinton claimed to be working in terms of reason and natural justice while his successor saw his job as not only to

¹²⁰ Brett, *English Church*, 127, 247, 146. B.R. Kemp, ‘Monastic Possession of Parish Churches in England in the Twelfth Century’, *JEH*, 31 (1980), 133-60, refers to them as ‘customary’ at 139 but as will be seen below, more generally emphasises their importance.

¹²¹ Cheney, *English Bishops Chanceries*, 72.

¹²² *EEA*, 18, Salisbury, xcvi; *ibid.*, 6, Norwich, lxxv. For a less enthusiastic appraisal *cf. ibid.*, 7, Hereford, lxxiii.

encourage granting in alms but also to corroborate it with his authority through his charter.¹²³

Confirmation charters originated in the legislation of Anselm's 1102 council where, in line with reform policy it was made compulsory for all transfers of ecclesiastical property from laymen to monastic houses to first pass through the bishop. Grants would be purified of lay influence, tested as to their legitimacy and, in the case of parish churches, provision for future worship secured.¹²⁴ As with legislation on the bishop's position with regard to his lay flock, this strengthened his governmental authority and placed him at the centre of the relationship between monastery and patron. It is, as was noted in the introduction, well known that the number of confirmations increased dramatically during the civil war period and now accepted that this was part of a search for alternative legitimate authority in time of war.¹²⁵ There is no reason why this could not be so in peacetime. David Smith pointed out that they might later be cited in the *Curia Regis Rolls* as evidence.¹²⁶ Bishops might inspect their predecessors' charters before confirming grants.¹²⁷

Episcopal confirmation could also be refused. When Nigel fitzErfast granted lands and a church to Llanthony his gift was confirmed by the king, the bishop of Hereford and William d'Albini but Bishop Alexander of Lincoln's ministers refused to sanction it. They had heard that Nigel had already made the same grant to another church. Alexander's continued refusal to confirm the grant led to a series of letters from Bishop Robert of Hereford which went as far as to question his ability to fulfill his office.¹²⁸ Few examples of this survive but many more might have been issued. It would not have been in the interests of monasteries to keep or to refer to such decisions. Nevertheless, they suggest that significance was attached to the episcopal act. Episcopal power in this form would have considerable political significance come the civil war.

¹²³ *EEA*, 10, Bath, nos. 26, 40; *ibid.*, 14, Chester, nos. 24, 74.

¹²⁴ Kemp, 'Monastic Possession', 137, 154.

¹²⁵ C.N.L. Brooke and A. Morey, *Gilbert Foliot and His Letters* (Cambridge, 1965), 93; Brett, *English Church*, 91.

¹²⁶ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, xlvii.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1, Lincoln, no. 30.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7, Hereford, nos. 40-2; the case is discussed by Brett, *English Church*, 147-8.

Episcopal confirmations also make clear that bishops were often present when grants were made or being carried through. Further, this might take place in the cathedral.¹²⁹ This confirms the emphasis given to the cathedral above. To use it was to use the chief religious centre of the diocese, to make a very public statement and seek very public validation. At Salisbury a man confessed that he had withheld a grant in the bishop's presence.¹³⁰ When William fitz Goer settled a dispute with Sixle and gave it North Willingham church no bishop was involved but he did so in the presence of the chapter of the Holy Mother Church of Lincoln, in the hands of archdeacon David, who was in place of archdeacon Robert, and in the presence of Humphrey the sub dean. He also asked the chapter to witness his charter and add its seal.¹³¹ Roger de Mowbray acted similarly at York in 1154.¹³² The bishop and his cathedral were very much a part of that community.

Grants might be made through the bishop's hands.¹³³ This might extend to him receiving a symbol of the grant and/or placing that symbol on the altar. According to a charter of Bishop Robert of Hereford recording a grant made to Monmouth in the cathedral chapter,

*Richardus in manu mea qui episcopus eram cum textu evangeliorum humili devotione donavit quod ego ipse quoque ibidem in manu Godfredi prioris cum eodem textu tradidi et pontificali auctoritate confirmavi.*¹³⁴

At Lincoln in 1156-7 William Brito surrendered into the bishops hands and restored to St Neots land over which he had done violence to the church a long time before. At Salisbury and Hereford descriptions of dispute settlements used the same terms.¹³⁵ This suggests the centrality of the bishop in administrative terms was paralleled in the rituals associated with grants to monasteries. The bishop's authority and person legitimated and transmitted the grant. It

¹²⁹ Eg. *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 27, 32; 11, Exeter, no. 104; 7, Hereford, no. 34; 6, Norwich, no. 51; 1, Lincoln, nos. 73-4; Kemp, 'Monastic Possession', 138.

¹³⁰ *EEA*, 18, Salisbury, no. 66.

¹³¹ *Transcriptions of Charters*, Sixle no. 5.

¹³² King, 'Dispute Settlement', 123.

¹³³ Eg. *EEA*, 7, Hereford, no. 35; 1, Lincoln, no. 263; 6, Norwich, no. 71; Kemp, 'Monastic Possession', 139.

¹³⁴ *EEA*, 7, Hereford, nos. 27, 46, 95-6.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7, Hereford, no. 73; 1, Lincoln, no. 237; 18, Salisbury, no. 52.

emphasises the spiritual significance that the office held for those around it.¹³⁶

Donors often asked for episcopal advice when making foundations or grants.¹³⁷ A well known charter recording a grant by Roger de Valognes emphasises that he did so ‘... moved especially by the exhortation, request and counsel of the lord Theobald....’ Theobald had advised him that a man holding six fees should give not just a third of a fee but a whole fee to the monks.¹³⁸ While Roger sought to patronize monasteries he did so with the spiritual guidance of his bishop. Aristocrats might almost always be interred in religious houses, but bishops might carry out the burial.¹³⁹ They were also often present at the deathbed.¹⁴⁰ There can be no doubt that monasticism was the main focus of lay piety but it should be clear that the bishop played an important and integral and much more than administrative part in that religious life.¹⁴¹ Donors to monasteries recognised that he possessed considerable spiritual authority.

In modern historiography grants to monasteries are rightly understood as incorporating much more than a straightforward gift and their charters as ‘...recording the reconciliation of many forces...’ and made by ‘...parties struggling to puzzle out the implications of how others might respond and what might go wrong and what might happen after their deaths.’¹⁴² They could represent disputes settled, assertions of legitimate right or family connections.¹⁴³ They could be social mechanisms. Analysis of them can yield much about the social structure as it was and as it was understood. Bishops’ presence in them makes them a party to, and integral with, that society and suggests that they should be examined in that light.

¹³⁶ It might also be worth speculating that bishops held an office which combined and linked secular and monastic and could therefore act as a conduit from one to the other. This would need a great deal of work.

¹³⁷ E.g. *EEA*, 11, Exeter, no. 42; *Regesta Regum Scottorum* (hereafter, *RRS*), i, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1960), no. 21; Harper Bill, ‘Bishop William Turbe’, 154. See local studies below for further references.

¹³⁸ Stenton, *First Century*, 38-9, 259-60; Hudson, *Formation of English Common Law*, 86.

¹³⁹ *OV*, iv, 51.

¹⁴⁰ *HH*, 599 for an archbishop at Robert of Meulan’s; Bishop Walter of Chester would be present at the deathbed of Ranulf II earl of Chester, see below, p. 100.

¹⁴¹ It is worth noting too that this also applies to the archdeacon, eg. *HH*, no. 1.

¹⁴² Hyams, ‘The Charter as a Source for the Early Common Law’, 174-5.

¹⁴³ Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbour*, 48.

b) Chronicles

Monastic chronicles also offer evidence of episcopal spirituality and religious importance. Mention was made above of William of Malmesbury's respect for Bishop Walkelin of Winchester. Indeed, while he is critical of bishops generally and individually, the majority of those mentioned in his *Gesta Pontificum* receive favourable treatment and very few are portrayed as wholly bad.¹⁴⁴ William constructed his history of the English church around the episcopate. It was fundamental to the propagation and maintenance of Christianity in the kingdom.¹⁴⁵ Its current make up may not have equalled that of an Anglo-Saxon golden age but its role had not changed. William of Newburgh held similar views.¹⁴⁶ Orderic Vitalis also conceived of the church in an episcopal framework practically as well as theoretically.¹⁴⁷ He too assessed the majority of bishops favourably despite generalised criticism.¹⁴⁸ His *Ecclesiastical History*, so important to modern understanding of contemporary society, is full of material for assessment of monastic understanding of the Anglo-Norman episcopacy. That understanding supports the interpretation of the charter evidence put forward here.

In terms of his own abbey, when newly elected abbots were presented with their pastoral staffs by the duke and later the king the latter borrowed them from bishops for the purposes of the ceremony. When one wished to resign, it was to the bishop he went. Abbot Roger of St Evroul was not blessed by the bishop because they were in dispute and so for a long time he held his temporalities but not his spiritualities. This was unhealthy for him and his abbey. When bishop and abbot were reconciled the resulting charter was written by a monk and read

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., e.g. 36, 289, 312-3; For more vitriolic comments left out of the final edition, see H. Farmer, 'William of Malmesbury's Life and Works', *JEH*, 13 (1962), 39-54, 46. William also wrote a Commentary on Lamentations angered by the incapacity of contemporary churchmen compared to those of the past, Farmer, 49-51.

¹⁴⁵ Farmer, 'Life and Works', 44.

¹⁴⁶ *WN*, 60.

¹⁴⁷ *OV*, iii, 51-97; vi, 9. P. Bouet discussed bishops' personal qualities in Orderic in, 'L'image des évêques normands dans l'oeuvre d'Orderic Vital', *Les Évêques normands du XIe siècle*, ed. idem. and F. Neveux (Caen, 1995), 253-76, 264-6, 268-72.

¹⁴⁸ *OV*, ii, 77-9, 239; iii, 23, 31; vi, 173, 337, 359, 531.

out by an episcopal clerk.¹⁴⁹ Abbots of St Evroul turned to the archbishop for advice when times were hard. They weren't the only ones, Archbishop Lanfranc apparently sent a confused Anselm to Archbishop Maurilius.¹⁵⁰

More generally, as well as continuous incidental reference to bishops suggesting their ubiquity, several vignettes offer glimpses of how Orderic conceived of the relationship between bishops and the laity. When William fitz Giroie took over estates at Montreuil and Echauffour he found that he enjoyed all the episcopal dues. He asked the locals who their bishop was and was informed that they didn't have one. Shocked he said, 'This is altogether wrong, Heaven forbid that I should live without a spiritual shepherd or the yoke of ecclesiastical authority'.¹⁵¹ Orderic repeated this conception of how laymen understood the office in the deathbed advice of Ansold of Maule to his son.¹⁵² When William de Roumare fell seriously ill he consulted Archbishop Geoffrey of Rouen who advised him to mend his ways.¹⁵³ Orderic's use of the Bishop of Sées to justify Henry I's invasion of Normandy has already been mentioned. Bishop Serlo is not some triumphal government figure but instead sits, sadly, dressed in his full regalia, in a little church full of refugees' belongings and reflects on the Norman situation.¹⁵⁴ Later, when Henry I was beaten back from Evreux and decided to fire the city, he turned to its bishop for a final decision emphasising that he should consider the greater good.¹⁵⁵

For Orderic the Anglo-Norman church worked most harmoniously and effectively when three equally distinguished bishops worked together to great advantage none minding if the others operated in his diocese. Each governed (*praeerat*), dispensed ecclesiastical justice (*aeclesiastica iura dabat*) and had cure of souls (*aeternae salutis curam exhibebat*).¹⁵⁶ Together these examples

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., ii, 69, 75, 93; v, 262.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., ii, 91, 93; GP, 97.

¹⁵¹ OV, ii, 27. This was by no means the actual situation! The area actually lay in the diocese of Sées but it was controlled by William's enemies the Bellême family and he wished to remove it to another. See Chibnall's note.

¹⁵² Ibid., iii, 195.

¹⁵³ Ibid., vi, 381.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., vi, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.; vi, 229.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., ii, 77-9.

suggest that Orderic conceived of the Norman church as headed by an episcopacy which could be the fundamental moral authority in government and society.

Episcopal administrative and monastic evidence then, suggests that spiritual and pastoral commitment and authority were much more substantial on the eve of the civil war than has been either found or allowed. It confirms that the likes of Brett, Cheney and Green were right to look for them. It provides a basis from which to reinterpret the nature of the office and the character of its incumbents. It also gives the lie to traditional but still very influential stereotypes.

2.2.iii. Critical

R.I. Moore has shown that it is possible to use sources traditionally cited as critical of venal bishops to gain insight into their 'function'. Reassessment of Bishop Ranulf Flambard's attempts to seduce Christina of Markyate led him to assert that the bishop played an important role in linking an Anglo-Saxon urban elite with its conquerors.¹⁵⁷ What follows is a tentative assessment of two sins common to many portrayals of twelfth-century bishops, ambition and magnificence. In contemporary criticism and modern studies ambition, careerism, conventional piety and entanglement in the secular world replaced militaristic tendencies and sexual mores as the main characteristics of the bad bishop in the twelfth century.¹⁵⁸ The former is particularly apposite to a discussion of 'king's men' and both to an attempt to recover the spiritual symbolic elements of the episcopal office.

a) Promotion

Promotion from the king's chapel was the most common background among Anglo-Norman bishops; it was also a major target of satire. The often rapid rise from the subdiaconate through the priesthood to the episcopacy might suggest

¹⁵⁷ Moore, 'Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate'.

¹⁵⁸ For examples of such criticism, *OV*, ii, 79-80; *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, i, 52, 141, 188, 190; ii, 300, 304, 326-7, 338, 344; A. V. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages*

that little importance was attached to it.¹⁵⁹ Even St Anselm had to refute charges of ambition.¹⁶⁰ Orderic Vitalis represents the Anglo-Norman in what was very much a Europe wide phenomenon well:

‘There were even some churchmen, wise and pious in outward appearance, who waited on the royal court out of covetousness for high office, and to the great discredit of their cloth shamelessly pandered to the king. Like recruits who receive wages from their officers for their service at war some of these clerks accepted from laymen as a reward for their service at court, bishoprics and abbeys, the provostships of churches, archdeaconries and deaneries and other ecclesiastical offices and honours which should have been granted on grounds of piety and holy learning.’¹⁶¹

Modern historians have pointed to the bias, monastic, edificatory, bitter or satirical, behind attacks on the episcopacy and Timothy Reuter has stressed that much of the later twelfth-century criticism of the secular clergy was written by men who knew very well the dilemmas it faced and were in fact trying to guide its members through them.¹⁶² Orderic Vitalis also wrote that ‘Others it is true were filled with the fear of God on taking up the burden of ecclesiastical authority, endeavoured to further the salvation of those committed to their care...’¹⁶³

Two points might be made about promotion to the episcopacy. Firstly, the transformative potential of promotion should not be underestimated. Michael Staunton has shown that elevation was the crucial moment in Becket’s spiritual development. He has also emphasised that there was a corpus of saints’ lives following this pattern from which both biographers and bishops could draw inspiration.¹⁶⁴ Thurstan’s transformation from court cleric to principled archbishop apparently surprised some.¹⁶⁵ Ordinals show that Anglo-Norman churchmen were intensely interested in clerical grades and the symbols of

(Oxford, 1978), 103-6, 214-30.

¹⁵⁹ E.g., *Letters of St Anselm*, ii, no. 229.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 156-60.

¹⁶¹ *OV*, ii, 269 and see also v, 205.

¹⁶² Reuter, ‘*Episcopi cum sua militia*’, 93.

¹⁶³ *OV*, v, 205.

¹⁶⁴ M. Staunton, ‘Thomas Becket’s Conversion’, *ANS*, 21 (1990), 193-213, 195-6, 201-4.

¹⁶⁵ Hugh the Chantor, 34, 44.

office.¹⁶⁶ One of Lanfranc's letters refers to the bible presented to a newly ordained deacon.¹⁶⁷ Ring and staff were fundamental to episcopal status as 'tangible symbols of an invisible world'.¹⁶⁸ Biblical prognostics made at consecration were remembered long after.¹⁶⁹ Anxiety expressed about the harm that the status of elect rather than full attainment of the office did to the spiritual welfare of the prelate as well as the government of the see adds depth to the dry legalistic differentiation of the two.¹⁷⁰ In the absence of explicit comment on consecration itself these must serve to suggest that great importance was attached to the ritual and changes in status which accompanied it.

Secondly, while there can be no doubt that promotion from the chapel was a reward for good, and in expectation of continued, service, and that it was a goal of many who entered that service and later the schools, that could nonetheless be a very sincere ambition. Arnulf of Lisieux and Gerald of Wales were explicit about their desire but both also had a very high ideal of, and strong practical commitment to, the office.¹⁷¹ Even St Hugh had wanted to be a priest in his youth so that he could experience and take part in the mysteries.¹⁷² Despite Gregory the Great's dictum that he who desired high office was not worthy of it, most Anglo-Norman bishops were. Only rarely was the office a pension or sinecure for the aged royal servant; most English bishops had a good ten active years in their dioceses. It was also well recognised that the position was a very difficult one. St Anselm, who had supported the candidature of one bishop later pushed for the acceptance of his resignation. Though a good man, he had simply not been up to the task.¹⁷³ The metaphysical difficulties and the temptations facing those who became bishops were also well known. As already noted,

¹⁶⁶ R. Reynolds, 'Christ as Cleric: The Ordinals of Christ', in *Clerics in the Early Medieval Ages* (Aldershot, 1999), 1-50, 35-40, 50.

¹⁶⁷ *Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 43.

¹⁶⁸ Hugh of St Victor, *On the Sacraments*, 278. For specific English examples, see *GP*, 66, 82, 20. Quotation from, D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000-1300* (London, 1992), 252.

¹⁶⁹ G. Henderson, 'Sortes Biblicae in Twelfth Century England: the list of episcopal prognostics in Cambridge Trinity College MS. R 7.5', *England in the Twelfth Century*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1990), 113-35, 115, 117-18, 127.

¹⁷⁰ *OV*, v, 262; Hugh the Chantor, 39, 48, 60.

¹⁷¹ *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 118; Schriber, *Dilemma*, 24, 54; *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, ed. and trans. H.E. Butler (London, 1937), 214-5, 358-9, and see his other works as listed above, nt. 27.

¹⁷² *Magna Vita*, 35.

Reuter has emphasised that much satirical material was written as guidance and a warning. As educational attainment and the definition, responsibilities and spiritual worth of the office grew across the century this sincere ambition to serve Church, God and flock rather than or as well as ambition and desire became better articulated.¹⁷⁴ It may not have needed to become more substantial.

b) Magnificence

Arnulf of Lisieux who was ambitious for the holiness of the episcopal office also wanted its magnificence.¹⁷⁵ Bishop Alexander of Lincoln was apparently nicknamed 'the Magnificent' by the cynics of the Roman curia unimpressed by his attempts at conspicuous expenditure.¹⁷⁶ Magnificence like ambition for promotion is often assumed to be characteristic of the stereotypical bad bishops. Nevertheless, it can also be examined in order to aid 'rounding out' of the episcopal office. Commentators understood it to be a valuable and even necessary characteristic of the successful bishop.¹⁷⁷ William of Malmesbury explained Bishop Alexander's building work at Lincoln as motivated by self importance but elsewhere he consistently praises such activity.¹⁷⁸ Bishops did add to their cathedrals to their own memory, but more importantly to the glory of God and the Church. The external and internal artistry of the cathedral forced upon the laity a consciousness of their God. Alexander's acquisition of a pall, reform of the psalmody, legislation on parish processions and appointment of a penitentiary complement it. In the context of twelfth-century society, all status and the efficacy of all governmental and administrative power, ecclesiastical as well as lay, were to some extent represented through and dependent upon its maintenance. It could be purely ecclesiastical in character, as can be seen in the vestments of the bishop, the internal decoration and ritual and external architecture of the cathedral.

¹⁷³ *Letters of St Anselm*, nos. 125-7.

¹⁷⁴ For one aspect of this development, the debate about whether the bishop might be classed as a separate order, see, R.P. Stenger, 'The Episcopacy as an Ordo according to the Medieval Canonists', *Medieval Studies*, 29 (1967), 67-112.

¹⁷⁵ *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 118.

¹⁷⁶ *HH*, 751.

¹⁷⁷ E.g. *GP*, 95, 132, 205.

¹⁷⁸ *HN*, 44; *GP*, 151-2, 194-5.

Magnificence's more secular forms were remarked upon by contemporaries. Entourages, courts, palaces, conspicuous consumption and generosity mirrored those of secular powers but this should not detract from the fact that what they represented and what was exercised was essentially ecclesiastical. While the Chronicle of St Alban's abbey contrasted the strength and power represented in the entourage of the bishop of Lincoln with the restrained and pious abbot with the support of only a very few monks when they came into conflict, the former was, at least, clerical.¹⁷⁹ Entourages may have had a military or at least a secular element, but they also usually included high clerics, an almoner and in Bishop Alexander's case a converted Jewess as an example to his flock.¹⁸⁰ Episcopal palaces were the property of and representative of the church and not of family and inheritance. The cultured courts and expenditure of bishops like Alexander and Henry of Winchester did advertise their wealth, status and power, but it was a learned and religious rather than a military and lordly power.¹⁸¹

Only the saintly and to some extent the monastic orders could sustain power by inversion of its normal forms. Indeed, they depended on it. Episcopal power was routinely exercised within the world and with regard to issues as much secular as ecclesiastical. For the most part it had to and could only be exercised and represented through and within the frameworks in which contemporary society, including the clergy itself, understood it. Wulfstan of Worcester was criticised by his peers, who thought that his dress demeaned their office. His biographer felt obliged to insist that humility and service were not inconsistent with authority.¹⁸² Hugh of Lincoln, like others before him, got off his horse to minister to the poor.¹⁸³ This was considered significant because the right place for a figure of such authority, regardless of his order, was on its back. His monastic biographer emphasised his small entourage but also noted that this horrified his clerks, one of whom also tried to sneak some adornment on to his

¹⁷⁹ *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. H.T. Riley (3 vols., RS, 1867-9), i, 139-56; J.E. Sayers, 'Papal Privileges for St Alban's Abbey and its dependencies', *The Study of Medieval Records*, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford, 1971), 57-85.

¹⁸⁰ *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 24.

¹⁸¹ Kusaba, 'Henry of Blois, Winchester and the Twelfth Century Renaissance'; N. Riall, 'Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester: a patron of the twelfth century Renaissance'. *Hampshire Papers*, 5 (Hants. Co. Council, 1994), 1-20.

¹⁸² *Vita Wulfstani*, 46, 54; *GP*, 141.

¹⁸³ *Magna Vita*, 125.

horse's trappings. Gerald of Wales, his secular biographer, felt the need to insist that he maintained his household and his episcopal order and dignity.¹⁸⁴ Even the monastic biographer emphasised his noble origins. High birth was important because it was worthy of the dignity of the office and strengthened its exercise.¹⁸⁵

Both men realised that they would have to eat with their knights and maintain courts if they were to exercise authority in their dioceses.¹⁸⁶ Their courts also offered them an interface between church and flock in which they could and did inspire and were a potential focal point for local society. Their biographers considered this to be an obligation of their office, which suggests that not all episcopal duties are to be found in lists of their ecclesiastical functions. Those that are not should not necessarily be seen as a falling away. 'Magnificence' and ostensibly secular style were essential to the effective exercise of power even by saintly figures and should be understood as unwritten but essential attributes of the bishop. This is apparent too in Hugh the Chantor's record of his conversation with Calixtus II. The pope bemoaned his inability to achieve anything in Rome by contrasting it with his home country, where he had known and was known by everyone, lay and religious, and had therefore been able to get things done.¹⁸⁷

This argument is supported by the evidence of those bishops who crossed the line. Magnificence and administration could be virtues in a bishop as long as they were balanced by a 'holiness' or 'spirituality'; a commitment to the ecclesiastical side of the office. Constance Bouchard showed how Bishop Hugh de Noyers of Auxerre failed in the former case and Philip de Harcourt was much criticised despite the acknowledged benefits he brought to his cathedral in the latter.¹⁸⁸ Robert Bloet is their equivalent in the case of the episcopal court.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ *Vita*, 15, 29-31; *Magna Vita*, 128. Getting off horses wasn't an uncommon sign of humility, Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 83-97.

¹⁸⁵ *Magna Vita*, 11-13; *OV*, iii, 81-5; Murray, *Reason and Society*, 323-5.

¹⁸⁶ *Vita Wulfstani*, 46-7; *Vita*, 29-3; *Magna Vita*, 202.

¹⁸⁷ Hugh the Chantor, 71, 85.

¹⁸⁸ Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration*, 105, 109; Gleason, *An Ecclesiastical Barony*, 27-30.

¹⁸⁹ *HH*, 587.

¹⁹⁰ *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 34.

Arnulf of Lisieux felt the need to defend his elder brother's conduct at Séez.¹⁹⁰ All four failed to strike a balance and entered into the secular world. All four lost their spiritual authority by doing so (although each was materially powerful enough to maintain their position). Henry of Huntingdon's description of Robert Bloet's court emphasises for moralistic purposes that it was too magnificent, too secular and Robert's delight in it too wholehearted, but it also shows the extent to which that court could and was supposed to be at the centre of a local society. In each case it was the extreme of conduct rather than the conduct itself which was wrong. Most bishops managed to stay on the right side of the line. They maintained a differentiation between themselves and the representations of their power from the laity and secular power. That differentiation was their ecclesiastical status and spiritual authority.

2.3. The Bishop

The introduction to this chapter began with reference to the fact that there is very little explicit evidence for how the Anglo-Norman bishops of 1135 themselves conceived of and exercised their office. It also stressed the considerable historiography of the episcopacy which has emphasised the administrative to the exclusion of the religious. This has often led to misguided models of the office. Both necessitated analysis of what material there is, even though it may at times have looked tangential. It should be clear that there is much more evidence of episcopal pastoral and religious commitment and social integration and importance than has hitherto been allowed. This suggests that it was in this character as well as those of administrator and politician that bishops appeared to, and were understood by, their flock. This was very much authoritative and superior and used many of the same forms of representation as secular power but it was religious nonetheless. Bishops at the end of Henry I's reign could be motivated by sincere commitment to their office and flock and could have a significant place within local religion and society. This gave them the potential passively to possess and sometimes exercise considerable spiritual

authority. It was this that they would take into Stephen's reign.

PART TWO
CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER THREE

CHESTER. THE BISHOP IN HIS DIOCESE

The medieval diocese of Chester incorporated Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and the northern halves of Warwickshire and Shropshire. Its Anglo-Saxon bishops had ruled it from Lichfield (Staffordshire), but because of the city's poverty its post-Conquest incumbents moved first to St John's Church, Chester, and then Coventry abbey (Warwickshire). Chester was one of the poorest dioceses in England (candidates twice refused it for that reason in the thirteenth century) and it remains one of the most obscure.¹ Two bishops held the see during Stephen's reign: Roger de Clinton (1129-1148), a secular clerk and archdeacon of Buckingham, and Walter Durdent (1149-1159), a monk and prior of Christchurch, Canterbury where he was remembered as wise, pious and a great improvement on his predecessor.² The Coventry monastic chapter freely elected him on the advice of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. As such he was one of a number of the archbishop's protégés to gain promotion in this period.³ In contrast, Symeon of Durham claimed that Bishop Roger's uncle, Geoffrey de Clinton, had paid three thousand marks to the king to secure his election.⁴ The *Gesta Stephani* statement that he was one of those bishops who '...filled their castles full of provisions and stocks of arms, knights and archers, and ...girt with swords and wearing magnificent suits of armour rode on horseback with the haughtiest destroyers of the country', was noted in the Introduction. Roger was the only bishop of an English see to accompany the Second Crusade (on which he died, at Antioch).⁵ Superficially, the two bishops' backgrounds and careers appear to represent the changing nature of the Anglo-Norman church. For Saltman, for instance, Roger 'represented the sporting type' while Walter is generally understood as a product of the new freedom the church gained consequent on the collapse of royal authority during the civil war.⁶

¹ For the diocese and its bishops, see *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xxxviii-liv; P. Heath, 'The Medieval Church', *VCH*, Staffordshire, iii, 1-44; M.J. Franklin, 'The Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield, c. 1072-1208', *Coventry's First Cathedral*, ed. G. Demidowicz (Stamford, 1998), 118-38.

² *Gervasii Cantuariensis Opera Historia*, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols., Rolls Series, 1867), i, 378.

³ Franklin, 'Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield', 127.

⁴ *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, ed. T.S. Arnold (2 vols, Rolls Series, 1882-5), ii, 83.

⁵ *MA*, vi, 1242, nos. 3, 4; *GS*, 157.

⁶ Saltman, *Theobald*, 43.

Little more work has been done on either man. Both Frank Barlow and Michael Franklin noted that Roger was a member of the team sent to Rome to put the case for Stephen's legitimacy early in 1139 and that the preamble to one of his surviving charters cited natural law and Justinian.⁷ Sharon Elkins has further noted that he was among those bishops who were the main supporters of the female religious life in the first half of the twelfth century.⁸ This suggests that there might be more to him than is usually allowed. In the realm of politics, both bishops, in common with most of their peers, are generally understood as inactive, withdrawn and at best passively loyal to the king for the duration of the civil war. It has been suggested of both that they might have flirted with the Angevin interest. However, Franklin's examination of their politics (the only such analysis) concluded that Bishop Roger's political career was '... a maze of contradictions on the very few occasions that it emerges from total obscurity'. His conclusion on Walter is similar.⁹

Beyond these references, the historiography of the ecclesiastical and political history of the diocese and its bishops is limited. Apart from Franklin's edition of the episcopal *acta* the only study of the bishops is Peter Heath's excellent Victoria County History entry. Coventry has received some further consideration because of its confused documentary history, but none of the few large monasteries in the diocese has been the subject of much attention and by far the majority are too small to merit it. West Midlands political history is better served. Several of the leading local families have attracted attention. However, work on the dominant political force in the region, Earl Ranulf II of Chester, has concentrated for the most part on his activities and importance elsewhere in England. There are no studies of civil war Cheshire, Staffordshire or N. Shropshire and only one of Derbyshire. The last found only '...an absence of any unimpeachable sources which throw any light on [Earl] Robert's political

⁷ John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1956), 83; Barlow, *English Church*, 87; EEA, 14, Coventry, xxxix, lix; Franklin, 'Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield', 125.

⁸ Elkins, *Holy Women*, 13, 17, 53.

⁹ EEA, 14, Coventry, xl, li.

views.’¹⁰ None of these studies incorporated the bishops.

No chronicle covers the region through the civil war period but a useful corpus of charters has survived, much of it collected and published (though sometimes edited only indifferently). It is on these, in accordance with the method outlined in the introduction, that what follows is based. It has been necessary at times to reconstruct the basic ecclesiastical and especially political history of the region before factoring in the bishop because of the historiographical lacunae. Below, the ecclesiastical history of the diocese through the civil war period is reconstructed in what has become the standard form, through the bishops’ origins and elections, cathedral, chapter, household and archidiaconate, then monasticism and administration. Political history is then addressed county by county in Chapter Four. Because, as was noted in the Introduction, it is difficult to assess the nature of episcopal authority once it has been proved to exist this order serves to emphasise the potential of the most slippery of its aspects, spiritual authority. In ecclesiastical terms, the local evidence confirms that Bishop Roger deserves a much better reputation than he possesses while suggesting that Bishop Walter was comparatively ineffective as a diocesan. Character assessment on the basis of episcopal origins is mistaken in this case. In politics, there are grounds for much more optimism in the evidence and both bishops can be shown to have been active and loyal to, and involved in, royal government.

David Crouch has shown how Henry I placed Geoffrey de Clinton, one of his ‘new men’, in Warwickshire as a counterbalance to the potential power of the earls of Warwick. Geoffrey’s position was difficult and in 1128 he may well have seen in the vacant bishopric of Chester a chance to strengthen his family’s position. Roger handed over several episcopal estates to his uncle very soon

¹⁰ H.A. Cronne, ‘Ranulf de Gernons, earl of Chester, 1129-1154’, *TRHS*, 4th ser., 20 (1937), 103-34; G. Barraclough, *The Earldom and County Palatine of Chester* (Oxford, 1953); E. King, ‘Mountsorrel and its region in King Stephen’s reign’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 44 (1980), 1-10; ‘The Charters of Robert de Ferrars, earl of Nottingham, Derby and Ferrars’, ed. M. Jones, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 24 (1980), 7-27; *The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester c. 1071-1237*, ed. G. Barraclough, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 126 (1988); *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters*; P. Dalton, ‘In Neutro Latere: The Armed Neutrality of Ranulf II earl of Chester in King Stephen’s reign’, *ANS*, 14 (1992), 39-59; Crouch, ‘The local influence of the earls of Warwick’.

after his election.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Roger was well qualified for promotion in his own right. His apprenticeship at Lincoln, his office and perhaps his holding of a prebend of St Paul's, London made him a senior member of the Anglo-Norman church with long experience in cathedral worship and diocesan administration.¹² He was the only Anglo-Norman bishop of Chester who did not pack his household, chapter and estates with his relatives.¹³ Bishop Roger worked with Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux at Rome in 1139 and the latter was the sole prelate from the Norman Church to join the 1147 Crusade. While Roger was not Arnulf, left no similar collection of letters and had nothing like such a brilliant career, it is worth noting that he was perhaps closer to him than to his traditional characterisation. The evidence as laid out below suggests that Roger was far more than the archetypal warrior bishop; he was a committed and effective diocesan administrator.

Bishop Roger's most important single act was the transfer of the site of his see from Coventry abbey to Lichfield. The move has usually been ascribed to the exigencies of civil war and most recently as due to the needs of his secretariat. His successor Walter would return to Coventry and this has led to an impression that the move was a brief aberration.¹⁴ The bishops were not popular at Coventry and had constantly to fight to assert their rights over the monks.¹⁵ By 1139 Innocent II had agreed to a division of the monastery's estates between bishop and monks and the transfer of the bishop's portion to Lichfield.¹⁶ The churches and tithes the abbey held were to go to the bishop and the knights settled on its lands to do service to him rather than the abbot. Roger may also

¹¹ D. Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton and Roger Earl of Warwick: new men and magnates in the reign of Henry I', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 113-24. On the grants, 119. Geoffrey also held of the bishop at Radway in the far south of the county, *The Stoneleigh Leger Book*, ed. R.H. Hilton, Dugdale Society, 24 (1960), no. 14.

¹² J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300*, iii, Lincoln, compiled D. Greenway (London, 1977), 39; *ibid.*, i, St Paul's, London (London, 1968), 64.

¹³ Bishop Robert Pecche's son Richard became bishop in his turn and several other members of the family turn up around Bishops Roger and Walter, *The Staffordshire Cartulary*, ed. G. Wrottesley, CHS (3 vols., 1880-3), iii, 182 (*EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 63); *MRA*, no. 169; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 63. Bishop Walter's family followed in his wake, *MRA*, nos., 173, , 602-3; *EEA*, 17, Coventry and Lichfield, nos. 69, 108.

¹⁴ Heath, 'The Medieval Church', *passim*; Franklin, 'The Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield', 125-6; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xliii-iv. See above, p. 65 for general comment.

¹⁵ Heath, 'The Medieval Church', *passim*; *VCH*, Staffordshire, iv (1958), 41, 43, 45; *GP*, 307-11; *MRA*, nos. 18, 26.

¹⁶ *MRA*, no. 454.

have had the right to institute to the abbey's priorate and to regulate its lands and offices. The monks were certainly to owe him the same obedience as those at Ely, Winchester and Worcester did their bishops.¹⁷ At Lichfield Roger set up eight new prebends and bolstered the resources transferred from Coventry with others newly granted by the king.¹⁸

Bishop Roger had formed his vision for Lichfield and begun the transfer of assets by 1139 but fighting did not begin around Coventry until the 1140s. Lichfield was the original site of the see and the cult of its saint, St Chad, and right in the centre of the diocese. Bishop Roger was also a vigorous supporter of the new monasticism and keen to reform what he saw as lax discipline at the monastery. Innocent II's bull made explicit reference to reassertion of the purity of the monastic life as part of the motive for the division of property. Roger took that which was explicitly stated to be best suited to, and exercised by, the bishop and least suited to the monastic life. He devoted such an enormous amount of time, energy and money to Lichfield that he must have aimed at more than either a stopgap solution to civil war problems or better provision for his secretariat. An antagonistic, independently minded monastic chapter was not conducive to the good government or religious leadership of the diocese. It was not the bishop's own, he had limited rights within it and he could not lead its religious life; at Lichfield Bishop Roger attempted to refound a cathedral where and from which he could do all those things.

Bishop Roger's move led to both churches claiming the right to elect when he died.¹⁹ By this time their relationship was hostile. Roger had taken away Coventry's estates, knights and status and this left it defenceless during the civil war. In 1144, left undefended, it was fortified and then besieged. Its abbot,

¹⁷ This is asserted in a charter of King Richard and relates to Bishop Hugh de Nonant's attempts to change the abbey into a secular college. Nonant's machinations mean that the document must be approached with some caution, *MRA*, no. 168. *MRA*, nos., 450, 452 are more secure.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no 262; *RRAN*, iii, nos. 246, 451-4, 969. See below for further discussion of the political significance of this.

¹⁹ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xlvii-1 is the best modern commentary on the immediate dispute; Heath, 'The Church', 9, takes it across the centuries. See also Saltman, *Theobald*, 114-16. Coventry's claim was best put in 1215, *MA*, vi (3), 1242; Lichfield's in the fourteenth century, *Anglia Sacra sive Collectio Historiarum de Archiepiscopis et Episcopis Angliae ad annum 1540*, ed. H. Wharton (2 vols, London, 1691), i, 438.

Laurence, a man possessed of enormous energy, thereafter engaged in a series of forgeries designed to prove the abbey's independence of the bishop.²⁰ On the vacancy, he may have reasoned that gaining control of the election of the next bishop would enable him to get what he wanted for his abbey. Archbishop Theobald accepted Coventry's case in return for the election of his own man. Walter then excommunicated the chapter at Lichfield for refusing him admittance to his church. Despite this initial alliance and Walter's monasticism, Coventry soon demanded its freedom from its new bishop and both men headed for Rome. Walter kept his place but was forced to concede much freedom to the abbey and to return most of the lands Roger had removed from it.²¹ Walter's effectiveness in his first years must have been inhibited by the dispute, even more so because there was a political dimension to the election.²²

Bishop Walter's relationship with Coventry improved with time and he returned many of the estates his predecessor had removed. However, he was posthumously accused of alienating Lichfield's lands to the abbey. In the late 1150s Canon Simon of Lichfield fought Coventry for his prebend of Honiton and was to claim that the abbey had seized it while the case was in progress.²³ Bishop Walter did see to it that Bishop Roger's plans for the revitalisation of Lichfield were completed by making sure that it received rights to a mint and a market, but he used its chapter and lands to provide for his clerical and lay relatives, and he neither replaced those estates taken back to Coventry nor replenished those affected by the war and Lichfield began to decline again.²⁴ He also took, and was referred to by, the title 'Coventry' rather than 'Chester'.²⁵ Walter might have been apathetic with regard to Lichfield - and this would fit

²⁰ The historiography of the forged charters and ownership of the town of Coventry is controversial and convoluted; see in the first instance and for bibliography, *The Early Records of Medieval Coventry*, ed. P.R. Coss and T. John (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, New Series, 11 (1986)), xviii.

²¹ *MRA*, no. 262; *RRAN*, iii, no. 246.

²² See below, p. 107.

²³ *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, no. 131.

²⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 456-9. Bishops Richard Pecche, Hugh de Nonant and Geoffrey de Muschamp would all try to revive the chapter. Richard had to reconstruct the dean's prebend which had been ravaged by the war. *MRA*, no. 357; *EEA*, 17, Coventry and Lichfield, nos. 39, 112. *EEA*, 16, Coventry and Lichfield, nos. 59, 64, 65, 70, and 71 for the reconstruction.

²⁵ Bishop Robert I de Limesey (1086-1117) may also have used Coventry although the originals of the two documents in which he is referred to as such have been lost. His successors Robert II Pecche and Roger both used 'Chester', *EEA*, 14, Coventry, lvi-lvii, nos. 3,4.

with his conduct elsewhere - but it is more likely in this instance that he made a choice as to which church would be his cathedral. His monastic conception of his office triumphed over Bishop Roger's experiment. National and international ecclesiastical debates very much affected this isolated diocese. The changes it went through must also have had some impact on the wider regional population: they were dramatic, controversial and long lasting enough.

Bishop Roger founded monasteries at Brewood (Staffordshire), Buildwas (Shropshire) and Farewell (Staffordshire). All date to Stephen's reign.²⁶ He made grants to the hermitage at Radmore (Staffordshire) and supported its development into a priory.²⁷ He freed Stone (Staffordshire) priory from synodals and at the foundation of Rocester (Staffordshire) in 1146 freed it from all episcopal customs. With the consent of its archdeacon he also granted it further liberties.²⁸ Bishop Walter's record is less good. Early in Henry II's reign he became involved in a dispute with the monk 'Ingenuf', who may well have been the abbot of Buildwas, and delayed too long in intervening in a dispute at Lilleshall (Shropshire). When he finally took notice of the latter it was only to make the situation so much worse that it threatened his standing at court. Archbishop Theobald also criticised him for failing to protect Shrewsbury.²⁹

As is listed in the edition of their *acta*, both bishops' households were similar to, and went through the same developments as, those of their peers. Masters first appear in the 1140s. Amongst them were two close relatives of Earl Robert II de Ferrars of Derby, Hugh and Edmund.³⁰ It will be suggested below that they and others made the household politically as well as ecclesiastically important. Politics and religion were intertwined in Stephen's reign.³¹ Like Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, Bishop Roger was accused of having a household of

²⁶ *VCH, Staffordshire*, iii, 220; *RRAN*, iii, no. 132; *VCH, Shropshire*, ii, 50; Elkins, *Holy Women*, 13, 53. Brewood's early history is unknown, but its dedication, to St Mary and St Chad, is shared only with Lichfield and Buildwas, the two sites most associated with Roger.

²⁷ *Stoneleigh Leger Book*, ed. Hilton, no. 14; *RRAN*, iii, no. 838; *VCH, Staffordshire*, iii, 247.

²⁸ *MA*, vi, 409, no. 1; *Stone Cartulary*, f. 18.

²⁹ Saltman, *Theobald*, nos. 88, 162, 249; *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, ed. W. J. Millor and H. E. Butler, rev. C.N.L. Brooke (2 vols, Oxford, 1955), i, no. 105; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, no. 110.

³⁰ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 43, 60.

³¹ See below, p. 107.

knights. Episcopal tenants did regularly attend the bishops' courts. Robert FitzGeoffrey and his brother Elias represented Bishop Roger when the de Clinton family settled their differences with the Earl of Warwick and were entrusted with strategically important estates. They also attested a charter of Bishop Walter.³² The Noel family, who will also appear in the political history put forward below, attest for Bishop Roger.³³ However, there is no explicit evidence of this attendance having military characteristics.

As well as constructing a new cathedral and chapter organization at Lichfield, Bishop Roger completed the archidiaconal structure of the diocese.³⁴ He also worked closely with its incumbents centrally and in the diocese. For instance, he and two archdeacons attested an important confirmation charter for Kenilworth priory. Four witnessed his charter issued at the dedication of Farewell nunnery and three a grant to William, archdeacon of London. He heard the prior of Worcester's case over the church of West Bromwich (Staffordshire) in his synod attended by five archdeacons.³⁵ Walter too held synods; five archdeacons, the treasurer of Lichfield, the dean of Tattenhall and the priests of Offlow hundred (Staffordshire) witness one of his charters.³⁶ The archdeacons of Chester and Stafford represented Bishop Roger in a Staffordshire land dispute while Froger archdeacon of Derby represented Bishop Walter at the foundation of Darley abbey (Derbyshire).³⁷

However, there is some evidence that Bishop Walter failed to control his subordinates and Froger in particular. The latter was accused of simony and Archbishop Theobald, despairing of Walter's efforts, felt obliged to send in his own agent to deal with the problem. On Walter's death it was found that Froger

³² *GS*, 157. For the FitzGeoffreys and others too, see, *MRA*, no. 176; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 18, 63, 65, 67, 76.

³³ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 18, 63.

³⁴ Chester had five archdeacons whose territories coincided with the county boundaries. All but Shropshire were titled with main towns of the respective shires- Chester, Derby, Coventry and Stafford. This organization is usually said to have been achieved by 1151, but a Worcester charter of 1146x1148 lists all five. *Cartulary of Worcester*, no. 191.

³⁵ *Cartulary of Worcester*, no. 191; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 21-2.

³⁶ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 65. For other examples of archdeacons attending bishops see, nos. 37, 39, 57-8, 63, 66.

³⁷ *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, nos. 24-5; *MA*, vi (i), 357. no. 1.

and the archiepiscopal agent had actually gone into partnership!³⁸ A dispute between Master Richard of Lichfield and an Osbert de Loco which also pulled in Archdeacon Elias of Stafford and which went to the pope also suggests Walter had difficulty disciplining his subordinates.³⁹ Again, a superficially 'reformed' appointment was not as effective as an 'old fashioned' one.

Archdeacons carried out their own duties throughout the civil war. Richard Pecche, archdeacon of Coventry worked with the earl of Warwick to expel Roger, the dean of the secular college at Warwick in 1145.⁴⁰ In the dispute mentioned above, in which Archdeacons William of Chester and Ralph of Stafford accompanied by Archdeacon William of London represented the bishop and judged a dispute at Stone (Staffordshire), they also worked in close co-operation with the leading local layman, Robert II de Stafford.⁴¹ Archdeacon Froger co-operated with Ranulf the sheriff of Derbyshire in the house of the dean of Derby.⁴² Froger and Richard Pecche attended the foundations of Darley and Merevale (Warwickshire) respectively.⁴³ As was stressed in Chapter Two, archdeacons were therefore part of local society and effectively had some religious significance within it. They were not just external administrative officers.

The exception to this rule is the archdeacon of Chester. Both before and during Stephen's reign, while he was in regular attendance on the bishop and acted with him and for him elsewhere in the diocese, there is no evidence of his presence within Cheshire itself. There is also some evidence that his prebend had to be funded centrally rather than in the usual way from the revenues of his office: the Staffordshire estates of Chadshunt and Itchington supported Archdeacon William de Villiers.⁴⁴ It seems too that the archdeacon of Coventry operated only in the southern part of the half of the county that lay in the diocese but not

³⁸ *Letters of John of Salisbury*, i, nos. 54-5, 105, 107; Saltman, *Theobald*, nos. 88, 162.

³⁹ *Letters of John of Salisbury*, i, no. 55.

⁴⁰ Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton', 121.

⁴¹ *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser.2, nos. 14-15.

⁴² *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey*, ed. R.R. Darlington, Derbyshire Archaeological Record Society (2 vols., 1945), no. 12a.

⁴³ *MA*, v, 482, no. 1.

⁴⁴ *EEA*, 14, Coventry and Lichfield, no. 66.

in the north. This same pattern is repeated in Lincoln diocese and it will be suggested below that both were excluded for political reasons by local magnate power. Their ecclesiastical authority and their loyalties threatened that power.

Episcopal administration and justice was also maintained during the civil war. The relationship of Shawbury (Shropshire) church with a number of new chapels was used as an example in Chapter Two.⁴⁵ Such cases continued to appear during the civil war.⁴⁶ Shrewsbury's enormous estates may have made the problem a widespread one for the abbey. Bishop Roger worked with his opposite number at Hereford to set out a general policy for the abbey's lands. Both also produced charters listing all the rights of the mother church and chapels which were then sent to the archbishop for confirmation.⁴⁷ Bishop Walter may have been less effective than his predecessor in this respect too. A William fitzNigel appealed to the archbishop's court claiming that Walter's was biased against him. Lilleshall abbey went as far as protesting to the king about Walter's judgement.⁴⁸ Again, there is no evidence of episcopal activity of this type from Cheshire or the northern part of Warwickshire.

Both bishops were also involved in the religious life of the local magnate community. Bishop Roger witnessed the foundation charter of Blythesbury (Staffordshire), gave counsel at the founding of Canwell (Staffordshire) and Combermere (Cheshire) and was instrumental in gaining permission for the transfer of the secular college of St Alkmund to the Augustinian order to enable the foundation of Lilleshall in 1145.⁴⁹ Bishop Walter was present when Osbert de Arden and Robert II de Stafford made grants to Radmore (Staffordshire) and Ardbury (Warwickshire) respectively.⁵⁰ Both bishops also issued confirmation charters for most of the monasteries in the diocese. Both confirmed all Shrewsbury's churches and possessions.⁵¹ Roger de Mowbray, who himself was

⁴⁵ See above, p. 69.

⁴⁶ Saltman, *Theobald*, no. 141.

⁴⁷ *EEA*, 14, *Coventry*, nos. 45, 63.

⁴⁸ Saltman, *Theobald*, nos. 88, 162; *Letters of John of Salisbury*, nos. 54, 105.

⁴⁹ *MA*, iv, 159, no. 1; iv, 104, nos., 2, 3; v, 323, no. 1; vi (1), 261, nos. 1, 2; *EEA*, 14, *Coventry*, nos. 30, 36, 69.

⁵⁰ *Stoneleigh Leger Book*, no. 17; *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser.2, no. 16.

⁵¹ *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey*, ed. U. Rees (2 vols., Aberystwyth, 1975), nos. 327-8.

based outside the diocese, regularly asked for confirmation of his grants to houses within it. His tenant Samson d'Aubigny also sought episcopal confirmation.⁵² Robert II de Stafford and his tenants in Staffordshire did the same.⁵³ Both groups were vulnerable during the civil war. However, episcopal confirmations and charters which address the bishop with regard to Cheshire and North Warwickshire are noticeably rarer than from the rest of the diocese. The most important baron of all, Earl Ranulf II of Chester, hardly ever addressed the bishop. This pattern is consistent with the archidiaconal evidence. The substance of confirmations and the episcopal jurisdiction which lay behind them during the civil war is made clear in a surviving charter of Earl Robert II de Ferrers. Recording a grant to Darley abbey he informed the burgesses and knights of Derby that if they caused any difficulty they would be answerable to the bishop.⁵⁴ The political significance of confirmations and bishops' administration in general, and this charter in particular, is discussed below in Chapter Four.

Within Chester diocese, individually, Bishops Roger and Walter undermine many modern assumptions about 'old-fashioned' and 'reformed' bishops. The activity of the former has to be understood in religious as well as 'sporting' terms, while the latter probably did possess some spiritual authority by the nature of his character but could not always transform it into effective action. More generally, episcopal and archidiaconal administrative and judicial activity were maintained throughout the civil war. As was outlined in Chapter Two this represented episcopal involvement with, and authority within, regional society. They were so within a political context of disruption, aggression, aggrandisement and suffering in which royal authority and government had declined to the point of disappearance. This is therefore testimony to the bishops' commitment and effort and also to the need the community felt for them. The latter was perhaps dependent on the former and on the continuity it offered to some extent. Maintenance of their place in itself meant that the

⁵² *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray, 1107-1191*, ed. D. E. Greenway (British Academy, 1972), nos. 77-9, 175-7.

⁵³ For Robert, see below. As an example of his tenants addressing the bishop: *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, no. 11 where Nicholas de Milwich addresses the bishop with regard to a grant made with Robert's consent and attestation of the charter.

⁵⁴ *Cartulary of Darley*, Gough ch., f. 25.

bishops could potentially offer continuity, government and legitimacy in a society which lacked all three. It will be argued below that the absence of the bishops and their administration from Cheshire and northern Warwickshire was a reflection of the same.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHESTER. THE BISHOPS AND THE POLITICS OF THE CIVIL WAR

The bishops of Chester's political experience is best approached by county because the political geography and history of each was different. However, with the exception of Shropshire, Earl Ranulf II of Chester dominated the whole region. His predecessors as earl are discussed under Cheshire, but he requires some preliminary consideration himself. Paul Dalton has described Ranulf II's ambitions in Lincolnshire, where he worked with his half-brother William de Roumare, thus: 'What they were aiming at, what they fought constantly to secure and what they made considerable progress towards achieving was independent tenurial, governmental and military domination of most of Lincolnshire.'¹ His motives were similar in the West Midlands. His ambitions are set out most clearly in a charter issued to him by Duke Henry in 1153. Among other things it granted or offered Ranulf II,

*...In super dedi ei Staford[iam] et Stafordiesir[am] et comitatum Stafordie totum quicquid ibi habui in foedo et hereditate, excepto foedo episcopi Cest[rie] et comitis Rob[erti] de Ferr[ariis] et Hug[onis] de Mortuomar[e] et Gervasii Pag[anel], et excepto foresto de Can[n]oc quod in manu mea retineo... Et totum foedum Norm[anni] de Verdun et foedum Roberti de Staff[fordia]... Et Notingeha[m] castell[um] et burg[um] et quicquid habui in Notingeha[m]... et totum foedum Willelmi Peverelli ubicunque sit nisi poterit se dirationare in mea curia de scelere et traditione... et Stanleia[m] juxta Coventreia[m] cum socha...*²

Repeated reference will be made to the charter in what follows. Duke Henry either offered Ranulf II all this with the aim of bringing him on side or the earl extorted it as the price of his allegiance. The duke cannot have meant to keep the agreement because it would have made Earl Ranulf II the most powerful man in the country. It is still testimony to the scale of the earl's ambitions and activities.

One hundred and three of Earl Ranulf II's charters have survived and forty six

¹ Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible', 111.

² *RRAN*, iii, no. 180.

of them concern the region (it is impossible to calculate how many of the latter and the whole were issued within it), but neither bishop appears regularly as either witness or addressee in them.³ Both witness twice while Roger is addressed three times and Walter four. None of these charters involve the county of Cheshire; indeed, for the most part they relate to regions where Ranulf II's power was limited. Roger witnesses a charter for Shrewsbury, Walter one for Bordesley (Worcestershire) outside the diocese. Roger is addressed in charters for Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire. Walter's appearances were at Ranulf II's deathbed.⁴ Ranulf II was easily the most important magnate in the region and for others, as is shown below, the bishop was of great importance. Since the bishops are present in some of his charters for elsewhere and also in the well-known agreements he made with Earl Robert of Leicester, Earl Ranulf II must have recognised episcopal authority. He was prepared to appeal to and use it, but only where his own power did not run.⁵ Ranulf II's death and its aftermath offer a useful contrast. Bishop Walter, as has been said, was present at his deathbed. Ranulf II's heir, Hugh II, was a minor and royal ward and Cheshire began to appear in the Pipe Rolls. The bishop's position improved too: the new earl and his mother made recompense for injuries Ranulf II had done the diocese and their grants came to address the bishop more regularly.⁶ Episcopal appearances in Earl Ranulf II's charters suggest the patterns that were noted in the Introduction, and those apparent in other magnate evidence cited below confirm their significance; across the diocese, the earl and the bishops had a difficult relationship.

Earl Ranulf II also represents an important feature of civil war West Midlands politics: for the most part they were autonomous of the 'official' civil war; local issues were very much more important than royal ones and royal government of any kind had little influence. Nevertheless, loyalty to the king, commitment to royal government and the legitimacy and legal status quo it represented were still influential. While evidence of them is rarely as explicit as that of local

³ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 15, 21-35, 39-40, 42-3, 45-6, 60-5, 67-8, 72-5, 81, 85, 90-1, 97-9, 104-05, 109, 114-15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 68, 82 witnessed by Bishop Roger, nos. 34, 100 by Bishop Walter. Nos. 45, 63, 68 addressed to Bishop Roger, 34, 84, 100, 118 to Bishop Walter.

⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 82, 110.

political issues, their indirect influence should not be underestimated and, as was stressed in the introduction to this thesis, it is at the local level that they are to be found. Both Bishops Roger and Walter have usually been described as neutral and passive with regard to the civil war, but the local evidence suggests otherwise on both counts. Because the bishops' relationship with the king has to be extrapolated from their local activity it will be considered last.

4.1. Cheshire

Earl Ranulf II's base was Cheshire, his relationship with the bishops of Chester was, to some extent, based in its history and the intertwining of politics and religion is clear there; it therefore makes sense to begin with the county. By 1135 the earl completely dominated the county: there was no royal desmesne and the only other tenant in chief was the bishop.⁷ The county's highest official was not the sheriff, himself under the earl's influence, but the earl's constable.⁸ The military commander was his seneschal.⁹ Cheshire neither accounted to the Exchequer, save during a minority, nor replied to the feudal assessments of 1166 and 1212. No royal justice operated within its bounds.¹⁰

In late Anglo-Saxon England the situation had been similar. Then the earl of Mercia had also controlled the bishopric. Leofwine, the last Anglo-Saxon bishop, began as abbot of Earl Leofric's abbey at Coventry. N.J. Higham has suggested the two were related; they were at least in close alliance. Their estates were intermingled and the earl had held some of the bishop's. Higham read this as suggesting military co-operation between the two against the Welsh.¹¹ Post-

⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 119-21, 124, 157.

⁷ *DB*, 263a where the entire county, save the town and the bishops' estates appear as, 'Lands of Earl Hugh and his men'; Barraclough, *Earldom and County*.

⁸ *VCH*, Cheshire, ii, 8. When Ranulf II made Eustace fitzJohn constable it was an occasion of some importance: *Charters of the Earls*, no. 72.

⁹ *Annales Cestrienses*, ed. R. Copley, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 14 (1916), 21. Robert Montalt routs the Welsh at Nantwich, 1146.

¹⁰ *VCH*, Cheshire, ii, 5.

¹¹ N.J. Higham, 'Patterns of Patronage and Power: The Governance of Late Anglo-Saxon Cheshire', in *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England, 1000-1700*, ed. J. Appleby and P. Dalton (Stroud, 1997), 1-13. See Barlow, *English Church 1000-1066*, 96-8 on Leofwine and on this 'type' of bishop.

Conquest the tenurial structure did not change; it simply became more exaggerated. However, in the new kingdom and with the end of Mercia, the king reasserted his right to oversee appointments to the bishopric and most of the diocese now fell outside the earl's jurisdiction. The bishops therefore had a new independence and the potential to form relationships with other lords. They could still be the earl's allies but he could also become an irritant.

Bishop Peter, the first Norman bishop, and Earl Hugh, the first Norman earl, continued the good relationship of their predecessors. Peter shifted his see to Chester from Lichfield in line with Lanfranc's ruling on the standard required for the site of a see. Chester, a wealthy port where the bishop already held fifty six burgages plus another six manors around the county, was eminently suitable. Earl Hugh welcomed outside influence as he built his power internally and against the Welsh.¹² He had enough confidence in his own prowess, his men and his king to tolerate another authority in the shire. He may also have appreciated the buttressing a bishop, a cathedral and episcopal resources could give him.

However, in 1102 Bishop Robert de Limesey moved the see to Coventry. William of Malmesbury claimed he was motivated by greed and Heath has added the troubled state of Cheshire in the aftermath of Earl Hugh's death. Robert's only surviving *actum* gives him the title Bishop of Coventry.¹³ It is odd then that elsewhere he and then his successors continued to be named 'Chester'. The move was also extremely sudden, St John's church at Chester was left only half built and thereafter completely neglected.¹⁴ All the other transfers of sees carried out around this time led to a new name for the bishopric. Retaining the title must suggest that the bishops were aggrieved and felt the need to maintain their claim in Chester. Little is known about Earl Richard or those who advised him before his majority, but he is said to have quarrelled badly with the one other authority in the county, St Werburgh's abbey. He may have attempted to change the foundation and he left the abbacy vacant in his last years.¹⁵ Like

¹² *OV*, iii, 216, 226-30, 260.

¹³ *GP*, 310; *Annales Monastici*, ii, ed. H.R. Luard (5 vols., Rolls Series, 1864-9), 223; Heath, 'Medieval Church', 7; Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, 115; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xxxii-vi, no. 3.

¹⁴ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, xxxiii, no.3.

¹⁵ Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, 116.

many second generation magnates, Richard may have had a chip on his shoulder and this may have contributed to the bishop's move.

In 1066 the bishop had held an eighth of the town of Chester, but by 1135 this was reduced to a street, four houses and the church of St John's.¹⁶ They still held their manors but only two knight's fees were ever created on them. In 1166 the then bishop did not know the amount of service those fees owed.¹⁷ He knew exactly elsewhere. At some stage the earls had neutralised the bishops' ability to exact military service from the county. As was stressed in Chapter Three, this is paralleled in the ecclesiastical sphere. Uniquely in the diocese, there is no evidence of the archdeacon being active in the county during the civil war period. This is especially odd because there is some evidence that Chester was considered the senior archidiaconate. Where he does appear he is part of the bishop's court or acting as his deputy elsewhere. Alone among the archdeacons, Chester was funded from the possessions of reformed Lichfield.

The bishops are also rarely present in the monastic evidence. Roger de Clinton appears in none of St Werburgh's charters and Walter only in one, issued at Ranulf II's deathbed.¹⁸ The same is true of their predecessors. During the civil war the abbey produced general confirmation charters purportedly issued by the first three earls.¹⁹ Each granted the abbey extensive autonomy and, together, they have been best explained as St Werburgh's attempt to persuade Earl Ranulf II to confirm its rights. None makes any reference to episcopal authority and this might be taken to imply that the abbey did not see it as important in the county. It might also be that the abbey consciously ignored the bishops. St Werburgh's consistently pushed for autonomy, either on its own account or in concert with the earls. Pope Alexander III granted the privilege of blessing vestments and stressed the abbot's right to the pastoral staff and ring. In 1188x1191 Clement III confirmed the church's freedom from episcopal exactions and permitted it to appeal against bishops refusing it chrism oil, consecration of altars and the

¹⁶ *DB*, 262c, 263a; *MRA*, no. 262.

¹⁷ *Liber Niger Scaccarii Staffordscira*, CHS, 1 (1880), 147.

¹⁸ *Charters of the Earls*, no. 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 3, 8, 13, 28.

ordination and institution of priests it had presented.²⁰ While bishops could not be replaced, there were some ecclesiastical actions only they could take, the abbey was attempting to exclude episcopal authority as far as possible. The earls gave it a great deal too. It possessed the tithes of the revenues of all their mills and the city, it had its own court which the earl himself respected and its market was privileged. Ranulf II also negotiated for it a trading agreement with Shrewsbury in case of war in the region.²¹ The abbey far outshone the secular church in lands and prestige in the county and it and the earls wanted to keep things that way. No similar concessions were ever made by the earls to the bishops.

A late twelfth century local chronicle explained the meaning of the name 'Chester' in terms of the tripartite division of the city between upright rulers, dutiful citizens and reverent monks. The bishop and his clergy were not included.²² Of the other religious institutions in the county, only the first new generation foundation, Norton (1115), was even relatively independent of the abbey and/or the earl and even it was founded by the latter's hereditary constable. Bishop Robert de Limesey encouraged it, but the bishops do not appear again in its charters until Stephen's reign. Their importance then is not clear. Combermere was founded in 1134 on the advice of bishop and earl, but thereafter the bishop does not appear again in the house's charters and the earls soon took over the patronage of the abbey. The nunnery of Chester, founded in Stephen's reign, was also soon taken over by the earls. The bishop was not involved. Bishop Roger's interest in supporting the female religious makes it likely that if the foundation had been made anywhere other than Chester he might have played some part.²³

However, just as Ranulf II's heir did begin to involve the bishop more, in 1157 the new abbot of St Werburgh's travelled to Lichfield to be blessed by Bishop

²⁰ *The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St Werburgh, Chester*, ed. J. Tait, Chetham Society, 79, 82 (1920-3), nos. 1, 61, 63.

²¹ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 13, 23, 61.

²² *Liber Luciani de Laude Cestrie*, ed. M.J. Taylor, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (1912), 41.

²³ *VCH, Cheshire*, iii, 124, 146, 165.

Walter.²⁴ In Earl Hugh II's majority under Bishop Richard Pecche the diocese at last became active in the county.²⁵ All of this implies that the bishops should have witnessed and been addressed more often than they were during the civil war. Given the energy of the bishop and Ranulf II's recognition of his role elsewhere in his diocese, his exclusion from the county must have been conscious policy. Politics and religion in Cheshire were dominated by the earl and the abbey and are inseparable. Politically, the earl was attempting to develop his autonomy as far as he could. He seems to have felt it important to control ecclesiastical activity in the county to that end. It may be that, in their mutual interest, he and the abbey worked to set up a religious franchise which excluded the bishop so far as that was possible.

4.2. Warwickshire

The northern half of Warwickshire which was incorporated in the diocese can itself be divided into two in the reign of Stephen, a northern area around Coventry and abutting north west Leicestershire dominated by Ranulf II and a southern one centred on Warwick and the huge estates of the eponymous earls.

In the north, the earl of Chester already held considerable estates and perhaps a part of the town of Coventry.²⁶ It became a pivotal point in his strategy. As Cronne put it, 'The Midland area which he strove to dominate was, broadly speaking, an equilateral triangle with its apex at Coventry and the extremities of its base at Chester and Lincoln.'²⁷ Duke Henry's charter as cited above makes Ranulf II's ambitions clear because it granted him, or perhaps confirmed his possession of, the huge royal estate of Stoneleigh to the south of Coventry.²⁸ Ranulf II aimed to consolidate his control of the region and take over the town. The Marmion family, which held a compact honour around Tamworth in the

²⁴ *Annales Cestrienses*, for the year 1157.

²⁵ E.g., *EEA*, 16, Coventry, nos. 14-21.

²⁶ P. Coss, *Lordship, Knighthood and Locality* (Cambridge, 1991), 24-7.

²⁷ Cronne, 'Ranulf', 127-8.

²⁸ See above, nt. 2.

north west of the county, opposed him.²⁹ They probably came out for Stephen early, since the Empress granted their estates from under them in 1141 as part of a package she offered to William de Beauchamp. This must have confirmed their allegiance to the king, but they may have had to fight for their place since a Stephen de Beauchamp was active in the area at some point during the reign.³⁰ Robert II Marmion also fought Ranulf II until his death in 1145x1146.³¹ Thereafter a more peaceful relationship was established between the earl and Robert III.³² Nevertheless, this did not bring an end to conflict since King Stephen himself challenged Ranulf II's control of Coventry in 1147.³³ To the east, Ranulf II came up against the other expansionist power in the region, Earl Robert of Leicester.

There is very little evidence of episcopal activity in the northern section of the county during the civil war. Archdeacon Richard Pecche's first appearance is at the founding of Merevale late in the civil war by a known episcopal ally, Earl Robert II de Ferrars. The first address to the bishop from the north also dates from these later years when Richard de Camville, who had married the Marmion heiress, informed him of his foundation of Combe priory. Camville was a loyal supporter of the king. Combe is discussed in more detail below.³⁴ A charter of Bishop Gerald Pucelle refers to cemeteries set up for the protection of refugees north and east of Coventry by the Earl of Chester and Thurstan Banastre. It states that only later had they asked for confirmation of their actions.³⁵ In contrast, in Shropshire it was the bishop himself who took the initiative.³⁶ Episcopal absence is partly explained by the fact that most of the bishopric's estates lay south of Warwick and that Roger de Clinton's move to Lichfield taking the abbey's knights with him had shifted the focus of the bishopric's

²⁹ For a comprehensive list of their estates see, *The Beauchamp Cartulary*, ed. E. Mason, Pipe Roll Society, n.s. 43, xx-xxii.

³⁰ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 68, 136.

³¹ *HH*, 744; *Annales Monastici*, ii, 230.

³² Davis, 'An unknown Coventry Charter', 94; *Early Records of Coventry*, no. 1. The authenticity of this charter is not secure.

³³ *GS*, 199-201.

³⁴ *MA*, v, 581, no. 1; 585, no.1. See below p. 107.

³⁵ *Early Records of Coventry*, no. 12.

³⁶ See above, p. 96.

interests and strength west.³⁷ He could withdraw without great loss to the security of the southern half of the county, but his material weakness in the north might have been just as important a factor in his effectiveness.

Episcopal absence may also have been due to the attitude of the earl and of Coventry abbey. Relations with Coventry had never been good and through the civil war they became worse. Under Prior Laurence Coventry attempted to gain independence from the bishop and was prepared to ally with Ranulf II to that end. Laurence witnessed for the earl and one of the latter's sons would be buried at Coventry when he died while still a child. Most importantly, the earl granted the abbey control of all the churches in his estates to the south of the city.³⁸ This was to deprive the bishop of his rights and set up an alternative ecclesiastical focus to him. Ranulf II wished to exclude the political and ecclesiastical authority of the bishop from regions under his control. He and Laurence worked together to that end. Bishop Walter, on his election, was parachuted into a political as well as an ecclesiastical dispute. His problems in his first years with Laurence may have been partly due to continuance of his predecessor's problems with the earl.

Charters from the Marmion family's foundation of Polesworth in the north west do not incorporate the bishop either.³⁹ At first sight this is odd because the family were in a similar position to episcopal allies elsewhere: the Ferrars in Derbyshire, the Staffords in Staffordshire and the Belmeis in Shropshire (for which, see below). All were Stephen loyalists, victims of aggression and under attack, the first two from the bishop's own enemy, Ranulf II. However, Robert Marmion II was excommunicated after he had fortified Coventry abbey (c. 1144x1146). He was killed while in that state and buried in unconsecrated ground.⁴⁰ It is likely that it was the bishop who excommunicated him. This suggests that Bishop Roger was prepared to take a moral stand even when it was to the detriment of his political position.

³⁷ *DB*, 238c.

³⁸ *Early Records of Coventry*, no. 2.

³⁹ *MA*, ii, 365-9.

As noted above, on the death of the last Marmion Richard de Camville was granted the family's estates. He founded Combe abbey very quickly, c. 1147, and Paul Dalton has suggested that the house should be considered as founded partly to promote peace.⁴¹ For him Bishop Walter and Prior Laurence of Coventry persuaded a number of men with ambitions and claims in the region to forgo them and the lands involved to found a religious house. This neutralized the land and also introduced the prayers of the Cistercian monks and their spiritual commitment to peace into local society.

However, as was emphasised in the Introduction, it is possible to suggest an alternative analysis of the evidence Dalton cited in which the foundation was not a framework for the establishment of regional peace.⁴² Richard de Camville, Combe's founder, held the land there from Roger de Mowbray, who held it in turn from Robert earl of Leicester. Dalton rightly noted that Richard was loyal to the king but that Roger was connected to Ranulf II. However, Roger's links with Ranulf II were very much against his will. He had been forced to concede a great deal in the aftermath of his capture at Lincoln and thereafter he struggled to maintain his estates until he left to go on crusade. Roger was the earl's victim rather than his ally.⁴³ He may even have been a closet loyalist and he most certainly looked to the bishop to confirm and protect his grants and the religious houses he was associated with. In North Warwickshire the aggressor they needed protecting from was the earl of Chester. Roger need not, therefore, be considered as having different loyalties from Richard.

Dalton also noted that Ranulf II made a grant to Combe, the charter recording which addressed Bishop Walter Durdent. Michael Franklin saw the same as signifying a connection between the two.⁴⁴ However, this grant can be linked to Ranulf II's deathbed rather than the foundation of the abbey because of its similarities to others known to have been issued there.⁴⁵ It need not therefore be

⁴⁰ *HH*, 744.

⁴¹ Dalton, 'Churchmen', 104-7.

⁴² Not least because Abbot Laurence did not get on with anyone!

⁴³ *Charters of Mowbray*, xxvi-viii.

⁴⁴ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, li.

⁴⁵ *Charters of the Earls*, no. 100; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 46.

related to any attempt to build and contribute to a peace plan. Given the acknowledged motives behind other grants he made at the same time, Ranulf II's gift might well have been in recompense. It was not mentioned in later confirmations perhaps because it was a restoration rather than a grant of new land. The earl's man Robert Basset may also have been restoring land to the abbey rather than granting it anew in a charter in which he also addressed the bishop and which is also cited by Dalton.⁴⁶ It suggests that he had seized the land from tenants of the earl of Warwick because it states that he had returned it after consulting them. This too looked to Dalton as if it was part of a process of making over disputed lands to a neutral religious house to encourage peace in the region. It cannot be shown that Robert's restoration was made before the end of hostilities. His reference to the original grantor in his charter is just as likely to be evidence of recognition of his crime as an agreement between them.

It is also likely that Combe's foundation was at least partly driven by Richard de Camville's desire to establish his own family presence rather than to make do with the Marmion foundation at Polesworth. His foundation was supported by other pro-Stephen and/or anti-Ranulf II magnates who independently looked to and were supported by the bishop elsewhere.⁴⁷ Commitment to co-operation, negotiation and settlement when a monastic house was founded cannot be assumed. Dalton's other work on Ranulf II of Chester makes clear that the earl had many less worthy characteristics than he had given rein to elsewhere. If this alternative explanation is correct it, entails a reassessment of the bishop's role. The bishops of Chester were not external, separated spiritual figures in this region; they were very much involved, whether by choice or necessity, in the dirty world of local politics. Within that world, they held some spiritual authority, but it was associated with policies opposed to Earl Ranulf II's actions.

In the southern area of the northern half of Warwickshire which was incorporated in the diocese the situation was very different. Roger earl of

⁴⁶ BL, Cotton Vitellus A I, fol. 42v.

⁴⁷ BL, Cotton Vitellus, A I fol. 42v, 43r, 45r; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 49.

Warwick was, for the author of the *Gesta Stephani*, one of the ‘...effeminate men, whose endowment lay rather in wanton delights rather than resolution of mind.’ In 1153 at Stephen’s court, Roger died of a heart attack on hearing that his wife had surrendered to Duke Henry.⁴⁸ He had remained loyal to the king throughout the civil war but was inactive for the most part. He sat tight as his more aggressive neighbours picked off outlying estates, but their sheer bulk seems to have protected him and the region in general from the violence of civil war so apparent elsewhere. Here, in contrast to the north, Bishop Walter Durdent had a residence and Archdeacon Richard Pecche worked with the earl to exclude from Warwick college its dean.⁴⁹

The southern section is also worth examining in terms of the relationship between a bishop and his family. Geoffrey de Clinton had been set up by Henry I to act as a counter to the potential power of the earls of Warwick. If Bishop Roger’s election was at the behest of his uncle, he did not let him down. As well as the four estates mentioned above Geoffrey’s former ward, Margaret of Bubbendon, held two fees of the bishop in 1166.⁵⁰ Roger was at Kenilworth at least three times and held his synod there. A transfer of an estate in Staffordshire was attended by the county’s great and good.⁵¹ It might well be that a bishop in the family contributed to the family’s prestige as well as its power. The bishop may also have brought the Clintons closer to the Staffords. The latter were a senior local family with substantial estates in southern Warwickshire. They provided another potential counter to the power of the earl of Warwick. Geoffrey de Clinton bought land from the Staffords and Robert de Stafford confirmed his father’s gifts to the Clinton house at Kenilworth and added more. Two Clintons witnessed his charter.⁵²

With the death of Henry I, Roger earl of Warwick saw his chance to reassert his position and immediately attacked. The Clintons held Kenilworth stubbornly but

⁴⁸ *GS*, 119, 237. For the history of the earls see, Crouch, ‘Local Influence’.

⁴⁹ Saltman, *Theobald*, no. 81; Crouch, ‘Geoffrey de Clinton’, 121.

⁵⁰ *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3; *MA*, vi (1), 219, no.1; *An Abstract of the Burton Cartulary*, ed. G. Wrottesley, *CHS*, v (pt 1) (1884), fol. 18; *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, no. 5.

⁵² *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2 nos. 1-7; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 25.

lost almost everything else. When the dispute was finally settled by marriage between the families they also retained Brandon castle and the hereditary shrievalty but they were now most definitely the Warwicks' subtenants.⁵³ Bishop Roger's conduct at this time is unclear. He had to be in London in 1136 to meet his new king and again this time for the legatine council of Alberic of Ostia when the settlement took place. However, two of his most important tenants, Robert fitzGeoffrey and his brother Elias, witnessed it, probably as his representatives. This suggests that Roger put his diocesan business before his family as before potential political allies, but in this case was able to support them too. The fact that his representatives were knights rather than clerics suggests that either he recognised the essentially secular nature of the settlement or he had made a military contribution to the defence of the family's lands. After his death, the Clintons were forced by the new bishop to return the estates he had given them. Perhaps this was because their problems through the civil war had made it difficult for them to consolidate their control of them. It might also have been due to their now reduced status.

Warwickshire evidence suggests several important points about these bishops. Their ecclesiastical status was inseparable from their political personality. As in Cheshire, ecclesiastical administration must have been much more than mere bureaucracy for Earl Ranulf II to see it as a threat and to try to exclude it as far as he could from the area under his control. Elsewhere in the county it continued and continued to be important to local society. However, episcopal authority was not exercised completely disinterestedly, but against the aggressor and in defence of the diocese. Politically, the bishops were aligned with, and their conduct best explained by, opposition to Earl Ranulf II and/or commitment to the king. Nevertheless, it could still be principled, the Marmion case makes clear that where loyalty to the king conflicted with the bishops' commitment to the church it had to be compromised.

⁵³ *Beauchamp Cartulary*, no. 285; Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton', 113-24.

4.3. Derbyshire

Reconstructing the bishops of Chester's experience in Derbyshire during the civil war is difficult because very little evidence of any kind has survived from the county.⁵⁴ In fact, the shire serves to emphasise one of the minor points of this thesis because, if episcopal evidence is taken into account much more sense can be made of its history than has hitherto been the case. Some of what follows is therefore a description of the county history as much as a study of the bishops' activity.

The bishops of Chester held only very little land in Derbyshire, only the soke of Sawley on its eastern edge and at Bubendon and Marston in the midst of the biggest lay landholding, that belonging to the Ferrars family.⁵⁵ The latter's caput lay at Tutbury just over the county boundary in Staffordshire, but their estates were concentrated in Appletree Hundred in the west and south of Derbyshire. From there they stretched east between the Trent and the Derwent and north to the edge of the Peaks. The family also held estates in north east Warwickshire just to the south.⁵⁶ The only other major landholder was William Peverel II, sheriff of Nottingham.⁵⁷ The two were close allies. Robert I de Ferrars and William II fought together at the Standard after which the first was made Earl of Derby. Robert II succeeded soon after and married William II's daughter.⁵⁸ Ranulf II Earl of Chester had interests in the south of the county at Repton and scattered lands to the west.⁵⁹

Again, Earl Ranulf II dominated. Derbyshire lay between Cheshire and Warwickshire and he wished to link the two. In Duke Henry's charter he

⁵⁴ In addition to material already mentioned, see for Derbyshire in this period, P.E. Golob, 'The Ferrars earls of Derby: A Study of the Honour of Tutbury (1066-1279)', unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1984, 116-140.

⁵⁵ *DB*, 273b; *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147.

⁵⁶ *DB*, 274a-276a.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 276b.

⁵⁸ Jones, 'Charters of Robert de Ferrars', 9.

⁵⁹ *DB*, 273c-d; Repton was granted away by Ranulf II and then his widow after him, *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 104-5, 119-20.

received all of William Peverell II's estates in the Peak district and lands around the county town. Derby had also been a target in his 1146 agreement with King Stephen.⁶⁰ Indeed, when he had captured William II at the battle of Lincoln back in 1141 he may well have hoped for his estates then. The Empress granted them instead to a Paynel.⁶¹ The evidence suggests that Earl Ranulf II was trying to consolidate in the south where his estates lay close to those he held in Staffordshire and northern Warwickshire. On his deathbed he returned the manors of Willetin and Potlac, which lay just south across the Trent from Repton, to Burton abbey which implies that he had taken them illegally.⁶² He also attracted the Gresley family to his court. The Gresleys held much of the very south of the county, some of it as tenants of the Earl of Derby and the bishop. They became regular witnesses for Ranulf II and he was to die at their castle.⁶³ In the north his relationship with William Peverell II was always hostile and would end in accusations that William had poisoned him.⁶⁴ In the far east of the county in the Soar valley area, Ranulf II came up against Robert earl of Leicester. There was fighting here too.⁶⁵ The episcopal estates at Sawley may well have got in the way because a Master Richard of Sawley appeared at the bishop's court in the last years of the civil war, which might suggest he had been driven out of his position in the east.⁶⁶

The political history of the earldom of Derby, the main part of the county, has confused those who have examined it.⁶⁷ Robert II who succeeded in 1139 is generally thought to have been loyal to Stephen, but for David Crouch he was determinedly neutral while for Judith Green he was allied to Earl Ranulf II.⁶⁸ In the famous *conventio* between Ranulf II and Earl Robert of Leicester he is named as the former's ally but Tutbury castle was held against Duke Henry's

⁶⁰ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 178, 180.

⁶¹ Jones, 'Charters of Robert de Ferrars', 9.

⁶² *Charters of the Earls*, no. 115.

⁶³ F. Madan, 'The Gresleys of Drakelow', *CHS*, 19 (vol. 1 n.s.) (1898), 6-29; *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 45, 115.

⁶⁴ *GS*, 236; Jones, 'Charters of Robert de Ferrars', 9-11.

⁶⁵ King, 'Mountsorrel'.

⁶⁶ *Cartulary of Worcester*, no. 191; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 63.

⁶⁷ Davis, *King Stephen*, 108, 146; Jones, 'Charters of Robert de Ferrars', 11.

⁶⁸ Green, *Aristocracy*, 313-4; Crouch, *Reign*, 253-4.

army in 1153 despite Ranulf II being by then duke's ally.⁶⁹ Episcopal and other evidence makes it clear that the best explanation is a crisis in the honour. Earl Ranulf II issued a charter at Rocester on the western side of the Ferrars' lands.⁷⁰ In the south, the Burton abbey manor of Cotes was taken by Stephen de Beauchamp.⁷¹ The Gresleys may have been attempting to extend their influence in the same area since a second son of the family married the bishop's tenant at Bubendon- a fee owing two knights right in the heart of the honour.⁷² Bishop Richard Pecche would issue a mandate to all parsons and vicars in the diocese requiring that all lands and tithes owed to Tutbury priory, the Ferrars' family foundation, be returned on pain of excommunication. Archbishop Theobald had issued a similar order in 1151x1157.⁷³ He had singled out the barons of the honour for especial criticism. The ecclesiastical evidence when added to the rest suggests that Robert II had lost control of local society. It seems that he eventually buckled sending men north to come to terms with Ranulf II of Chester since the priest of Repton, a Gresley and William de Ferrars witness one of Ranulf II's charters and Hugh the dean of Derby another dated to 1147x1148.⁷⁴ Robert II's position in the *conventio* is a subordinate one. Ranulf II was not expected to help him if he decided to take the offensive.

This was bad news for the bishops, not least because the Gresleys as well as the holder of Bubendon were their tenants too. The bishops had close ties with the earl of Derby. As was noted in Chapter Three, two relatives of the earl, Master Hugh and Master Edmund, were members of the episcopal household.⁷⁵ The earl may have given the bishop land in the course of the reign.⁷⁶ Both Robert II and William Peverell II addressed the bishops in their charters.⁷⁷ Bishop Roger had

⁶⁹ Stenton, *First Century*, 250-3, 286-8; GS, 235.

⁷⁰ *Charters of the Earls*, no. 68.

⁷¹ This may have been because of the Beauchamp family's interest in nearby Tamworth (Warwickshire), for which, see above p. 106. However, Stephen also had some connection with the Earl of Chester's constable, Hugh Malbanc, *Burton Cartulary*, fol. 35; *RRAN*, iii, no. 136.

⁷² It was the cause of a dispute between them and Nigel de Stafford during Henry I's reign. *Burton Cartulary*, fol. 5.

⁷³ *Cartulary of Tutbury*, nos. 6, 33. *EEA*, 16, Coventry, no. 106.

⁷⁴ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 45, 85.

⁷⁵ For the political connections this might have created, see below, p. 120.

⁷⁶ *MRA*, nos. 452, 262; Bradestune was the earl's in 1086 and did not appear in the papal general confirmation of episcopal estates of 1139, it did in that of 1152. See above, nt. 57 for reference.

⁷⁷ *Cartulary of Darley*, nos., 52, 70, H46; *MRA*, no. 687.

also been trying to support the Earl of Derby's authority. He had ordered that the monks of Tutbury retain the church of Marston in demesne which may have meant to appropriate it. He was attempting to shore up the priory's position and by extension that of the family itself.⁷⁸ This is also reflected in Earl Robert II's charter for Darley in which he explicitly stated that those who abused the abbey's position would answer to the bishop.⁷⁹ Those under threat from Ranulf II looked to, and hoped for help from, the bishop. In Derbyshire, they simply cannot have expected that help to be in any way military. The bishop for his part did as much as he could. It was, unfortunately for himself and for those who looked to him, not enough.

South eastern Derbyshire and north eastern Warwickshire was the subject of the two famous treaties between Earl Ranulf II and Earl Robert of Leicester. Both dioceses, Chester and Lincoln, were involved in both.⁸⁰ Despite an extensive bibliography episcopal significance is still at issue. Some have emphasised the importance of the bishops' *christianitas* as the moral guarantee of the agreement, but Davis and now Crouch pass over it altogether. King followed Round and Stenton in seeing the terms of the *conventio* as essentially feudal and therefore drawn up by the earls' 'friends' rather than the ecclesiastical authorities.⁸¹ He is right to emphasise that the text suggests that the two earls were acting in their own interests rather than out of a general desire for peace. Neither earl showed any willingness to be guided by any outside authority at any other time. Earl Robert's stance with regard to his bishop was similar to Earl Ranulf II's: both seem to have considered them as a threat to their authority and promoted ecclesiastical institutions of their own in their place.⁸²

It is worth noting in this context a treaty of alliance made between Earl Roger of Hereford and William de Braose against Gilbert de Lacy in which Bishop

⁷⁸ *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 42A; *Cartulary of Tutbury*, no. 3.

⁷⁹ See above, p. 97.

⁸⁰ Stenton, *The First Century*, 286-8; *Charters of the Earls*, nos 82, 110.

⁸¹ Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 380; Stenton, *First Century*, 250-6, 286-8; King, 'Dispute Settlement', 124; Davis, *King Stephen*, 109; Crouch, *Reign*, 238, 253-4. Stringer, *Reign*, 71; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 215 and Dalton, 'Churchmen', 93, 108 recognise episcopal involvement.

⁸² See below, p. 175.

Gilbert Foliot of Hereford was involved. This *conventio* was purely secular - not all magnate treaties involving bishops were peacemaking.⁸³ It is unlikely that the bishops initiated discussions in the Chester/ Leicester case. Nevertheless, in the second *conventio* (they witness the first but nothing more is known of their involvement then) the respective bishops were each to hold one earl's copy and if one broke the agreement to present both to the other who would then have a legitimate right to take action. Both earls recognised and made use of episcopal moral authority and must therefore have understood it as impartial, independent, legitimate and of a higher order than their own. This has to be factored in to analysis of their relationships with the bishops elsewhere. It explains both men's keenness to either control or exclude it from their own lands. It also suggests that, while bishops could not always achieve all they wanted and while the absence of material power limited their effectiveness, their authority could still be considerable even among those who rejected it.

4.4. Staffordshire

The bishop of Chester was one of the biggest landholders in Staffordshire, in which no one figure had a dominant interest. His estates ran in a thick band across the centre of the county, clustered at either end around Lichfield and Eccleshall. While he held nothing in Stafford, the county town, in 1135, his lands just to the south meant that the link between the east and west of the shire was unbroken. A further small group of manors lay to the south completely surrounded by the honour of Dudley.⁸⁴ Lichfield and Eccleshall were the centres of the estate and were both granted markets during Stephen's reign.⁸⁵ Most of the knights of the diocese were enfeoffed across these estates and again clustered around the two towns. A number of them appear in his charters.

The most important lay landholder in the county was Robert de Stafford II with

⁸³ M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry. The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy 1066-1217* (Cambridge, 1996), 42.

⁸⁴ *DB*, 246a, 247a-247c.

⁸⁵ *RRAN*, iii, no. 454.

ninety manors mainly in the north west. He also held the shrievalty and garrisoned the castle in the name of the king. Since in 1166 he held his estates at the privileged Mortain rate, he may well have been close to Stephen in the early part of the reign.⁸⁶ In the south of the county Ralph Paynel's honour of Dudley with its caput at Ludlow straddled the border with Worcestershire. When Matilda arrived in England in 1139 he declared for her. Stephen laid siege to Ludlow castle but the family survived and stayed loyal to Matilda.⁸⁷ The Marmion and Ferrars estates in the county and across its boundaries abutted those of the bishop and the Staffords.

Earl Ranulf II of Chester already possessed estates in the south-east, on the border with North Warwickshire, where the Ridels held from him.⁸⁸ His intention seems to have been to dominate the northern half of Staffordshire and to link up his centres of Chester and Coventry. In 1146 when he and the king tried to reach a settlement of their differences he was permitted to hold the castle of Newcastle-under-Lyme in the north-west of the county.⁸⁹ He had probably built it in the first place. By 1163 there was another castle at Trentham, five miles away. Earl Ranulf II gave the monastery there estates for rebuilding on his deathbed. Presumably he had led fighting in the area and this suggests that he may have had the castle constructed during the civil war.⁹⁰ Ranulf II's ambitions are, again, clearest in Duke Henry's charter. He was granted the entire county save the estates of the bishop and a few other minor figures and religious houses. His gains would include the entire Stafford honour.

In Staffordshire King Stephen took considerable interest in the episcopal estates. In 1136 he granted Lichfield the royal chapels of Penkridge and Stafford and their lands and, in 1139, he added Wolverhampton.⁹¹ Each chapel had considerable lands, wealth and jurisdictional immunities. Stafford gave the

⁸⁶ *DB*, 246a, 248d-249d; *VCH*, Staffordshire, iv, 49-53; J. Green, *English Sheriffs to 1154* (London, 1990), 75. For the Mortain rate, *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147-8.

⁸⁷ *DB*, 226b, 249d-250b; *VCH* Staffordshire, i, 222; iv, 53-7; *HH*, 713.

⁸⁸ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 39-40 and notes there.

⁸⁹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 178; T. Pope, *Medieval Newcastle under Lyme* (Manchester, 1928), 2-3.

⁹⁰ *Pipe Roll 15, Henry II, 1169* (Pipe Roll Society, 1890), 72; Pope, *Medieval Newcastle under Lyme*, 3.

⁹¹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 451-3. For the Staffordshire royal chapels, see, *DB*, 247d; J. H. Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels, 1000-1300* (Manchester, 1970), 72-3, *passim*.

bishop a place in the county town for the first time and associated him with royal government there, Penkrige and its estates extended the bishop's influence in the west of the county and made his estate at Brewood less isolated. Before Bishop Roger's changes Lichfield had only five canons; by contrast, Gnossal, another royal chapel already given to the bishop, had four, Penkrige nine and Stafford thirteen.⁹² Wolverhampton's estates were widespread in the south and west of the county, intermingled with those of the honour of Dudley. It constituted a considerable strategic, economic and ecclesiastical body and as such was a substantial addition to the bishop's position. Bishop Roger recognised Stephen's purpose; he very quickly created a new knight's fee on the chapel's estate at Pelshall and granted it to the fitzGeoffreys, a trusted family who already held the isolated southern estates of Hints and Tipton.⁹³ Wolverhampton had long before been given to Worcester and it is unlikely that Stephen was ignorant of the fact when he granted it to Lichfield. He would be forced into ordering its return in 1144.⁹⁴ The initial transfer must have seemed very necessary to him. At some point in the reign the bishop also picked up the churches of the royal manors of Bromley and Alrewas on the county's eastern edge.⁹⁵ The king's interest was not, therefore, just in the episcopal estates, but in the move to Lichfield and episcopal authority in the shire. He clearly valued the last highly. Local magnates and the bishops themselves must have acted within this context.

In the event royal authority was absent from Staffordshire for most of the civil war period and local and regional issues dominated political life. However, this does not have to mean that the bishops were no longer loyal to, acting with regard to, or associated with, the king by politically important figures and/or the general population. In Staffordshire the bishop had the relative material power to defend himself against Earl Ranulf II's expansion. While there is no explicit evidence of his fighting, it seems likely that he did so. The *Gesta Stephani's*

⁹² For Gnossal, *RRAN*, iii, no. 454; *VCH*, Staffordshire, iii, 298, 303.

⁹³ *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147.

⁹⁴ *RRAN*, iii, no. 969. For further details, see *Worcester Cartulary*, nos. 263, 266-7; Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, 41-4.

⁹⁵ Both were royal estates in 1086 and do not appear in Lichfield's 1139 papal confirmation, *MRA*, no. 452. They first appear as Lichfield's in Eugenius III's confirmation of 1152, *MRA*, no. 262.

characterisation of Bishop Roger as a military figure can only really have applied in this shire and Earl Ranulf II was his only potential opponent. Bishop Roger had removed the knights that had belonged to Coventry into the county and the only post-1135 enfeoffments made on the episcopal estates were concentrated around Lichfield. He also fortified the town and perhaps Eccleshall.⁹⁶ As noted above, there was fighting around the latter. Episcopal estates also sustained some damage. The prebend of the dean of Lichfield and the estates of the common fund suffered severely. William de Ridware who held a fee of the bishop could not hold on to his lands at Edingale.⁹⁷ Henry II would order his sheriffs to hear all the complaints of the bishopric and church.⁹⁸

It has been argued that Robert II de Stafford became a follower of Ranulf II earl of Chester during the civil war because he witnessed two of the earl's charters.⁹⁹ However, Ranulf's ambitions as represented in Duke Henry's charter must make this doubtful since the Stafford honour was to be subordinated to him. Potentially, this would put Robert II very much on the defensive in much the same way as the bishop and their relationship was in fact close. Much of the ecclesiastical evidence cited in Chapter Three relates to Stafford religious activity. As was noted above, a large proportion of the chapter witnessed a charter recording a grant to Kenilworth priory by Robert II in Bishop Roger's time and Bishop Walter and his household were present when Robert recorded a grant to Arbury.¹⁰⁰ The bishops appear in almost all surviving Stafford charters of the period and are addressed by them and their tenants more often than by any other group.¹⁰¹ If it is correct to emphasise the significance of such clauses, then the connection between the bishops and this family was extremely strong. Land belonging to the Staffords at Domesday was at some point transferred to the bishops while Bishop Walter set up his steward at Bromhall on ex-Stafford

⁹⁶ *Anglia Sacra*, i, 434; *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147. The evidence for the fortification of Eccleshall is late; King John granted the then bishop a license to fortify his castle. Nevertheless, this does at least suggest that the castle existed in some form prior to what seems to have been its repair, *MRA*, no, 21.

⁹⁷ *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147.

⁹⁸ *MRA*, nos. 351, 497; *RRAN*, iii, no. 715.

⁹⁹ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 62, 65; Green, *Aristocracy*, 313.

¹⁰⁰ *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, nos. 5, 16.

¹⁰¹ E.g. *Stone Cartulary*, 3; *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, nos. 1-6, 11-12, 16.

land.¹⁰² Robert II enfeoffed two episcopal tenants, William de Ridware and the Noel family (the latter held land from the bishops at Seighford and Podmore in the north).¹⁰³ Robert II also granted Bradley church to two important members of the bishop's household in succession, William archdeacon of London and Richard archdeacon of Shropshire.¹⁰⁴ This closeness extended to co-operation in the field of law. On behalf of Bishop Walter three archdeacons decided a case involving lands of which Robert II was lord. Robert II had been present and issued a certificate in support of the judgement. Robert II was also sheriff of Staffordshire; whether this facet of his authority has to be factored in is unknowable, but what is clear is that in the absence of royal authority the local secular and ecclesiastical authorities could work in co operation for the better government of the region.

Archdeacon William was cousin to the brothers Richard II and Philip de Belmeis, royal partisans and episcopal friends in Shropshire. Bishop Roger also encouraged a connection between the Staffords and his own family across the county boundary in Warwickshire. When the Ferrars members of the episcopal household are added, this suggests that the bishops were something of a focus for local opposition to Ranulf II's aggression. However, while each of these connections was local, each individual was also loyal to the king; it may therefore be that the bishop was something of a focus for this loyalty. If so, Stephen's earlier trust was rewarded.

Staffordshire is the only county where Ranulf II was in action from which no evidence has survived of his success. It seems likely, therefore, that he was frustrated in his ambitions and, if so, that the bishops played a major part in this. If so (again), they probably did so in combination with the leading local magnate. Admittedly, this must remain speculation. If Bishop Roger in particular was active as the author of the *Gesta Stephani* claimed, then this reconstruction implies that his efforts were essentially defensive and conducted in the legitimate interests of his diocese, his flock and the kingdom. Given that

¹⁰² *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147; *VCH*, Staffordshire, iv, 49-53; *MRA*, no. 168; *EEA*, 14, Coventry, no. 63.

¹⁰³ *Staffordshire Cartulary*, ser. 2, no. 12.

he would later go on crusade, he may well, therefore, have considered his actions to be theologically acceptable. If all this is the case, then important conclusions can be drawn from the Staffordshire evidence. Only when there was relative material parity, when the bishops themselves engaged in secular politics and only when in alliance with secular powers could they maintain their position. Stephen's grants to them, their earlier governmental role and their continued loyalty also combined with their magnate ally's status as sheriff to add to their practical effectiveness and moral authority. The religious relationship between the two probably also played a part in their working together. All of these factors combined proved enough to hold off the earl.

4.5. Shropshire

The bishops of Chester were less active in northern Shropshire than elsewhere in the diocese, but because, uniquely, the county was affected by the 'official' civil war what place they did have is useful for assessing their relationship with its protagonists. Shropshire was also the only area where the bishops were not under threat from Earl Ranulf II of Chester. The bishops had few estates in the shire and most of them were granted to Bishop Roger's major foundation at Buildwas in 1136.¹⁰⁵ Only one tenant held of the bishop by knight's service in 1166. The most important ecclesiastical landholder in the area was Shrewsbury abbey. Its estates were so extensive as to limit those of any secular power and to ensure that none of them could dominate the region.¹⁰⁶ The major families were the fitzAlans in the west and the Belmeis in the east. William fitzAlan was sheriff and a leading marcher lord in 1136; he was also married to Robert of Gloucester's niece.¹⁰⁷ He was one of the first to rise for the Empress in 1138 and with his uncle Arnulf held Shrewsbury castle against the king.¹⁰⁸ Philip de Belmeis, head of the other family, witnessed one of Stephen's charters issued during the siege. He was close to his brother, Richard de Belmeis II, dean of the

¹⁰⁴ *MRA*, nos. 67, 169.

¹⁰⁵ *DB*, 252b; *VCH*, Shropshire, ii, 50; *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 147.

¹⁰⁶ *VCH*, Shropshire, ii, 18-20, 30; *Cartulary of Shrewsbury*, i, nos. 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ *VCH*, Shropshire, iii, 11.

¹⁰⁸ *OV*, vi, 521.

college of St Alkmund in Shrewsbury, archdeacon of Middlesex and, eventually, bishop of London.¹⁰⁹ Both families maintained their allegiances for the remainder of the reign and the northern half of the county was thus split in two, one side royalist and one Angevin.

Buildwas was founded with Stephen's counsel; bishop and king were early linked by their mutual interest in the Savignacs.¹¹⁰ Shropshire is the only county in the diocese from where royal charters of the civil war period survive. One of Stephen's addresses the bishop, the bishop was heavily involved in the issue behind the other.¹¹¹ Stephen's charter is for Haughmond priory, the fitzAlan foundation in the west of the county. This is the only Haughmond charter of the period, from whatever source, which addresses the bishop. Only one of the Empress Matilda's numerous charters addresses the bishop, it was issued in 1141 when she was in power.¹¹² All of her charters, but none of Stephen's, address William fitzAlan and his brother.¹¹³

This pattern is repeated at the baronial level. William fitzAlan's charters for Shrewsbury and Haughmond are not addressed to the bishop.¹¹⁴ Hamo Peverel, a minor landowner, did address the bishop when he made grants to the former but his successor Walchelin Maminot did not. Walchelin is known to have been an Angevin sympathiser.¹¹⁵ Shrewsbury was particularly keen on episcopal confirmation, probably because its *de facto* patron, the king, was ineffectual, and the bishop's absence from Angevin supporters' charters is therefore very obvious. Even Earl Ranulf II of Chester addressed the bishop.¹¹⁶ In contrast, the Belmeis foundation at Lilleshall in 1145x1146 was founded with the consent of both the bishop and King Stephen. The bishop had been instrumental in securing papal consent to the use of St Alkmund's college as the basis for the

¹⁰⁹ *VCH*, Shropshire, ii, 70-1; *RRAN*, iii, nos. 132, 966.

¹¹⁰ *RRAN*, iii, no. 132.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 376, dated to 1135x1152. Either pre-1141 or very late according to Cronne and Davis. Stephen's confirmation to Lilleshall is no. 460.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, iii, no. 377.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 378, 461, 820.

¹¹⁴ For example: *Cartulary of Shrewsbury*, i, nos. 285, 307-8; *Cartulary of Haughmond*, nos. 272, 288, 583, 888, 925, 960, 1370.

¹¹⁵ *Cartulary of Shrewsbury*, i, nos. 15, 28; *Cartulary of Haughmond*, no. 187. On Walchelin, see Crouch, *Reign*, 79, 184.

foundation.¹¹⁷

There are clear patterns in the presence or absence of the bishops in royal and baronial charters issued for North Shropshire; so clear as to confirm less distinct patterns from elsewhere and to suggest that they can be relied on. Shrewsbury, as a house supported by members of both parties, enables direct comparison to be made. The king and his supporters address the bishop. Indeed the king addressed no one else consistently, suggesting that he relied on the bishop as his representative in the county. The Empress, her son, and her supporters did not address the bishop. This implies that the bishop was assumed to be loyal to the king and that what authority he possessed in the region was associated with him. This fits with the suggested history of Staffordshire given above, and both together must have influenced how the bishop was perceived elsewhere in the diocese.

However, this is not yet the whole story. While no Haughmond charter save Stephen's addressed the bishop (and this was a boom time for the abbey), the case of Shawbury church already discussed shows how the abbey itself did continue to acknowledge and make use of his ecclesiastical authority.¹¹⁸ It is unlikely that the priory involved the bishop without FitzAlan permission since the family were good and close patrons. It would seem that officially, and in the charters they issued, the FitzAlans could not recognise episcopal authority because of the bishops' associations with the king. Unofficially, he was essentially important to the development of their religious foundation and local religious provision and as such was recognised. FitzAlan acceptance of episcopal authority in this respect emphasises that it and respect for its holder was not inconsiderable.

The contrast with Warwickshire and Cheshire is interesting. It may be that the fact that material episcopal power was distant had some effect. However, for all

¹¹⁸ *Cartulary of Shrewsbury*, ii, no. 311.

¹¹⁷ *RRAN*, iii, no. 460. *MA*, vi (1), 261, nos. 2, 3. No. 3 is the abbey's own charter addressed to the bishop.

¹²⁰ See above p. 69.

its being a meeting point between two loyalties there is actually very little evidence of fighting in the county. Ranulf II of Chester promised reparations to Shrewsbury, but it is unlikely that he had attacked it; it is more likely that he was thinking of its estates between the Ribble and the Mersey which he had promised to protect.¹¹⁹ Empress Matilda and Duke Henry took Lilleshall under their protection, which might suggest that the loyalty of the Belmeis family was beginning to fade. However, they did so from Normandy before Duke Henry's invasion, and this cannot therefore be used as evidence of conflict in the county.¹²⁰ The only fly in the ointment, the only layman known to have abused Shrewsbury's rights in this period, was just that, Walchelin Maminot was an incomer. It may be that the constant threat of Welsh interference necessitated the suppression of loyalties in the face of a potential common enemy. After the initial Welsh rising in 1136 the marches were peaceful for the remainder of the reign.¹²¹ It may also be that the bishop had something to do with maintaining the peace. Both Philip de Belmeis and William fitzAlan made grants to his foundation at Buildwas during the civil war period, implying that he was important to both.¹²² What did not apply at Combe might apply here. If so, Shropshire evidence also reaffirms the idea that bishops' ecclesiastical authority was not dependent on their material power.

4.6. Relations with the King

Historiographically, Bishops Roger and Walter, like their peers, have been considered neutral or even to have leant towards the Angevin cause. Roger appears as a witness to two royal charters issued before the outbreak of hostilities and then only once more in 1146.¹²³ Walter does not appear in them at all until after the civil war's end.¹²⁴ Bishop Roger was also addressed in a

¹¹⁹ *Charters of the Earls*, no. 61.

¹²⁰ *RRAN*, iii, no. 461-2.

¹²¹ F. Suppe, *Military Institutions on the Welsh Marches, Shropshire, 1066 1300* (Woodbridge, 1994), 83, 94-5.

¹²² *VCH*, Shropshire, ii, 51, at Little Buildwas and Buckley.

¹²³ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 494, 947, 948. Roger also witnesses nos. 284 and 928 which are considered forgeries.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 272 (Stephen's agreement with Henry), 864, 865.

charter issued by the Empress Matilda in 1141 and one of his own, dating to around 1140, is a notification of the institution of a chaplain to a benefice by her grant and presentation.¹²⁵ It incorporates the phrase *domine nostre* of the Empress and a dating clause stating that it was made in the year or within a year of her arrival and escape from the king. Stenton, Yoshitake and Franklin all considered that this signified his alliance with her. All three also cited his family relationship with Geoffrey de Clinton, who they were sure was an Angevin sympathiser.¹²⁶ Further, Stephen could not control Bishop Walter's election and between November 1153 and April 1154 Duke Henry described Walter as his '*...familiari et dilecto amico meo*'.¹²⁷ As was noted above, Franklin and Dalton both connected him with Stephen's enemy and late convert to the Angevin cause, Earl Ranulf II of Chester.¹²⁸

However, the Shropshire evidence most certainly implies that both bishops were much more loyal to and associated by society with the king than this allows. The indirect evidence from the other counties suggests the same. Bishop Roger was clearly trusted by Stephen in the run up to the civil war in Staffordshire and his connections thereafter were loyalists. Bishop Walter's connection with Ranulf II has already been shown to be weak. While the direct influence of the king in the region was very limited the bishops are addressed in all the surviving charters he issued for it.¹²⁹ Stephen also made grants to Bishop Walter in the last years of the civil war including one that was recorded while he besieged the duke at Bridgenorth.¹³⁰ One of those grants was of a mint to Lichfield. Mark Blackburn has shown that this and a similar grant to the Bishop of Lincoln were part of a programme to bring stability to the kingdom and are not to be compared with new mints granted to magnates as a commercial prospect or power transfer.¹³¹ The bishop of Chester had played an important role in local government under

¹²⁵ *RRAN*, iii, no. 377; *EEA*, 14, no. 42

¹²⁶ Stenton, *First Century*, 243; Yoshitake, 'Arrest', 109, nt.10. There is in fact little evidence for Geoffrey's Angevin sympathies, Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton', 115-19; idem, *Reign*, 136.

¹²⁷ *RRAN*, iii, no. 458.

¹²⁸ See above pp. 108-9.

¹²⁹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 570, 662, 838.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 456-7.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 457, on Lincoln see below and no. 487; M. Blackburn, 'Coinage and Currency', *Anarchy*, 145-205, 161. It is noteworthy that no coins survived from either of these mints.

Henry I and under Stephen in his first years.¹³² The new mint suggests that they returned to this and the king turned to them for it as soon as was feasible after the worst of the civil war was over. This suggests that while royal government may have collapsed in this region, the bishops' association with it had not.

Further, the evidence cited for episcopal neutrality or Angevin sympathy is not secure. Bishops of Chester were never regulars at court even in time of peace because distance and poverty had always limited communications. Roger had only witnessed three times in seven years under Henry I.¹³³ Robert de Limesey (bishop, 1086-1117) witnessed twenty charters of Henry I, but eight of these were in the very first difficult years of the reign and thereafter three were issued on the same occasion.¹³⁴ Robert Pecche (1121-1127) witnessed eight charters, three immediately after his election and later two on the same occasion.¹³⁵ Roger de Clinton's lack of attestations is not evidence of his neutrality but rather due to his local focus. In Walter Durdent's case, Duke Henry was not necessarily discriminating in whom he called a friend and, in any case, the charter which incorporated the phrase was not issued until after the end of hostilities. It is also a confirmation of a grant made by King Stephen. The complexities of the political and ecclesiastical situation at Coventry were something that Walter was parachuted into rather than evidence of his own position with regard to the king. What they best show are the complex mixture of local and national, secular and ecclesiastical politics which affected bishops and which make interpretation complex.¹³⁶

Only Bishop Roger's charter recording Matilda's grant therefore remains of the evidence for alliance with the Angevins. There are good reasons for doubting its contemporary status and it is possible that the narrative was interpolated in the early years of the reign of Henry II. Referring to Matilda as *domine nostre* at the presumed date of the charter is unusual to say the least. Both the address clause

¹³² *RRAN*, iii, nos. 284, 376, 451, 452, 714.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 1715, 1744, 1776.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, early charters, nos. 492-3, 544-49; Council of 1109, nos. 918-20.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, nos. 1245, 1297, 1301, 1317-18, 1391, 1400, 1421.

¹³⁶ As such it is to be compared with York and Durham.

and the introduction of a narrative are rare in Roger de Clinton's *acta*.¹³⁷ The charter states that Richard Pincerna had held the church on the death of Henry I, but being unwilling to continue to hold it afterwards, he urged the appointment and agreed to the new incumbent. The charter is therefore a justification of a change in the holding of the church which took place during the civil war. It is couched in terms which would fit in with the settling of land disputes that took place with the new regime of Henry II and with its references to the death of Henry I as a motive for a change and to the involvement of Matilda; it could be said to be justifying the change in the most advantageous terms possible. While references to land or rights as held on the death of Henry I are unusual but by no means unknown within the reign of Stephen, explaining a transfer by the death is exceptional.¹³⁸ The terminology of the charter suggests that, while the transfer or at least the grant is present as it was originally written, the narrative was interpolated to make that change more acceptable or more appealing to the new regime of Henry II.¹³⁹

Chester diocese evidence therefore suggests that both Bishops Roger and Walter were more closely linked to king and government than has been allowed. The connection combined with the bishops' pre-war autonomous and royal governmental authority can also only have affected their actions and how others reacted to them across the diocese, even in those areas where royal government was absent and/or local issues dominated. Using the frameworks established in Chapter Two, the evidence also implies that Bishop Roger was much more respectable than his reputation allows, that he and his successor were integral parts of their community, that episcopal government was maintained during the civil war and that both bishops possessed some spiritual authority.

Across the diocese men clearly turned to the bishops during the civil war, but

¹³⁷ Stenton discussed the charter in the context of references to contemporary or personal events in charters of the period.

¹³⁸ Holt, 'The Treaty of Winchester', 303. See this on the need to justify gains and transfers on the part of churchmen after the war. White, 'The Myth of the Anarchy', contains an extended discussion of those charters of the time of king Henry II in which the situation under his uncle is the legal starting point, 328-31.

¹³⁹ On the history of the church itself, Trentham, see *EEA*, 14, Coventry, nos. 8, 74; *VCH*, Staffordshire, iii, 255; *Charters of the Earls*, no. 118. And see above, p. 117, for its importance in the civil war.

they cannot have done so because of episcopal material power, which was only strong in Staffordshire. Generally, episcopal authority must therefore have been founded in more intangible governmental and religious factors. The latter were much more positive in their action and effect than has usually been allowed. Their potential is apparent in their exclusion by Earl Ranulf II from Cheshire and northern Warwickshire. Even for him they were a force to be reckoned with. Episcopal religious authority was not neutral (as Dalton understood it to be), but exerted against the bishops' personal enemies and aggressors and in defence of the legitimate order. This equated to the bishops' role in royal and local government. Where Bishop Roger Roger had military power he exercised it similarly, in the interests of his flock and the kingdom; no surviving evidence supports the claims made in the *Gesta Stephani*.

Bishop Roger's military power is the only element of his position that has been recognised in the past, but bishops of Chester were figures with multifaceted roles, with authority derived from royal, secular, ecclesiastical and spiritual elements. Splitting them is perhaps to get rid of their essential unity. They were not necessarily always, or even often, successful, but they were very much more important within West Midlands political and religious life in and beyond Stephen's reign than they have hitherto been allowed to be.

CHAPTER FIVE

LINCOLN. THE BISHOPS AND THEIR DIOCESE

Lincoln diocese after 1109 comprised the counties of Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and parts of Hertfordshire.¹ In late Anglo-Saxon times it had been governed from Dorchester (Oxfordshire) in the south, but William I and Remigius, the first Norman bishop, removed the cathedral northwards.² Lincoln was hugely wealthy, had immense prestige and considerable political importance. Its bishops had usually been, and often continued once in office to be, among the most important political or, in the case of the late twelfth century St Hugh, spiritual figures in the kingdom. Remigius (1067-1092) almoner of Fécamp appears on William the Conqueror's Ship List; Robert Bloet (1093-1123) was William II's chancellor before his promotion and continued to work for him and then Henry I; Geoffrey Plantagenet (1173-1181x1182), the illegitimate son of Henry II, resigned the see to become his father's chancellor and that office to become archbishop of York; Walter de Coutances (1183-1184) had been Henry's Keeper of the Seal, was Richard I's chief justiciar and went on to the archbishopric of Rouen. Hugh (1186-1200) was the spiritual conscience of king and nation.³ Lincoln also supported important writers in Henry of Huntingdon, who remembered being brought up in Bloet's court, and Gerald of Wales, who wrote a biography of St Hugh and contributed a Life to a campaign to get Remigius elevated to sainthood.⁴ Documentary survival is also exceptional, so much so that modern studies of the twelfth-century church in England have relied to a considerable extent on Lincoln evidence.⁵

¹ D.M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1971); *History of Lincoln*, 1-14, 112-63.

² D. Bates, *Bishop Remigius of Lincoln, 1067-1092* (Lincoln, 1992).

³ For brief biographical details see *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, xxx-xxxix; Bates, *Remigius*, *passim*; F. Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), 146-7, 192-3, 209-10, 296-7, 328, *passim*; Green, *Government*, 39, 45, 48-9, 135, 159, 162, 188; P.A. Poggoli, 'From Politician to Prelate: the Career of Walter of Coutances, Archbishop of Rouen', unpub. PhD. Thesis, Ann Arbor (1984).

⁴ *HH*, 594-5; *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 1-80.

⁵ Brett, *English Church*, *passim*; Kemp, 'Informing the Archdeacon', *passim*; idem, 'Archdeacons and Parish Churches', *passim*.

The political history of parts of the diocese has also been reconstructed in some depth. However, with one exception, David Crouch's 'Earls and Bishops in Twelfth Century Leicestershire', modern local and regional histories have passed over the bishops.⁶ This has its uses: when the bishops' experience is reconstructed on the basis of their presence or absence in the charter evidence it dovetails exactly with modern understanding of the region's history, thereby justifying the methodological approach taken here. It also, of course, emphasises just how limited understanding of local society during Stephen's reign is if the bishop is not included.

Like his predecessors, Bishop Alexander (1123-1148) was a figure of national political importance. He was part of England's most powerful clerical family with his uncle, Bishop Roger of Salisbury, and his cousin, Bishop Nigel of Ely, and was arrested with them in June 1139. He was a literary patron, commissioned the glorious west front of Lincoln cathedral, built palaces and monasteries and was remembered for his 'magnificence'. He was also committed to England's 'monastic revolution'. He has therefore been the subject of much contemporary and modern comment.⁷ Possibly a royal clerk, certainly his uncle's archdeacon, he was promoted from a traditional episcopal background in traditional fashion.⁸ His peers

⁶ For detailed references see the individual county studies which follow. D. Crouch, 'Earls and Bishops in Twelfth Century Leicestershire', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 37 (1993), 9-20.

⁷ Contemporary: e.g. *GS*, 72, 76-8, 156; *HN*, 25-31; *HH*, 751. Modern: Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury*, App. iii; A.G. Dyson, 'The monastic patronage of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln', *JEH*, 26 (1975), 1-21; G. Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln: the sculpture of the cathedral* (Lincoln, 1988) In ecclesiastical histories, e.g. Saltman, *Theobald*, 13-14; Brett, *English Church*, 96, 110-1; Barlow, *English Church*, 86, and in political histories e.g. Davis, *King Stephen*, 28-30; Crouch, *Reign*, 94-7, 138-9, 311. Alexander's importance in literary affairs has been rather passed over. Henry of Huntingdon wrote for and about him and Geoffrey of Monmouth recorded the Prophecies of Merlin at his request, *HH*, 474-5, 750-1; *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. and trans. L. Thorpe (London, first pub. 1966), 170. For an introduction to the *History*, J. Gillingham, 'The Contexts and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*', *ANS*, 13 (1991), 99-118; and for the Prophecies, see J. Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, Prophecy and History', *Journal of Medieval History*, 18 (1992), 357-71. Both men were connected to Walter, archdeacon of Oxford. Gaimar's connections were also Lincolnshire ones. Potentially there is a literary community here and one which included figures of some importance to the contemporary developments in 'Englishness', which John Gillingham's work has done so much to make clear; see his collected essays, *The English in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2000), and below, p. 221, for a potential importance of this in Stephen's England.

⁸ Saltman, *Theobald*, 204. 'Salisbury' may well represent a personal assistantship rather than a territorial responsibility at this date, Brooke, 'The Archdeacon and the Norman Conquest', 21. As royal clerk: Brett, *English Church*, 107; Dyson, 'Monastic Patronage', 2. *WN*, 59 says 'Because the

in his uncle's household included Nigel, Geoffrey Rufus, future royal chancellor and bishop of Durham, and Everard of Calne, future royal clerk and bishop of Norwich. None have a good reputation.⁹ In the *Gesta Stephani* Alexander is cited with Bishop Roger de Clinton as one of those bishops who took up arms in their own interest during the civil war. Alexander's reputation is similar to, if more exaggerated than, Roger's (Roger had been Alexander's archdeacon).

Bishop Robert de Chesney (1148-1166) is something of an anomaly in Lincoln's history in that he was never an actor on a greater stage. He was of local family and a resident archdeacon of Leicester, and like Bishop Walter Durdent's his election has been classed with those 'free' and 'reformed' choices that came about as a result of, and were symptomatic of, increasing ecclesiastical autonomy and reduced royal power in Stephen's England. His part in the Becket crisis was minor, and beyond recognition of his administrative abilities he has been little studied.¹⁰ Both bishops have been assumed to be neutral and passive for the duration of the civil war.¹¹ However, as at Chester, the local evidence necessitates considerable reassessment of this picture. It shows that both bishops were committed and talented administrators of the diocese; both possessed considerable spiritual authority, were consistently loyal to the king and continued to act for and in the interests of royal government. Locally, they sought to maintain and came to represent legitimate, morally acceptable government and possession in the face of magnate aggression and disruption. They were integral to local politics and society for the duration of the civil war.

Again, a relatively short ecclesiastical history is followed by a discussion of the bishops' experience in politics, and again the latter is organised by county. As at

king refused him [Bishop Roger] nothing he obtained for his nephew the ecclesiastical see of Lincoln.'

⁹ Saltman, *Theobald*, 146-7; Brett, *English Church*, 110, 181; Barlow, *English Church*, 88-9.

¹⁰ Saltman, *Theobald*, 102-3; Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 8; Barlow, *English Church*, 100.

Knowles was not so enthusiastic, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 15-16. Bishop Robert's only biographer is H.P. King, 'The Life and Acta of Robert de Chesney Bishop of Lincoln', unpub. M.A. Thesis, University of London (1955). This is a very solid work.

¹¹ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, xxxv.

Chester archdeaconries and counties were co-terminous. However, Hertfordshire is mentioned only rarely because St Alban's extensive ecclesiastical and secular jurisdiction and the area's historical connections with the see of Canterbury limited episcopal influence. The monastic archdeacon of the abbey also possessed considerable authority while there is no surviving evidence of the episcopal archdeacon's activity.¹² Lincolnshire, like Staffordshire, supplies the majority of the evidence, but in this instance much of it stems from new foundations. This necessitates caution because the first few years of a monastery's establishment have often left (and probably produced) more documentary material and in particular more episcopal evidence than its later years. Bishop Robert's charters are difficult to date and, as he was still in office when major new developments in the church took place, only those which can be dated to before 1158x1159 have been considered for what follows. Of them, those that cannot be dated before 1155 have been used with caution and only where they exceptionally illustrate a point. This should avoid a false impression of his early career, although it is worth remembering that Emilie Amt and Graeme White have shown that Henry II's first years are vital to an understanding of Stephen's reign.¹³ Care is also necessary because evidence from before 1123 and after 1166 is limited, making comparison difficult. Taking this on board, Lincolnshire is still the county in which the bishops were most active and more space is devoted to it than to the others.

Assessment of Bishop Alexander's episcopate has been hindered by his reputation. It needs more work than his successor's. There is no contemporary evidence for his being either Bishop Roger's son or Bishop Nigel's brother but this continues to taint him.¹⁴ He most certainly benefited from nepotism and he would practise it himself,

¹² J. Sayers, 'Papal Privileges for St Alban's Abbey and its Dependencies', in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in honour of Kathleen Major*, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford, 1971), 57-84; idem., 'Monastic Archdeacons', *Church and Government*, 117-203; Brett, *English Church*, 103, 118, 120, 132.

¹³ Amt, *Accession*; White, *Restoration and Reform*.

¹⁴ For a recent example, Crouch, *Reign*, 95. Orderic Vitalis refers to Alexander as Bishop Roger's nephew and Roger le Poer as his son in the same sentence, *OV*, vi, 531. Alexander founded Louth Park for the souls of, among others, his parents and his uncle Roger, *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 47. A need to fudge the relationship between Alexander and Nigel when David was always acknowledged as the bishop's brother seems unlikely.

but given the limits of the education system this was still a proven method of producing qualified men.¹⁵ In any case, he also attended the school at Laon.¹⁶ Nepotism would not have been enough to get him Lincoln because it was far too important for a dilettante. Its significance is made clear by a charter Henry I issued during the vacancy following Robert Bloet's death which addressed the Bishop of Lincoln but left the name space blank.¹⁷ Alexander's career history and ability, like Bishop Roger de Clinton's (and perhaps his pretensions to grandeur, unlike Bishop Roger), were potentially just as important a factor in his promotion as his connections.¹⁸ He has been considered a royal clerk because an 'Alexander archdeacon of Salisbury' was cited as the author of the *Epistola Vocabulorum*, a glossary of Anglo-Saxon legal terms surviving in the *Red Book*.¹⁹ However, while the *Epistola* is comparable to other legal work of the early twelfth century there is no internal evidence to associate it with the future bishop and an early thirteenth-century Alexander archdeacon of Salisbury is also an acceptable candidate as author. Further, Alexander attests only one of Henry I's charters before his promotion to bishop and then in company with his uncle.²⁰ Caution is needed in ascribing to Alexander an early career in the royal chapel.

The traditional view of Alexander's origins has sometimes resulted in an assumption that his arrest in 1139 caused a personal transformation. Hitherto he had been a bad bishop but now became a good one; hitherto he had been political but now became religious. This has its origins in the *Gesta Stephani*, '[he and his uncle] went back, humble and downcast, stripped of their empty ostentatious splendour, to hold their church property in a manner which befits a churchman' and William of

¹⁵ Alexander promoted his brother David and his nephew William, *HH*, 593; Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury*, 274, App. 3; *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 8. Cf. Barlow, *English Church*, 221 for a less sympathetic view of this 'sycophantic world of patrons and clients.'

¹⁶ Tatlock, 'English Journey', 461. The best survey of episcopal education at this period remains Barlow, *English Church*, 217-67.

¹⁷ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1389.

¹⁸ Cheney, *Roger Bishop of Worcester*, for a biography of a highly capable and principled churchman who just happened to be Robert of Gloucester's son.

¹⁹ *The Red Book of The Exchequer*, ed. H. Hall (3 vols., Rolls Series, 1897), iii, 1032. Judith Green is more cautious than others, *Government*, 162.

²⁰ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1301.

Newburgh, 'Once he had relinquished them [his castles] he gained his freedom with difficulty; and if he was wise he respected God's judgement on him and wholesome things.'²¹ It has been used to date the beginnings of his rebuilding of Lincoln cathedral to 1141.²² Evidence cited in Chapter One from Henry I's reign and below from Stephen's first years shows that Alexander was committed to his Church before his arrest. Peter Kidson has shown that the beginning of work on the cathedral is better dated to 1123.²³ Contemporaries looked for a religious explanation and result from Alexander's fall, but modern historians need not do so. Like Bishop Roger de Clinton, and like many of their peers, Alexander was much more involved in his ecclesiastical responsibilities and a much better bishop than he has been given credit for.

Bishop Robert de Chesney's election has been explained as an independent choice by the chapter which would enable it to maintain a position of neutrality for the remainder of the war because he had important family connections on both sides. His brother William was Stephen's captain in Oxfordshire while his nephew was Bishop Gilbert Foliot of Hereford.²⁴ Holdsworth concluded that Robert successfully maintained that position.²⁵ However, the king was present at his election ceremony in London and Robert had actually spent the early years of the civil war supporting his brother in Oxfordshire rather than fulfilling his archidiaconal duties in

²¹ *GS*, 79; *WN*, 59-61.

²² Dyson, 'Monastic Patronage', 3; R. Gem, 'Lincoln Minster: *Ecclesia Pulchra, Ecclesia Fortis*', *Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 7 (1986 for 1982), 9-28, *passim*; G. Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln*, ch. 2.

²³ P. Kidson, 'Architectural History', *History of Lincoln Minster*, 14-46, *passim*. The evidence for 1141 is William of Malmesbury's statement that Stephen fortified the cathedral in that year [*HN*, 48] and the Louth Park Chronicle's report that major damage was done after the battle [Kidson, 23]. The evidence for 1123 lies in the Annals of Margam reporting a fire in 1122 [*Annales Monastici*, i, 11], the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle one in 1123 [*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a revised translation*, ed. D. Whitelock with D.C. Douglas and S.I. Tucker (London, 1961)] and Gerald of Wales stating that the nave was begun in 1124 [*Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 25]. Henry of Huntingdon, who would know best of all, states only that the work was completed in 1146. Kidson proves that the Louth Park Chronicle is extremely unreliable, that Gerald is more reliable and that if the work was begun in 1141 it couldn't possibly have been completed by 1146, civil war or no.

²⁴ For Robert's family, see *The Eynsham Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (2 vols., Oxford Historical Society, 49, 51 (1907-08), i, 411-23; Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 15; Brooke and Morey, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, 34-5, 44, 50; Amt, *Accession*, 50-3.

²⁵ Saltman, *Theobald*, 106-7; Barlow, *English Church*, 100-1; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 223.

Leicestershire.²⁶ Lincoln's chapter in any case was itself close to the king. Chapter Nine below shows that it was not unique in this respect.²⁷ Stephen founded prebends; made numerous grants to it and, as episcopal and capitular estates were separated, was early to recognise its autonomy from the bishop. After Robert's election Bishops Arnulf of Lisieux and Gilbert Foliot both wrote to him assuming his loyalties lay with the king. Arnulf tried to persuade him to change sides while Gilbert wanted him to use his influence with Stephen.²⁸ Bishop Robert received grants from Stephen during the last years of the civil war. He also opposed the power of the earl of Chester, Stephen's enemy in Lincolnshire, right up until the end of hostilities, and it took much effort by Duke Henry to bring about a settlement between the two.²⁹ Robert's election was not 'free' and his loyalty to Stephen, suggested here, is made clear in the evidence cited below. In office and in ecclesiastical terms, Bishop Robert was more than just an administrator; he too was a patron of Geoffrey of Monmouth and he too was capable of magnificent display of his power.³⁰ He may not have founded monasteries or begun new work at the cathedral but his predecessor had used up the bishopric's resources.

Both bishops' households developed very much as those of their peers, albeit with a greater proportion of wealth and talent than most.³¹ As was noted in Chapter Two, according to the author of the *Gesta Stephani* Alexander loved display and had an extraordinary concourse of knights.³² Geoffrey of Monmouth praised him because, 'No one else among the clergy or the people was waited upon by so many noblemen as he was for his never failing piety and open handed generosity attracted them to his service.'³³ Nevertheless, his entourage also included a converted Jewess and his

²⁶ For the election, see *Canterbury Professions*, ed. M. Richter, Canterbury and York Society, 67 (1973), no. 92; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, nos. 75, 80-1. Robert attested one of the king's charters in this connection, *RRAN*, iii, no. 873.

²⁷ See below, pp. 146-7, 227, 233.

²⁸ *Letters of Arnulf*, no. 4 (1149), xxviii, fnt. 7; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, no. 87. Dated by the editors to 1149, Brooke and Morey do recognise that Robert was a loyalist bishop.

²⁹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 491-2.

³⁰ *Life of Merlin*, ed. and trans. B. Clarke (Cardiff, 1973), 53 and see above pp. 81-2.

³¹ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, xl-xlii.

³² *GS*, 73.

³³ *History of the Kings of Britain*, 170.

household Gilbert of Sempringham, his confessor. It is suggested below that the ‘concourse’ of knights was a function of the bishops’ place at the centre of the local community rather than his military ambitions.³⁴ He created the office of subdean and added nine prebends, and to a tenth between 1133 and 1148.³⁵ When a number of lay foundations made in his time are added this brought the chapter to its full medieval complement.³⁶ Both bishops directed the separation of episcopal and capitular estates efficiently and fairly.³⁷ Alexander’s prebendal foundations were not from new lands, but made as part of this process.³⁸ He directed the endowment’s churches to the chapter retaining the estates himself.³⁹ It might be that he recognised that the canons’ purpose was religious while his required him to act in the world as well.

Both bishops also encouraged Lincoln’s position at the centre of the religious life of the diocese. Considerable building work took place on the cathedral through Stephen’s reign. The nave was completed and the glorious west front at least begun.⁴⁰ Alexander acquired a pall to attract visitors and revitalised the liturgy. Gilbert of Sempringham was to act as penitentiary to the whole diocese not just his bishop. The *Lincoln Obit Book* was probably begun in his time, while the first recorded gift by a city man rather than a local magnate to the cathedral was made in

³⁴ See below, p.164.

³⁵ As of 1133 in the Lincoln Psalter list there were forty two canons, *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 32; *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, App. 2. The foundation of only one of the nine is recorded in a charter, *RA*, ii, no. 333 but it and the other eight all appear in the papal confirmation of 1146, *ibid.*, i, no. 252. Greenway is cautious for this reason but the absence of these canonries from the Psalter list is solid evidence, ix. See for the prebends, the lists in *Fasti*, iii, for Banbury, Buckden, Cropedy, Leicester St Margaret, Leighton Bromswold, Louth, Sleaford, Thame and Dunham and Newport.

³⁶ Henry I is thought to have founded two prebends, Gretton and Ketton, confirmed in a Papal Bull of 1146, *RA*, i, no. 252. Stephen founded three, North Kelsey, Langford and Brampton, *RRAN*, iii, nos. 477, 479, 484, 486. He attempted to found two more, one at Blyth and one for his chaplain Baldric de Sigillo from the city farm, *ibid.*, nos. 478-80, 485. See *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 94 for a failed lay foundation.

³⁷ On this trend across the English church, see E.U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth Century England: a study of the mensa episcopalis* (Cambridge, 1994) and on Lincoln specifically, *ibid.*, 290-319; *RA*, i, nos. 248, 252.

³⁸ All the estates save Sleaford, added in 1072, belonged to the see 1066, *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 51, 56, 64, 66, 73, 77, 79, 84, 101.

³⁹ See nts. 34 and 35 above and charters recording Alexander’s foundations for the subdean and precentor, *RA*, i, no. 302; ii, no. 332.

⁴⁰ Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln*, *passim*.

Robert's first years.⁴¹ Both men also encouraged educators, a song school and a growing library.⁴²

As at Chester, the archidiaconal structure of the diocese was finalised in Stephen's reign when Alexander created the eighth himself. Archdeacons were also canons of the cathedral and regularly in company with the bishop.⁴³ Connections between centre and locality were strong and made stronger still by the local ties of several archdeacons. Henry of Huntingdon was the son of his predecessor, Robert de Chesney's predecessor and successor as archdeacon were members of honorial families of the earls of Leicester.⁴⁴ Archdeacon Walter at Oxford was made the heir of his friend Brityna at Shillingford (Oxon) and confirmed a grant that his own peasants had made.⁴⁵ Archdeacons were often present when gifts were made to monasteries. Henry of Huntingdon was present when Godric Gustard offered himself to religion and when Gilbert of Folksworth and his sons gave the church there to Crowland.⁴⁶ They also settled disputes and Archdeacon David concluded one such by symbolically handing over the keys of the churches involved to their rightful possessor.⁴⁷ The archdeacon of Northampton was responsible for the ordeal in his county town.⁴⁸ Archdeacons also witnessed local magnate charters.⁴⁹ As at Chester, most Lincoln archdeacons were active and effective in the civil war period and their relationship with local society was much more than administrative. The

⁴¹ *RA*, ii, no. 331.

⁴² Ralph Gubion, Alexander's chaplain left his service to enter a monastery before returning when the opportunity to study under a Master Guido presented itself, *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii S. Albani a Thoma Walsingham (AD 793-1401)*, ed. H.T. Riley (3 vols., Rolls Series, 1867-9), 106; for the song school, see *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 41; for the library, *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, vii, 166-170; R.M. Thompson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Woodbridge, 1989).

⁴³ E.g. *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 35, 49, 60, 78-9, 84.

⁴⁴ *HH*, xxiii-viii and see each county below.

⁴⁵ *Facsimiles of Early Charters in Oxford Muniment Rooms*, (Oxford Charters), ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford, 1929), no. 60; *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery Near Oxford* (3 vols., Early English Texts Society, 129-30, 142 (1904-11)), no. 717.

⁴⁶ *HH*, App. 1, nos. 1, 6.

⁴⁷ *Historia et cartularium monasterii sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ii, no. 706; *Dunstable Cartulary*, nos. 139, 161; *Eynsham Cartulary*, i, no. 115.

⁴⁸ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 185.

⁴⁹ E.g. Henry of Huntingdon, BL, Harleian Charter. 85 B 5; *Cartularium Monasterii de Ramesia*, ed. W.H. Hart and P.A. Lyons (3 vols., Rolls Series, 1884-93), i, nos. 54, 59, 67-9.

one exception to this is Robert de Chesney himself who cannot be shown to have been active in Leicestershire for the duration of the civil war. The explanation is essentially political as at Chester and will be laid out below. His exclusion, for that is what it was, suggests his potential power.

Administrative evidence from both bishops' terms of office abounds, but because it has been cited so often there is no need to repeat it at length here. However, as was emphasised in Chapter Two, it represents much more than mere administration. Men of different social backgrounds, from Gilbert II and Robert de Gant down to Peter of Billingham, made and confirmed grants and settled disputes in the bishops' presence.⁵⁰ A charter addressed to Bishop Robert issued by Robert de Gant and Alice Paynel and relating to Irnham church makes clear that donors were well aware of the bishop's role:

*...Unde precor paternitatem vestram quatinus pro amore Dei et officii vestri et servicii nostri auctoritate confirmetis episcopali ne super illis peccatum habeam.*⁵¹

When Robert de Broi restored land at Crowley to Ramsey he did so through his son's hands. It was then passed to the abbey through Bishop Robert's.⁵² Bishop Robert also confirmed Robert Chevauchésul's grant to Thame with the assent of his mother, brother and sisters after a dispute over the property had been amicably settled in the bishop's presence. The mention of 'amicable' suggests the bishop's role in the settlement was an important one.⁵³ He also notified the people of Oxfordshire that he had consecrated a church at Cassington.⁵⁴ Bishop Alexander dedicated Christina of Markyate's new church of Holy Trinity in Caddington (Bedfordshire) in 1145x1146.⁵⁵

Both bishops were actively committed to the support of the religious life in the diocese. Again, Alexander is more prominent and his actions more impressive, but

⁵⁰ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 64, 76, 97, 200, 217.

⁵¹ *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vi, no. 74. See also nos. 73 and 75.

⁵² *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 225.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, no. 264.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 115.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 49.

Robert's efforts were continuous and consistent. The large, powerful Anglo-Saxon foundations like Peterborough, Ramsey, St Alban's and Thorney just across the diocesan boundary were wary of the bishops and sought to protect and extend their extensive jurisdictional rights and freedoms. Peterborough attempted to remove its parish church from the common obligation to hold and/or to attend the bishops' ordinations of priests, pleas, chapters and synods.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Bishop Alexander and his uncle, Bishop Roger, saved the abbey from the loose cannon Henry de St Jean d'Angely in 1127 by persuading the king to rescind his appointment as abbot.⁵⁷ In the early twelfth century St Alban's placed itself under the Lincoln bishops' protection. Ralph Gubion, Alexander's chaplain and treasurer, became monk and then abbot at St Alban's and continued to attend him after his promotion. The bishop blessed the translation of the arm of St Alban in 1139, enjoined on the monks the feeding of thirty poor and extra masses and granted forty days indulgence to pilgrims. Alexander also accepted that the monastic archdeacon had the right of absolution and this may have left Robert in difficulties.⁵⁸ Ralph's successor was committed to his abbey's autonomy and fought Bishop Robert for it. He won in 1163.⁵⁹ Bishop Robert's attempts to maintain his position in this instance should not be held against him because the relationship between the two had been so close.

Bishops Alexander and Robert were very involved in the 'monastic revolution' which took place in their diocese as much as elsewhere in the mid twelfth century. They were much sought after by the new houses and their patrons. Alexander himself founded four monasteries and a leper hospital.⁶⁰ He was committed too to expanding provision for women religious and especially to the new Gilbertine foundations.⁶¹ William of Newburgh disparaged his motives, 'Since buildings of

⁵⁶ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1911.

⁵⁷ *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. and trans. W.T. and C.W.T. Mellows (Peterborough, 1941), 51-4; ed. W.T. Mellows (Oxford, 1949), 66.

⁵⁸ *Gesta Abbatum*, i, 92, 106, 148.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 139-56.

⁶⁰ Dyson, 'Monastic Patronage', *passim*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, *passim*; Elkins, *Holy Women*, 35-6, 62-5, 78-9, 81-2; Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, 84-5, 202-03.

this type [castles] seemed inappropriate to the good name of the episcopate, in order to remove the odium attached to their construction he set up the same number of monasteries...’, but Alexander’s own charters suggest otherwise.⁶² At the foundation of Godstow in 1138 he reflected,

...ecclesiam suam novo semper fetu multiplicat, ita eam nostris temporibus novo lumine sancte religionis illustrat, dum fidelium devotione crescente, ad ipsius laudem nove fundantur ecclesie, quatinus in omni loco dominationis eius omnis anima deum benedicat et laudet.

Godstow was one of the peaks of his religious life: the king, queen and archbishop Theobald attended the foundation ceremony.⁶³ As was emphasised in Chapter Two and made apparent for Chester, both bishops played much more than an administrative role in these developments.

As at Chester then, the bishops of Lincoln continued to exercise their office and play an important part in the religious life of diocese and local aristocracy throughout the civil war. Paul Dalton found that they held considerable religious authority in Lincolnshire during the civil war but he could not account for its origins or their motives. It is in this their everyday activities and the centuries behind it that their power lay. As at Chester, there were exceptions. Robert de Chesney cannot be shown to have exercised his archidiaconal duties in Leicestershire before his promotion and, as will be outlined below, particular groups of magnates did not have good relations with the bishops. Episcopal ecclesiastical activity and authority was important enough to be politicised in the civil war. It must also have influenced bishops’ own political conduct.

⁶² *WN*, 59.

⁶³ *EEA*, 1. Lincoln, no. 33.

CHAPTER SIX
LINCOLN. THE BISHOPS AND THE POLITICS OF THE CIVIL WAR (1)
LINCOLNSHIRE

The evidence and interest of episcopal involvement in Lincolnshire make it merit a chapter of its own. Like Staffordshire in Chester the county was the centre of episcopal activity during the civil war. It was also the most disrupted area of the diocese and, although the bishop has yet to be incorporated, its history is the only one in either diocese reconstructed in detail by modern historians.¹ Lincoln is also unique in the evidence it provides of episcopal and capitular significance to local society below the level of the magnate conflict that characterised the region during the civil war. Like Chester, Lincolnshire's political history during the civil war was dominated by Ranulf II earl of Chester. However, unlike Chester, this study begins with an assessment of relations between the bishops, the cathedral chapter and the king because Lincoln is also unique in the extent of surviving royal evidence. Thirty charters for the county and another thirty for the cathedral itself are catalogued in the third volume of the *Regesta*. What follows also contains an extended discussion of Dalton's model of episcopal conduct during the civil war because most of his case studies come from Lincolnshire. As at Combe in Warwickshire, the evidence can be interpreted in ways which suggest alternative possible conclusions.

6.1. Relations with the King

Lincoln's strategic and governmental importance, and episcopal capacity to contribute to them, were recognised by the Anglo-Norman kings from the start. Both Bishops Remigius and Robert Bloet had military experience. Richard Gem has speculated that the former's new cathedral was *ecclesia fortis* as well as *ecclesia pulchra*, while Henry I made the latter justiciar of the county and perhaps the city.²

¹ Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible', *passim*.

² Gem, 'Lincoln Minster: *Ecclesia Pulchra*', *passim*; *RRAN*, iii, no. 490, a charter of Stephen's.

He addressed Bishop Alexander on secular as well as ecclesiastical matters, when he confirmed to Hugh Pincerna his father's lands, when he granted the Ridel wardship to the Basset family and lands and wardships to the Mauduits.³ As was noted in Chapter One, the king also pushed the development of the castle and town at Newark and extended episcopal jurisdictional powers to complete control of Well wapentake.⁴ Stephen continued this policy in his early years. Bishop Alexander is addressed regularly in royal charters from soon after the king's coronation, he continued as justiciar and Newark continued to be strengthened.⁵ The bishop was granted a fee in Kent, from which the castleguard had been owed to Dover, but was now to be transferred to Newark, and two fees which had previously belonged to the honour of Poitou.⁶ Ecclesiastical grants to bishop and cathedral continued too.⁷ As of April 1139, Bishop Alexander was expected to play, and played, an important part in the judicial, military and political life of the county.

This, of course, explains his fall.⁸ If Stephen had any doubts about Alexander he had to deal with him as quickly as he could. Nevertheless, no evidence of the bishop's guilt survives and modern historians have agreed that the Leicester family made false accusations aimed at removing their chief rivals for the royal ear. Alexander fell because he was Bishop Roger's nephew, not because of his own conduct. Local friction between him and the Earl of Leicester may also have played a part. Earl Robert seized Newark castle, which potentially threatened him from the north, and the two parties had been in conflict over the bishop's position in Leicester itself for years.⁹ The earl had already managed to get his man into the

that Bishops Robert Bloet and Alexander had held the justiciarship.

³ Ibid., ii, nos. 389, 1465, 1719.

⁴ Ibid., ii, nos. 1660-1, 1772, 1777, 1791 and above pp. 34-36

⁵ Charters addressed to Alexander before his arrest include: *ibid.*, iii, nos. 293-4, 353, 367, 466, 468, 474, 478, 526, 586, 589, 636, 638, 641, 649, 657, 681, 832, 878.

⁶ Ibid., iii, no. 470 and see below for Poitou.

⁷ Ibid., iii, nos. 463-4, 469, 475-6.

⁸ On the arrest itself, see *OV*, vi, 531; *GS*, 26-8; *HN*, 44-52. For an interesting viewpoint, see *Life of Christina*, 166-7.

⁹ *RA*, i, no. 283. For Earl Robert of Leicester and his brother Waleran and their ambitions, see Davis, *King Stephen*, 28-30; C.W. Hollister, 'The Aristocracy', *Anarchy*, 37-66, 61; D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins* (Cambridge, 1986), 44-5.

deanery at Lincoln.¹⁰ It will be shown below that during the civil war Earl Robert attempted to set up an alternative centre of ecclesiastical power and excluded episcopal authority from Leicestershire as far as he could. All this suggests too, of course, that the bishops had considerable local power. So too does Stephen's grant of the justiciarship to William de Roumare.¹¹ Especially so, because William was soon made earl which might be taken as implying that the office required such status to be exercised effectively. William also received the *domus* of Bishop Alexander's steward.¹² What this signifies is unclear but Earl Ranulf II of Chester would issue a charter with a long witness list in his *domus* soon after he took Lincoln in 1140 and it might therefore have been a court of some status. If so, episcopal power in Lincoln is again worth noting.

In the three years before the arrests Alexander is listed as a witness to thirty-two of Stephen's charters, but in the nine years after he appears in only four.¹³ He actually witnessed more charters of the Empress.¹⁴ These statistics and his apparent reformation on his return to his cathedral have been used to assert his supposed neutrality and withdrawal from government during the civil war. However, he was soon back on good terms with the king. Cronne and Davis suggested that temporalities were restored to the see as early as September 1139 and Alexander witnessed a royal charter issued at Norwich in mid 1140.¹⁵ Before the Battle of Lincoln Stephen granted the wardship of the Condet family heir and their castle of Thorngate in the city to the bishop. This can only have been aimed at restoring episcopal secular power in the government of the city and was probably an attempt to counter the growing influence of Earl Ranulf II of Chester and William de Roumare, who also had claims to them.¹⁶ At least four royal charters issued

¹⁰ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 130.

¹¹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 493.

¹² Davis, *King Stephen*, 134-5.

¹³ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 46, 99, 119, 204, 271, 257, 284, 288, 292, 335, 338, 366, 467, 473, 585, 667, 685-6, 716-7, 777, 784, 827, 919, 928-9, 945-8, 975, 990 (pre-war); 399, 655, 982-3 (wartime). Nos. 767, 769 may also have been issued during the civil war.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 377, 393, 630, 699, 700-1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 399.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 482. See below for this grant's importance to Ranulf II.

between 1139 and 1141 address the bishop.¹⁷

After the battle there is then a five year gap in episcopal appearances in address clauses to 1146. Thereafter, addresses and grants to the bishops began again.¹⁸ Nevertheless, even then the bishop witnessed for Stephen and attended him while he campaigned against Earl Ranulf II and William de Roumare and swept the fenland abbeys of Angevin sympathisers in 1143.¹⁹ Bishop Alexander was also, as was outlined above and will be in Chapter Seven below, continuously connected with the king and loyalist magnates elsewhere during the period. The gap is therefore better explained by the half-brothers' control of Lincoln after the battle than the bishop's neutrality. However, he must have struggled to maintain himself in the city. His opposition to Chester dominance may have been expressed most in the architecture of his cathedral. The new west front's glory might represent the spiritual in face of the secular ensconced in the castle close by. Alexander visited Rome during this period, almost certainly partly to escape the tension which must have filled the city.²⁰

After 1146, Stephen repeated his grant of knights' fees from the honour of Poitou which suggests that his first attempt had been ineffective or disrupted.²¹ If so, Ranulf II and William de Roumare are the obvious candidates. The king also gave the bishop the chapelry of Blyth and the church of Brampton.²² As described above, he oversaw Bishop Robert's election and made numerous grants to him. These included a mint at Newark and, like at Lichfield, this was part of a policy of stabilisation. As at Lichfield, the bishop was the best candidate for the job. Coinage in Lincoln has some history in the civil war period and this last grant might also imply that the bishops had some influence over the mint in the city itself already. A mint issuing type 1 Stephen coins operated throughout the period in Lincoln. Type

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 125, 290, 605-6 and possibly 879.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 471, 485-6, 604-6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 655.

²⁰ *HH*, 748, 750.

²¹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 485-6.

²² *Ibid.*, iii, no. 471.

1 producers have been classified as remaining loyal to the king but beyond his direct government. Control of the mint has always been ascribed to either William de Roumare or Earl Ranulf II, but this leads to confusion over their attitudes to the king. The maintenance of type 1 production fits better with the bishops' political stance and activities. It may be that the bishop had control of the mint before the outbreak of the civil war; he was certainly the leading secular figure in the city and there was no earl. It is possible that it was he who ensured the issue of a loyal coinage through the civil war. As well as reflecting the role given to the bishop in the stabilisation of the region, this might also reflect trust in his capacity to do so on the basis of his actions through the civil war.²³ Importantly, Stephen also restored the justiciarship to Bishop Robert de Chesney.²⁴ Bishop Robert must have continued to oppose Earl Ranulf's control of the county because Duke Henry was forced to guarantee a settlement by the earl in which the latter returned a great deal that he had taken from the cathedral at the end of the civil war.²⁵

Bishops Alexander and Robert were closely connected to the king, so too was the chapter. As was mentioned above, Stephen recognised its autonomy from the bishops, made numerous grants to it rather than the bishops and founded three prebends. He also attempted to found two more, one from the chapelry of Blyth, which never came into being, and one for his clerk and Keeper of the Seal, Baldric de Sigillo.²⁶ He discussed the latter in a letter to Bishop Alexander. He wanted to fund it by combining a proportion of the city farm with an equal amount found by the bishop from his own revenues. He stated that the creation would be as beneficial to himself and the bishop as the new canon. He had to repeat his founding grant in 1146, which suggests that, as with the case of the knights of Poitou, Ranulf II and

²³ Blackburn, 'Coinage and currency', on the types in general, and on Lincoln specifically, 180; Dalton, 'In neutro latere', 48-9; White, *Restoration and Reform*, 65. For Ranulf's conduct see the local studies above and King, 'Mountsorrel and its Region'; Dalton, 'Aiming at the impossible' and 'In neutro latere'; J.A. Green, 'Earl Ranulf II and Lancashire', *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters*, 97-108.

²⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 489-90.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 491-2.

²⁶ See above p. 136.

William de Roumare, who controlled the city up to that point, had prevented the foundation.²⁷ The proposed method of funding in this case was unique. It may stem from the king's problems in controlling Lincolnshire and the city and most certainly implies the loyalty of the bishop. It connected king, bishop, chapter and city, and increased the first's influence with the last three. Its initial failure suggests that Ranulf II recognised its purpose. Stephen also founded Langford for Ralph, canon and future dean of St Pauls, London. Ralph spent more time in London than in the north, Henry II regranted the prebend as if from new and Bishop Robert used it to endow the archdeaconry of Oxford all of which suggest that the prebend's original foundation and purpose were later recognised as specific to civil war.²⁸ Given the local political situation it suited the chapter to have a royalist bishop rather than a neutral one. Neutrality meant defencelessness in the face of the ambitions of the Chester/ Roumare family.

English historiography has not addressed the potential political power of chapters but Constance Bouchard recognised that the canons of Auxerre were a, '... part of the web of relationships which bound the regional nobility together in the twelfth century...' ²⁹ In England too the majority came from local baronial and knightly families.³⁰ They could retain their interests in the family estates and possess their own property. According to Martin Brett, '... a canon once installed enjoyed a measure of independence and had interests which might be distinguished from those of his fellows or even opposed to them, and in which he might be supported by

²⁷ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 478, 480. The editors date the first to 1139x1140. A better option might be post 1141 because it suggests that Stephen did not have control of the city. The basis for 1139x1140 seems to be that the bishop no longer worked with the king thereafter – this chapter shows that this was not the case.

²⁸ Baldric did, in the end, become a resident canon and was eventually a resident archdeacon of Leicester, *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 33, 110-11.

²⁹ Bouchard, *Sword, Mitre and Cloister*, 79.

³⁰ Blake, 'Chapter of the Diocese of Exeter'; C.N.L. Brooke, 'The Composition of the Chapter of St Paul's 1086-1163', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1950-3, 1951), 121-32; J. Barrow, 'Cathedrals, provosts and prebends. A comparison of twelfth century German and English practice', *JEH*, 37 (1986), 534-64; Spear, 'The Norman Empire and the Secular Clergy'; idem., 'Power, Patronage and the Anglo-Norman Cathedrals', *ANS*, 20 (1997), 205-21. For comparative purposes see, D. Lepine, *A Brotherhood of Canons Serving God: English Secular Cathedrals in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1995). In the context of the last chapter and Chapter Two of Part One this is the only one of the studies cited which examines canons' religious life.

powerful friends even against the bishop.' Brett also noted that, 'When a new prebend was created it was a specific benefice which could be reserved for the use of particular men and this could form a kind of patronage over which the founder might exercise a continuing control.'³¹ With progress towards separation of chapter and episcopal estates the former became major landholders.³² Despite this development, the personnel of chapter and episcopal household were still very often the same and the connections between the two 'intimate'. Chapters could bolster or frustrate their bishops' authority and could possess considerable influence with him. Potentially they had considerable political importance.

Stephen's interest in the chapter must be understood in this context. He can be shown to have been keen to maintain similar relationships elsewhere too; much to his advantage as it turned out.³³ He was not the only secular founder of prebends in this period. Ranulf II of Chester is considered the most likely founder of a prebend from Scamblesby. William de Roumare was involved in a dispute over the prebend of Asgardby which lasted the whole civil war.³⁴ Stephen's allies Simon II de Senlis and Gilbert II de Gant reconfirmed a grant to Ranulf of Nassington's prebend and made a direct grant to the cathedral respectively. Gilbert II's gift was to be held from him.³⁵ Local magnates seem to have been keen to influence the composition of the chapter. Philip de Harcourt was a member of a Leicester honorial family and a canon of the family college of Beaumont in Normandy. In the aftermath of the arrest of the bishops in 1139 he replaced the chancellor and was made bishop elect of Salisbury on Roger's death. He had already been made dean of Lincoln before the arrests.³⁶ Richard de Turville (or Urvile), archdeacon of Buckingham in the early years of Stephen's reign was also from a Leicester honorial family, in this

³¹ Brett, *English Church*, 188.

³² Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, 290-319.

³³ See below, pp. 227, 233.

³⁴ *RA*, i, no. 252; *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 78. On Asgardby see below, p. 157.

³⁵ *RA*, i, no. 252, 310, 315; *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 94.

³⁶ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 45, 48, 150; Spear, 'Power, patronage and personality', 214. *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 8. It is not clear when Philip was made dean at Lincoln but it may have been in the aftermath of Simon Bloet's fall. Simon too may have been the victim of conspiracy theorists at court, *HH*, 596.

case with considerable power in his county.³⁷ Bishop Robert's predecessor as archdeacon of Leicester, Walter, held a prebend of the family's secular college in the town. Hugh Barre, Robert's successor, was again from an honorial family and was the Philip de Harcourt of the Leicester side of the family. Hugh spent much of the civil war at Lincoln but thereafter spent much more of his time with the Earl. Only Bishop Robert himself was from a family not linked to the Earls of Leicester.³⁸ As was highlighted above, he did not exercise his office in the county during the civil war period. All archdeacons of Lincoln also held prebends at the cathedral. Combined, this evidence suggests that the Leicester family saw control of the county's archdeacon and influence at the centre of the diocese as important. Hugh Barre's stay at Lincoln for the duration of the civil war suggests that the chapter was particularly important then. When they had neither they excluded the bishop and his deputy from their county as far as they could.

Stephen, his allies and the Chester/Roumare family all saw the chapter as important. Scamblesby never came off and one explanation for William's legal problems at Asgardby is his dissatisfaction with its incumbent. He may have wished for a canon he could control. Chapter and archdeacons at Lincoln were understood to have considerable political importance in local society. That importance stemmed as much from the ecclesiastical authority and influence they could exercise as from their secular power. It may too have had a spiritual element. Prebends were not just founded for secular reasons: Bishop Alexander's constable founded one for his son; archidiaconal and cathedral religious importance has been emphasised already.³⁹ It will be shown below that the cathedral and chapter also came to play an important part in the lives of the Lincolnshire lesser aristocracy during the civil war which was more religious than political. They, like their bishops, were loyal to Stephen and, like them, this and their independent authority governed the way magnates reacted to them centrally and locally. This description of their place in Lincolnshire

³⁷ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 116-20.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

³⁹ *Fasti*, iii, Lincoln, 58.

society is mirrored in that of the bishops as outlined below.

Bishops Alexander and Robert were consistently loyal to the king through the civil war. They were neither neutral nor passive. Stephen's addresses and grants to them suggest that he saw them as such and he would not have been so consistent in either if they had not repaid his trust. Chapter Eight shows that the two bishops continued to be involved in government too. Any analysis of the bishops' own actions and local society must take this into account. This is as true of their ecclesiastical as their political actions. If, as Dalton claims, the bishops were involved in creating peace networks in Lincolnshire then they did so with all sides aware of their other loyalties and roles. It is important to emphasise this royal connection because, in the event, Lincolnshire politics was essentially local and regional. Lincoln was too far north for Stephen to either directly control or have more than intermittent influence. Local magnates, including those who might be considered actively 'loyalist', fought their own battles with little reference to the 'official' civil war. Nevertheless, like episcopal religious authority royal connections must have had some influence on the bishops' actions and place. So too must their historical role in royal government. Legitimate government in Lincolnshire was inseparable from the bishops. When it collapsed they were still its representatives and their position would have been engraved in local social and political memory.

6.2. The County

Lincolnshire politics in Stephen's reign was dominated by the attempts of Earl Ranulf II and his half-brother William de Roumare to gain control of the county.⁴⁰ Already possessing sizeable lands they had numerous claims to further estates and offices in respect of their ancestor, the Countess Lucy. Bolingbroke was William de Roumare's caput in England and he dominated the eponymous wapentake. The

⁴⁰ The following reconstruction of Lincolnshire politics is based on Paul Dalton's work, 'Aiming at the Impossible'; *In neutro latere*. References to these articles are therefore used sparingly.

family (and Paul Dalton has emphasised that they worked very much as such) also controlled Manley, Hill, Gartree and Boothby wapentakes and had considerable interests in those of Yarborough, Louthesk, Candleshoe and Calcewath. With the collapse of royal power they seized their chance; to quote Dalton for the second time, ‘... what they were aiming at, what they fought consistently to secure and what they made considerable progress towards achieving was independent tenurial, governmental and military domination of most of Lincolnshire’.⁴¹

In Stephen’s reign, Ranulf II and William competed for control of the remainder of the north of the county seeking to dominate the wapentakes of Wraggoe in the centre; Yarborough and Bradley to the north; Horncastle, Candleshoe and Calcewath to the east and Aslaoe, Corringham and Well in the west. To the south where their pre-war standing was more limited, Aswardhun, Aveland, Beltisloe and Winnibriggs would come under their influence. Dalton has shown that this expansion had three main features: the acquisition of estates of key governmental and economic importance, the acquisition of regalian rights and domination of the lesser aristocracy. From the king and Duke Henry they received, from north to south, Kirton in Lindsey, Gainsborough, Torksey and Grantham. All were wapentake centres and Grantham also had a castle and a bridge over the Trent. The jewel in this particular administrative crown was the city of Lincoln itself together with its castle and its justiciarship, which the family held between 1141 and 1146. Captures made at the Battle of Lincoln enabled Earl Ranulf II to manipulate the marriages of Gilbert II de Gant and the daughter of Baldwin fitzGilbert, who were Lincolnshire magnates, and to force Roger de Mowbray to enfeoff Eustace fitzJohn and give up control of Gainsborough.⁴² The half-brothers also laid claim to the estates held by the honours of Burun, Poitou and Stafford in the county.⁴³

⁴¹ Dalton, ‘Aiming at the Impossible’, 111.

⁴² On Baldwin, E. King, ‘The Origins of the Wake Family. The Early History of the Barony of Bourne in Lincolnshire’, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 5 (1975), 167-77, 169-70. On Eustace, P. Dalton, ‘Eustace FitzJohn and the Politics of Anglo-Norman England: the rise and survival of a twelfth century royal servant’, *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 358-83.

⁴³ As shown by Duke Henry’s charter issued to Earl Ranulf II late in the reign, *RRAN*, iii, no. 180.

Recently there has been some emphasis on the fact that Ranulf did not renounce fealty to Stephen until after 1146 and that therefore his actions around Lincoln were not in direct opposition to the king and, indeed, assisted in ‘...maintaining the royal ascendancy in the region...’⁴⁴ While the fact itself is true, given Ranulf’s seizure of Lincoln castle, the battle and its aftermath, Stephen’s attempts to retake the city in 1143 and 1144, the need for a settlement to be made in 1145x1146 and the arrest itself, the earl’s loyalty cannot have meant a great deal to the king or to local society. More committed loyalists came under attack from the two men on a number of occasions. Stephen never addressed the earl or his half-brother as legitimate governors of the city and county after the restoration of the bishop in 1140. No one else can be shown to have turned to them for governance either. This new sympathy for Ranulf II is misplaced.

Gilbert II de Gant provided the main active opposition to the Chester/Roumare connection despite his enforced marriage into the family. He had a solid base in the south of the county in the wapentakes of Aswardhun, Aveland, Beltisloe and Ness with his headquarters at Folkingham. His estates were concentrated around the consistently loyal royal borough of Stamford, with which he had close connections. The Gant family also held important estates along the south bank of the Humber along the east coast and around Lincoln in Wraggoc and Lowress wapentakes.⁴⁵ Gilbert fought to protect his own position; he was not an aggressor. Dalton picked out Ranulf of Bayeux, who held estates scattered across the county in the north and south, as a third main figure in county politics. William de Roumare attempted to claim Ranulf’s northern estates and to entice away his subtenants most noticeably Peter of Goxhill. Peter stayed loyal and worked with his lord to hold off William.

As in Chester the bishops’ relationship with Chester/Roumare family had points of friction. Alice de Condet was close kin to Ranulf II of Chester and he might therefore have expected to claim wardship for her son and possession of her castle

⁴⁴ Crouch, *Reign*, 225-6.

⁴⁵ Lindsey Survey, *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, Lincoln Record Society, ed.

of Thorngate in Lincoln, but Stephen granted both to Bishop Alexander. Earl Ranulf II also claimed the honour of Poitou, but the king granted two knights' fees from it to the bishop with the explicit assertion that the castle guard they owed was to be carried out at Newark.⁴⁶ If Dalton is correct in thinking that the Chester/Roumare family aimed at domination of wapentake centres, then the fact that Stephen granted the bishops the church of Torksey and Ranulf II the town may not have boded well for the episcopal possessions.⁴⁷ Given Stephen's build-up of episcopal authority before June 1139 it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he was aiming to balance the two powers. William de Roumare had rebelled in the 1120s to gain lands in Lincolnshire he claimed to be his in right of his mother. Henry I and Stephen must have taken this into account. Episcopal estates and rights in Lincolnshire were as much under threat as those of lay magnates from the family. Earl Ranulf II took control of Well wapentake, where the bishop had had a monopoly of judicial authority and where most of his Lincolnshire estates were situated. Well also linked Lincoln with the bishop's palace and castle at Newark. He also had considerable estates in Aslaoe, Corringham and Yarborough, all of which Ranulf II and William attempted to dominate.

Episcopal opposition to the half-brothers was consistent. The citizens of Lincoln turned to their bishop with their complaints about Ranulf II's oppression in 1140 and it was of course he who took Mass on the morning of the battle.⁴⁸ Alexander attested a royal charter issued while the king campaigned against Ranulf II in 1143. Count Alan of Richmond, an opponent of Earl Ranulf II, granted Lincoln a knight's fee from his Nottinghamshire estates during the civil war on condition that it was held by the bishop's niece's son.⁴⁹ As was illustrated above, the bishops were consistently loyal to, and received grants from, Stephen. Duke Henry's resolution of Bishop Robert's difficulties with the earl makes clear the extent of the depredations

C.W. Foster, 19 (1924), 237-9, 242-3, 245, 250, 252, 254, 256-7, 260.

⁴⁶ *RRAN*, iii, no. 472.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 178, 468.

⁴⁸ *GS*, 111; *HH*, 733.

⁴⁹ *RA*, ii, no. 314.

the see must have suffered at Ranulf II's hands.⁵⁰ Like the king, Ranulf II and William attempted to influence the chapter and he and his brother may have attempted to control the bishop and cathedral, and when that failed they ignored them.

This is a very different description of the relationship between the bishops and Ranulf II and William from that set out by its two modern students, A.G. Dyson and Paul Dalton. Both focussed on new monastic foundations made in Lincolnshire during the civil war period. Dyson accepted that there was potential for conflict between the bishops and the Chester/Roumare and Leicester families, but argued that it was avoided by their mutual membership of a 'freemasonry' of founders of Cistercian abbeys.⁵¹ Dalton took a step further and argued that, 'Alexander and/or the occupants of some of the religious houses with which he was involved deliberately orchestrated religious patronage to promote peace between many powerful laymen and protection for the church.'⁵² He specifically incorporated Ranulf II of Chester and William de Roumare into the religious and social aristocratic networks he argued that this activity created. Dalton (but not Dyson), as was noted in the Introduction, also made more general conclusions about the Anglo-Norman episcopate on the basis of the Lincolnshire evidence. Here, there is more antagonism and friction than compromise and two bishops more engaged than neutral.⁵³

Both Dyson and Dalton cited William de Roumare's foundation of Revesby (1142x1143) as exemplifying their case because Alexander was the first witness of the foundation charter. Dalton noted too the bishop's advice to the new abbot, 'to accept grants of land from knights in generous free alms; and [Ailred of Rievaulx] obeyed since he had realised that in these unsettled times such gifts profited knights

⁵⁰ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 491-2.

⁵¹ Dyson, 'Monastic Patronage', 9-10.

⁵² Dalton, 'Churchmen', 95.

⁵³ Conceptualisation of the nature of magnate society as noted in the Introduction, pp. 15-17, is important here. Dyson and Dalton implicitly subscribe to the most positive models. For reasons given there, this thesis is more cautious.

and monks alike ... [Ailred] desired that that land, for which almost all men were fighting to the death, should pass into the hands of the monks for their good.' For Dalton this is an example of a religious house founded on disputed land in order to neutralise both land and conflict.⁵⁴ He interprets Ailred's appointment as abbot as establishing peaceful connections between Ranulf II and his enemy David I of Scotland because of his importance at the Scottish royal court before entering the monastic life.

However, Ailred's promotion was as a precocious new Cistercian talent and need have had little to do with his connections to David. David used Rievaulx rather than Revesby as the mother house for his own foundations. Ailred's own relationship with Scotland had its ambiguities after the Battle of the Standard.⁵⁵ The dynamic of Cistercian expansion very much had its own momentum in England and Scotland in this period. Founders sought monks where they could and vice versa to some extent. Mother houses necessarily developed.⁵⁶ Attaching politics to connections is unnecessary and foundations might be connected across political divides. Simon II de Senlis earl of Northampton founded a 'granddaughter' of Rievaulx at Sawtry on estates which he had taken over from the Scottish royal family and from which he had excluded tenants loyal to them.⁵⁷ Neither his foundation there nor his own grant to Revesby are likely to have been motivated by a desire for compromise with David. There is no evidence of any alliance between Earl Ranulf II and David until 1149 and that in a very different political context.⁵⁸ Dyson also cited Robert of Leicester as connected with Ranulf II by their interest in the Cistercians, but there was a great deal of tension between the two men when they made them. Indeed, as will be outlined below, Earl Robert founded Garendon partly as a move in their chess game.

⁵⁴ Dalton, 'Churchmen', 97, quotation from, *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx* by Walter Daniel, trans. M. Powicke (Oxford, 1978), 28.

⁵⁵ 'Relatio de Standardo', *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, iii, 181-99.

⁵⁶ J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain 1000-1300* (Cambridge, 1994), 73-5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 74 and see below, p. 172.

⁵⁸ For commentary, Crouch, *Reign*, 242-3.

Revesby itself was not in a disputed region, but at the heart of the Roumare estates and was the family's major foundation in England. Later grants to it from a variety of benefactors are as likely to be due to its rapid development and prestige as to local politics. The form of the source for these grants, and the only early Revesby evidence except for the foundation charter itself, is interesting. It is a short inventory of charters granted by a number of important men. It is a single sheet on which the names appear one after the other, but it contains no dates, no witnesses and no contextual information.⁵⁹ Ascribing too much significance to it is dangerous; it cannot be assumed that all those who appear made their grants at the same time or for the same reasons. Bishop Alexander's advice to Ailred is by no means unique. William of Newburgh interpreted foundations in a very similar fashion.⁶⁰ Awareness of contemporary charter diplomatic is essential when approaching this and other documents cited as evidence for the model in question.

Alexander did witness the house's foundation charter, but that he was first witness is perhaps not as significant as it might seem.⁶¹ Bishops were more often than not the first to witness when they were present in royal and baronial charters. Generally, this represents high episcopal status, but because it is so common it cannot on its own represent a greater importance on a particular occasion. Dalton noted that Bishop Alexander also witnessed Kirkstead's foundation charter around the same time. Because a cartulary does survive from the latter it is possible to show that beyond that his connection with the abbey was limited. He is addressed in seven of twenty-two charters datable to this period and witnesses none.⁶² This compares badly with other houses in the region where the bishop appears much more often.

⁵⁹ BL, Egerton MS, 3058.

⁶⁰ *WN*, 98.

⁶¹ *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, ed. F.M. Stenton, Northamptonshire Record Society, 4 (1930), 1-2. It is worth noting in the context of this study's use of the charter evidence that he is also addressed by it but that neither Dyson nor Dalton comment on that.

⁶² Kirkstead Cartulary, fo. 2r-v, 19r, 32r-33r, 71r, 73v-74r, 99r-100v, 142v, 158r, 179r. Of the six charters of the house in *Documents Illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Northern Danelaw*, ed. F.M. Stenton, Records of Social and Economic History, 5 (British Academy, 1920), only two address the bishop, nos. 158, 203 (and for the other four, nos. 167, 176, 185, 202).

He appears in thirty of forty charters from the period from Bardney and is almost ubiquitous in those from Newhouse.⁶³ Revesby's founder, William de Roumare also only rarely involved the bishop in his charters. Nineteen of his charters concerning Lincolnshire have survived from the civil war period, only five of which address the bishops.⁶⁴ Again this compares badly with the ten of Gilbert de Gant II's seventeen charters for Bardney and the overwhelming majority of Ranulf of Bayeux's for Newhouse which do address the bishop.⁶⁵ No cartulary survives for Revesby but Kirkstead's example suggests that the bishop's presence at a foundation need not entail a particularly strong connection between himself and the house or its patrons. Episcopal action and consent was necessary in initial foundation, but thereafter abbeys and their benefactors had a freer choice as to whether they involved the bishop.⁶⁶ At Revesby, William de Roumare chose not to.

Dyson expanded the connections between Earl Ranulf II, William de Roumare and Bishop Alexander by reference to their presence at his foundation of Haverholme, the first's grant to his foundation at Louth Park and the second's grant to Lincoln cathedral chapter of the prebend of Asgardby. None of these is secure. Haverholme's foundation charter has been dated to between December 1139 and March 1140 and includes the two laymen as, '*testimonio Rannulfi comitis Cestrie et Willelmi comitis Canteb' fratris eius*' along with the cathedral chapter and the bishop's own seal.⁶⁷ Neither man was a benefactor of the new house. At the time of the foundation Alexander's position was at its weakest, while Ranulf and William were the accepted leaders of local society and had taken over the bishop's secular

⁶³ For Bardney, see nt 65 below; Newhouse: *Danelaw Documents*, nos. 244-5, 247-8, 253, 256-8, 281, 283-4, 289, 299, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313. For comment on this phenomenon, *ibid.*, 166 and see below.

⁶⁴ Kirkstead Cartulary, fo. 142v; BL, Cotton Vespasian E 20, Bardney Cartulary, fo. 123v-124r; BL, Harleian Charters 55 E 10, 55 E 12; *Danelaw Documents*, nos. 185, 499-501, 512-3, 515-6, 518; *Facsimiles of Early Charters*, no. 1.

⁶⁵ Bardney Cartulary, fo. 63r-75v, 86r-v, 89r, 91v, 104r, 105r, 111r-112r, 113v-114v, 120r, 123v-124r, 197v. 231r-v.

⁶⁶ Dyson, 'Monastic Patronage', 7; followed by Holdsworth, 'The Church', 216-7. Both point out that Cistercian houses were especially keen on *initial* episcopal consent.

⁶⁷ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 50. William de Roumare is 'Earl of Cambridge' which was probably a courtesy title by this date, Davis, *King Stephen*, 135. For Haverholme's foundation, Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, 202-3.

roles. Alexander needed their consent to ensure the permanence of his grant; they may even have had some sort of supervisory role with regard to him. Stephen's charter granting William de Roumare the earldom of Lincoln and the bishop's steward's *domus* notes too that he is considering replacing Alexander. The Haverholme foundation charter is not to be understood as evidence of a close relationship between the bishop and the Chester/Roumare family.

Ranulf's grant to Louth Park survives only in the form of a later inspeximus and is therefore impossible to date. If it was made at the foundation of the abbey then it preceded the bishop's fall and his hostility to the family.⁶⁸ Dalton quoted Alexander's foundation charter, which only survives in a nineteenth century translation, at length as emphasising the new house's role in a period of strife. He concentrates on the anathema clause but, like the bishop appearing as first witness, it is in no way unusual. In fact the charter includes nothing that cannot be found in the foundation charters of many of the other new houses formed in this period. This is not to say that these elements are irrelevant, but to assert that their importance and power were the same as that they possessed when they occurred in times of peace or when the charter cannot be connected to peace network creation.⁶⁹

Asgardby prebend's history is more complex than Dyson allowed. William de Roumare's predecessor had founded it and during Stephen's reign it must have been disrupted because both the king (1140x1144) and Henry II (1154x1162) ordered that the canon to whom it belonged should be seized of it. William issued four confirmation charters for the prebend during Stephen's reign. Only the fourth can be dated specifically to its very last years.⁷⁰ William never lost control of the lands where Asgardby lay, which implies that it was he who withheld the prebend's rights. It seems to have been the canon rather than the lands themselves that was the

⁶⁸ *Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, iii (London, 1908), 247.

⁶⁹ Dalton, 'Churchmen', 96; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 47 and for 'about forty' of Alexander's and Robert's charters incorporating anathemas, lvii. These include the Haverholme foundation charter as discussed above.

⁷⁰ *RA*, i, nos. 130-3.

problem. The potential political importance of chapter and canons has been noted above and it may be that William was unhappy with the chapter's choice.

Dalton's main example is Premonstratensian Newhouse founded by Peter of Goxhill and/or Ranulf of Bayeux in 1143. For him the foundation resolved the problems caused by the Earl of Chester and William de Roumare's claims to the estates and was of itself a statement of peace. Stenton was the first to note the exceptional level of inclusion of bishops in charters from Newhouse; they appear in almost all the surviving charters from the civil war period.⁷¹ For Dalton this emphasised the episcopal role in peace creation in the area. However, this is to ignore the very personal religious relationship between the bishops and Ranulf of Bayeux and, to a lesser extent, Peter of Goxhill. Both men made grants to the abbey in the chapter at Lincoln, and Ranulf and his wife made public their separation in order to enter the religious life in the same place.⁷² A charter addressed to Bishop Robert (c. 1150) includes the phrase, '*Precamur episcopum...*'.⁷³ One reason why the bishops appear so often in charters for Newhouse is that they were Ranulf's spiritual mentors. Again, while Alexander's charter does incorporate an anathema and ends 'Amen', neither is so unusual as to signify a particular peace drive in this instance. Historians need to be cautious before ascribing particular significance to charter features that, at first sight, appear to be unique, but which in fact are not.⁷⁴

Newhouse received grants from a large number of lesser knightly families with connections to great men who were opposed to each other during the civil war. Sometimes those great men would confirm the gifts. For Dalton this was a mechanism by which disputes between groups were resolved. However, he admits that the pattern of patronage that emerges at Newhouse might be accidental because in north eastern Lincolnshire patterns of lordship were fragmented and a knightly

⁷¹ Nor is this a trick of diplomatic, many survive as originals and some do not address the bishop, e.g. *Danelaw Documents*, no. 285.

⁷² BL, Harleian Charters, 45 F 17, 50 H 58.

⁷³ *Danelaw Documents*, no. 244.

⁷⁴ The very next charter in the *EEA* edition, no. 53, a general confirmation for Osney (1143x1147), which lists donations made only before 1136 and by men who did not join different sides in the civil

local community emerged early.⁷⁵ Many knights held land of several tenants in chief and some of them held enough to be considerable figures in their own right. Exactly when this phenomenon developed is not clear but it had come into being by or during Stephen's reign. Simon fitzWilliam and his son Philip of Kyme held thirty fees by 1166. Simon was close to Earl Ranulf II while Philip was steward to Gilbert II de Gant. Dalton himself, elsewhere, cites Ralph de la Haye who witnessed five charters of Earl Ranulf II and an important one of William de Roumare but also witnessed for Gilbert II de Gant. Ralph also witnessed several royal charters and was referred to as a 'royal baron' in one of them.⁷⁶

Lesser barons across Lincolnshire witnessed each other's charters and attended each other's grants almost regardless of their respective overlords. Gervase de Halton held of Philip of Kyme and William de Roumare and attested a charter recording a grant by the bishop's steward and tenant Walter de Amundeville.⁷⁷ Philip of Kyme witnessed for Gilbert II de Gant but also for the Angevin loyalist Richard de la Haye.⁷⁸ William de Roumare's tenant Roger of Benniworth could also attest a charter of the Countess of Northampton, the wife of Stephen's most loyal earl.⁷⁹ This same layer of society, rather than great lords, was the main support for the new monastic orders in northern England.⁸⁰ Lords consented to their grants, but they made them for their own reasons and in their own contexts and not those of their lords. When William de Roumare consented to grants to Newhouse he was not necessarily entering into a relationship of peace with the abbey, the bishop or other benefactors. 'Accident' is just as likely an explanation for the pattern of patronage at Newhouse as the creation of a network of aristocratic peace making. Further, this lesser aristocratic 'community' will be shown below to have had a close

war, ends with three Amens.

⁷⁵ Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible', 127-8. For the later twelfth century, see T. Wales, 'The Knight in Twelfth Century Lincolnshire', unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge (1983). For a general discussion of the nature of twelfth century English local society and ways of defining it, see Crouch, 'From Stenton to MacFarlane', and bibliography there.

⁷⁶ Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible', 125.

⁷⁷ BL, Cotton Charter xi 26.

⁷⁸ Kirkstead Cartulary, fo. 99r-100v, one example among many.

⁷⁹ *Danelaw Documents*, nos. 19, 216, 500. For Simon II de Senlis see below, pp. 166-75.

⁸⁰ H.M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford, 1951), 33-6; Burton, *Monastic Orders*, 57.

relationship with the cathedral at Lincoln, a relationship neither Ranulf II nor William shared in.

Newhouse was the first Premonstratensian house in England and was therefore, like Revesby, a natural focus for an aristocracy enthused with the new monastic orders. Stephen also made grants to the abbey but his relationship with Earl Ranulf II and William de Roumare never recovered after 1141. Dalton makes no attempt to incorporate him into the local peace system he seeks to prove.⁸¹ If anything, Stephen's grant suggests local loyalty to him. Patterns of episcopal appearance in charters can be cited as evidence here as well. Charters of Newhouse and Ranulf of Bayeux have a more general importance because almost all of them incorporate the bishop whereas those of William de Roumare and Earl Ranulf II do so only rarely. Bishops of Lincoln appear in only six of twenty-six charters Ranulf II of Chester issued in or regarding the county. At least seven of those twenty-six were issued at Lincoln but none of them incorporate the bishop.⁸² Of the six that do all were issued after 1149 and most between 1152 and 1153. By that time Ranulf II was very much on the defensive in the east midlands. He and Earl Robert of Leicester had concluded their famous *conventio* at least partly because neither was making progress and both needed to consolidate.⁸³ His half-brother had either left the country for his Norman estates, died or been killed, and his alliance with Earl William of York had been beaten back by Gilbert II de Gant. Stephen had also recently made Gilbert II Earl of Lincoln disregarding William de Roumare's possession of the title. Ranulf II addressed the bishop when he made recompense to Bardney, which he had attacked in earlier, more successful days. He asked the bishop both to ensure that the grant was made and to protect it thereafter.⁸⁴ When the earl was at the height of his powers and based literally across the road from the

⁸¹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 605-6. Some of Stephen's gifts were not confirmed by King Henry II, BL. Harleian. Ch.51 H 1. For discussion, *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 178.

⁸² *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 16-17, 44, 48, 53-5, 58, 59 (at Lincoln), 66 (at Lincoln), 69 (at Lincoln), 70-1, 76-7 (at Lincoln), 78, 79-80 (at Lincoln), 92-3, 96, 104, 107-8, 111, 117. The bishops appear in nos. 78, 92-3, 96, 107-8.

⁸³ Crouch, *Reign*, 238.

⁸⁴ *Charters of the Earls*, no. 96.

bishop he felt no compunction to address him in his charters and thereby seek his authority and the legitimacy he could confer. Only when his strength was failing did Ranulf II turn to Bishop Robert de Chesney.

Apart from the charter for the foundation of Haverholme discussed above, Ranulf II and William appear in very few other episcopal charters. Bishop Robert confirmed grants made by William de Roumare to Spalding and these were noted in more general confirmations for the same house. William was also mentioned in a general confirmation for Bardney, but each of these was issued after his death.⁸⁵ Bishop Robert's confirmation of grants to St Benoît-sur-Loire by Ranulf II is mentioned in a later general confirmation issued by Archbishop Becket, but his own charter is lost. Bishop Robert also confirmed Ranulf II's gifts to Spalding and both bishops confirmed both men's gifts to their mother's foundation at Stixwold (Bishop Robert post-war).⁸⁶ Later confirmations cannot be used to reconstruct earlier political relationships, but the Spalding and first Stixwold charter could be. Robert's confirmation of Ranulf II's gifts to Spalding dates to 1152x1153 like Ranulf's own charters incorporating the bishop and can be explained in the same terms. Bishop Alexander's Stixwold charter has been dated to the same period as the Haverholme foundation charter (1139x1140). The protection clause with which it ends seems to be directed to the two men rather than generally:

...Ranulfus comes Cest' et Willelmus de Rom' illud postea confirmaverunt et concesserunt per cartas suas. Quare precor vos sicut filios karissimos sancte ecclesie ut eas pro salute animarum vestrarum adiuvetis et manuteneatis et de beneficiis vestris eis impertiamini. Sub anathemate pono ne aliquis violentia vel rapina illud donum eis auferat. Valete.

Rather than the bishop bringing together willing magnates to create networks of peace this suggests that he could see where the region's politics were going, and took the opportunity presented by their mother's memory to harangue the two men he suspected would take them there.

⁸⁵ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 72, 252, 255, 257

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 57 (the first Stixwold charter), 235, 253 (the Spalding charter).

Bardney abbey evidence bolsters the validity of this description of the bishops' relationships with the Chester/Roumare family. Modern concentration on the significance of new monastic houses in Lincolnshire has left this Gant family Benedictine foundation sidelined.⁸⁷ It lay in the exact centre of the county in Wraggøe wapentake which Earl Ranulf II of Chester strove to control and Gilbert to defend.⁸⁸ Gilbert held few estates in the hundred except around Bardney and the abbey and those lands acted as a bulwark against which Earl Ranulf II would have to take action. It, more than any of the new houses, was strategically important. Forty charters from this period are recorded in the Bardney cartulary, of which thirty address the bishops. Gilbert II contributed seventeen of those charters and ten of them address the bishop. In three of the other seven cases bishops issued confirmation charters.⁸⁹ Gilbert II granted land to Lincoln cathedral and compensated Norwich cathedral priory for damages he had inflicted on its estates through Bishop Robert's hands.⁹⁰ Other members of his family made grants in chapter at Lincoln.⁹¹ Bishop Robert de Chesney issued confirmations where Gilbert II made grants from and of lands which he was struggling to control, thereby emphasising and guaranteeing with his ecclesiastical and moral authority the latter's legitimate possession of, and right to grant from, them.⁹² Earl Ranulf II may well have managed to gain control of the area around South Ferriby on the Humber, from which Gilbert II made a gift to Bridlington Priory. Gilbert II also donated land around Bramber to Bridlington. Bramber was a strategically important area which Earl Ranulf II had earlier forced him to make his new wife's dower.⁹³

⁸⁷ For Bardney's general history, see H. Breakspear, 'Bardney Abbey', *Archaeological Journal*, 79 (1922), 1-93; G. Beech, 'Aquitanians and Flemings in the Refoundation of Bardney Abbey (Lincolnshire) in the Later Eleventh Century', *Haskins Society Journal*, 1 (1989), 73-90.

⁸⁸ Dalton, 'Aiming at the Impossible', 116-7.

⁸⁹ See above, nt. 65.

⁹⁰ *RA*, ii, no. 315; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 200.

⁹¹ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 76.

⁹² *Ibid.*, nos. 85-6. Bridlington was the Gant family's chief foundation in England.

⁹³ Gilbert II de Gant's most dramatic relationship with a monastery was with Vaudey in the south of the county. His enemy Earl William of York set up a group of canons at his Lincolnshire caput of Castle Bytham. When Gilbert II drove William out of Lincolnshire he removed the canons to Vaudey in the midst of his own estates. A clearer example of humiliation by religious house would be harder to find. Unfortunately, because no charters survive from Vaudey from this period the

Bardney and Newhouse, Gilbert II de Gant and Ranulf de Bayeux were closely connected with the bishops. Revesby, Earl Ranulf II and William de Roumare were not. Kirkstead can be considered a 'control' to some extent because it and its patron escaped the disruptions of the civil war. Few of its charters mention the bishop and only three of Bishop Robert's relate to it. Two of them are confirmations of a gift made by a man who held of the bishop and are made by the bishop as lord rather than ecclesiastical governor.⁹⁴ Gilbert, Ranulf of Bayeux and the bishops can all be connected with the king, whereas Earl Ranulf II and William de Roumare took advantage of his weakness to usurp his authority and at times at least were actively opposed to him. None of the first three was an aggressor; each sought to defend the pre-war governmental and tenurial status quo. In Ranulf of Bayeux's case at least the relationship with the bishops was also a religious one. The patterns formed in Lincolnshire from episcopal appearances in monastic charters and the subjects of the bishops' own charters equate with those from the Chester diocese. They do not fit the models suggested by either Dyson or Dalton. While they confirm that the bishops were possessed of some authority they imply that this was a different type of authority, used and recognised in different ways.

As was noted above in the Introduction to this study, Dalton's model is explicitly constructed using frameworks of dispute settlement and social networks built around monasteries developed by historians of French monasteries and society over the last twenty years. There can be no doubt that monasteries were central to aristocratic political and social networks and were sometimes founded as part of a peace process, but not every grant or confirmation need have integrated donors into such networks, not every list of donors can be assumed to have been a network, and not every foundation need have neutered lands in dispute. The evidence from Lincolnshire both suggests, and is best understood through, a model in which dispute and all that lay behind it, and resulted from it, was as important an element

bishops' take on all this cannot be assessed!

⁹⁴ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 137-9.

in local and regional society as its settlement.

In fact, historians seeking 'protected' spaces and immunities would do better to look elsewhere than monasteries in Lincolnshire. The existence of a lesser aristocratic community in Lincolnshire in the mid twelfth century was noted above. The bishop's court and the cathedral came, to some extent at least, to be focal points for it during the civil war. They fulfilled the potential Chapter Two outlined that they possessed. Records of several instances of grants being made in chapter by magnates of varying political persuasions survive. Ranulf of Bayeux, Peter of Goxhill and William Berber all made grants to Newhouse.⁹⁵ Ranulf, as noted above, also gave himself to religion there. Alice de Craon, Robert de Gant, Philip of Kyme, and Hugh de Scoteni, all important local lords, gave to other houses.⁹⁶ When Robert Arsic gave land to Kirkstead in 1151x1152 a number of laymen witnessed his charter. Given the bishops' difficult relationship with the family the fact that William de Roumare's tenant and regular witness Wido de Ver is among them is at first sight surprising. When Ralf fitzGilbert, a Gant baron and relation, made a grant to the same house in the presence of bishop and chapter the Chester baron Robert fitzHugh witnessed his.⁹⁷ With the exception of Gilbert de Gant II the great magnates in Lincolnshire did not appear in the same arena. In the absence of legitimate secular government and in the context of a very disrupted local society, giving to monasteries in the cathedral in the presence of the bishop and/or chapter was a very public process offering a guarantee of the gift. In Ranulf of Bayeux's case it was also a religious process in itself. It may have fulfilled the same purpose for other magnates. The cathedral really did offer a 'protected space' where lesser

⁹⁵ BL, Harleian Charters, 45 F 17; 46 B 3; 50 H 58.

⁹⁶ BL, Harleian Charters, 52 G 21, 52 G 25; BL, Additional Charter, 11292 (6); *Danelaw Documents*, nos, 2, 58, 303; *Transcripts of Charters*, Alvingham, no. 3, Sixle, no. 54.

⁹⁷ Kirkstead Cartulary, fos. 17r, 99r.

barons with different lords, the 'community', could congregate.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LINCOLN. THE BISHOPS AND THE POLITICS OF THE CIVIL WAR (2) THE DIOCESE

7.1. Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire

Both these counties were dominated by the earldom of Huntingdon which was held by the Scottish royal family before 1138, firstly by King David and then his son Henry. With the breakdown of Anglo-Scottish relations between 1138 and 1140, at some point King Stephen transferred the earldom and its estates to Simon II de Senlis whose father had held it in early Henry I's reign. On Simon's death in 1155 Henry II held the honour for two years before granting it to Malcolm IV; it was later returned to Simon III and then handed over to Earl David of Huntingdon.¹ Simon II had no choice but to stay loyal to Stephen since King David and Henry of Scotland backed the Empress. His connections were royalist too, since he was married to a sister of Earl Robert of Leicester and his son married a daughter of Gilbert II de Gant.² Because of the scale of the honour's estates the civil war affected the two counties in similar fashion.

In Northamptonshire, beyond Earl Simon, the only other major lay landholder was Earl Robert of Leicester. He dominated the south-west of the county where he had a residence and founded a hospital at Brackley.³ Northampton was the strategic centre of the country, a fact reflected in its central role in the revolts of 1173, 1215 and 1264. A favoured royal lodge and castle also lay nearby at Rockingham.⁴ In peacetime there was constant royal traffic through the county.⁵ Stephen was at

¹ On the convoluted history of the Honour of Huntingdon see, *RRS*, i, 18, 100-03; K. Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon, 1152-1219* (Edinburgh, 1985), 104-8, 113, 126; Davis, *King Stephen*, 129, 131. For the problems of dating Henry of Scotland's loss of his English estates, *RRS*, i, 102.

² Davis, *King Stephen*, 110, nt. 3.

³ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 27, 117, 119, 123, 125, 129, 146, 152.

⁴ *VCH*, Northampton, i, 304, 308; ii, 5; iii, 2-3.

⁵ C.R. Elvey, the editor of the Luffield Priory charters, thought the house was founded to take advantage of, and had only a limited endowment because of, this 'passing trade', *Luffield Priory Charters*, Northamptonshire Record Society, 22 (1957), 2 pts., pt. 1 vii.

Rockingham in 1138 and at Northampton in mid-1140, and again in 1142 when he lay ill there for a month. He arrested Ranulf II Earl of Chester in the town in 1146.⁶ Nevertheless, this nodal centre was too far north for Stephen to control directly during the civil war and he therefore relied on his earl of Northampton, Simon II de Senlis. Simon has been picked out as the only one of Stephen's earls who consistently exercised governmental authority on the king's behalf.⁷

Despite this, the extent of his lands and the importance of his connections, the local evidence suggests that Simon struggled to control the county. High waste figures and substantial expenditure on restocking royal estates in the early post-war years imply that it suffered extensive disruption.⁸ Peterborough Abbey in the north east lost estates to the Mauduits, Bassets and its own Waterville tenants. Simon himself may have been a predator there.⁹ Robert fitzVitalis and the lord of Staverton withheld churches and William de Neufmarché land at Welton belonging to Daventry priory.¹⁰ The Maudit family may have suffered in Stephen's first years but thereafter pushed its influence out from Rockingham. Empress Matilda and Duke Henry, but not King Stephen, granted to and confirmed for the family. The family claimed hereditary possession of the chamberlain's office but held it from Matilda rather than Stephen.¹¹ Simon II seems to have been unable to clamp down on the Mauduits' ambitions. Edmund King showed that Ranulf II of Chester was also active in the county and attempted to assert control over north-west Northamptonshire and particularly the honour of Belvoir by a speculative claim to lordship over lands around Pipewell just to the west of Rockingham.¹²

Earl Simon II also had difficulties on his own estates because the King of Scotland

⁶ *RRAN*, iii, xxxix-xliv for Stephen's itinerary. *GS*, 195-9; *HH*, 748 for Ranulf II's arrest.

⁷ White, 'Continuity in Government', 133.

⁸ *Idem*, 'Were the midlands wasted', 35.

⁹ *Peterborough Chronicle*, 66; E. King, *Peterborough Abbey, 1066-1310. A Study in the Land Market* (Cambridge, 1973), 21-32.

¹⁰ *The Cartulary of Daventry Priory*, ed. M.J. Franklin, Northamptonshire Record Society, 35 (1985), xxiv-v, nos. 429, 505, 664, 921.

¹¹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 581-2; *Beauchamp Cartulary*, iv, xxvi, xxxiv.

¹² King, 'Pipewell Abbey'.

had built up a loyal baronial following, which he found hard to break or win over.¹³ Several families had followed King David north and Simon II seems to have felt the need to take over their English estates. He founded the abbey of St Mary de la Pré on Olifard estates at Fotheringay and gave the Moreville church at Bozeat to St James, Northampton.¹⁴ He faced similar problems and responded in similar fashion in Huntingdonshire. Earl Simon II must have been in financial difficulties too because St James granted him cash in return for a warranty.¹⁵ He was defeated politically as well, eventually driven into allying with the Mauduits by marrying one of his daughters into the family.¹⁶ Given this context, his capacity to act successfully as earl has to be doubted.

In contrast, the bishops were dynamic in Northamptonshire. Only four *acta* of Bishop Alexander survive and, while one predates Stephen's reign and two are confirmations, the fourth shows him acting in full synod attended by three canons, two archdeacons and Bishop Richard of St Asaph.¹⁷ One of the archdeacons was his nephew William who was very active in the county. He also appears in both the address and attestation clauses of Bishop Robert de Chesney's charters. Daventry, seeking ecclesiastical sanction in its first years addressed him as well as the bishop. William is also addressed in charters for Luffield priory.¹⁸ Uniquely, in Northamptonshire, Alexander used the bishop of St Asaph as a suffragan. His actions were particularly positive. Land Daventry had always held was withheld by William de Neufmarché until a compromise was reached by which the latter regranted the land to the former. However, Bishop Richard refused to consent to this solution and insisted that the land had always belonged to Daventry.¹⁹ It is

¹³ J.A. Green, 'Henry I and David I', *Scottish Historical Review*, 75 (1996), 1-19, 12-14.

¹⁴ *MA*, v, De la Pré, nos. 1, 2, 5, 9; K. Stringer, 'The Early Lords of Lauderdale, Dryburgh Abbey and St Andrews Priory at Northampton', *Essays on the Nobility of Medieval Scotland*, ed. idem (Edinburgh, 1985), 44-72, 45.

¹⁵ BL, Additional Charters, 6037.

¹⁶ *Beauchamp Cartulary*, xxxiv.

¹⁷ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 21, 48, 63. No.20 for Alexander's synod.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 21, 107, 156, 167, 185, 247i; *Daventry Cartulary*, nos. 5, 6, 8, 610; *Luffield Priory Charters*, no. 24; *MA*, iv, 349, no. 6.

¹⁹ For the case, see M.J. Franklin, 'The Secular College as a Focus For Anglo-Norman Piety: St Augustine's Daventry', *Minsters and Parish Churches. The Local Church in Transition 950-1200*,

worth noting that, like the study of episcopal relations with new monasteries in Lincolnshire and Bishop Alexander's obstinacy in a Bedfordshire legal case, this suggests that the ecclesiastical hierarchy might on occasion be determined to uphold legality rather than negotiate compromise settlements.²⁰ Bishop Robert de Chesney also sat in synod in the county in Stephen's reign. He issued up to twenty four *acta* and was addressed eighteen times.²¹ Given the relatively small number of religious houses and surviving charters for Northamptonshire these statistics are more impressive than they might at first appear.²²

The county was as important to the bishops as it was to the king. They held few estates and had little influence over the collegiate church in the county town, but the area was exactly in the centre of their diocese and was important to their communications too.²³ With such a weak secular governor it was in the bishops' interest to exert themselves to maintain their position and also to offer a source of legitimacy to lay and religious alike. It was in lay and monastic interests to seek the latter. The bishops also took a step further and backed the secular government in the county. Graeme White asserted Simon II's commitment to royal government on the basis of his being addressed in two royal charters for Northamptonshire and two for Huntingdonshire.²⁴ Four of the ten royal charters dealing with the county during the civil war were addressed to the bishop.²⁵ The address clauses of four of the other five have not survived and the fifth concerns estates in Essex and is addressed to the

ed. J. Blair (Oxford, 1988), 97-105, 99. For Bishop Richard himself, see D. Smith, 'The Episcopate of Richard of St Asaph: A problem of twelfth century chronology', *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, 23-4 (1973-4), 9-13.

²⁰ For the case, see above, p. 73.

²¹ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 85, 107, 131, 156, 167, 185-95, 198-9, 220-3, 247i-ii, 278, 280. Robert is addressed in BL, Cotton Caligula A xii, Pipewell Cartulary, fo 3r, 8r-v, 11r, 27r, 36v, 37r; *MA*, vi, 1018, no. 1; *Facsimiles of Early Charters*, Boughton, nos. 46-7; *Daventry Cartulary*, nos. 5, 6, 8, 667, 701, 815.

²² Luffield was never popular, St Andrew's, perhaps too closely associated with the Scottish kings, has left few charters from this period; Pipewell, St James and St Mary de la Pré were all founded relatively late in Stephen's reign and have therefore also left few charters. That leaves Daventry.

²³ *DB*, 219a, 221a-b.

²⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 611, 657 (both in company with the bishop) and see below, nt. 33, for Huntingdonshire.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 610-14, 657-661. The bishop is addressed in nos. 610-12, 657.

bishop of London.²⁶ Every relevant royal charter with an address clause surviving is therefore addressed to the bishop of Lincoln. All the eighteen lay charters which addressed Bishop Robert were issued by Earl Simon II and his connections or others under some outside threat from opponents of the king.²⁷

The bishop also supported Simon II's attempts to control his own estates. He publicly backed Simon's right to his honour in succession to King David in a charter issued for the Scottish royal family's foundation of St Andrew's in Northampton in 1148x1151, '*...sicut in cartis advocatorum eiusdem ecclesiae videlicet David Regis Scotie et Simonis comitis de Northamtona continetur...*'²⁸ King David and his tenants had founded and supported a secular college at Daventry, Simon II de Senlis converted it to a priory during the civil war. Michael Franklin has shown that he did so with the aim of reducing and replacing the Scottish king's influence in the county.²⁹ As noted above, he also founded an abbey on the estates of the Olifard family. The bishops backed both these moves despite the fact that they must have been controversial. This is to be compared with the bishop's role in the foundation of Pipewell abbey in the north-west of Northamptonshire where Edmund King has shown that Earl Ranulf II of Chester attempted to assert his authority by regrating land which William de Albin, the holder of the honour of Belvoir, had earlier given to the monastery. King called this '*... siege warfare of a subtle and invidious kind*'.³⁰ William de Albin's original grant made earlier in the civil war and a later charter dated to 1148 both address the bishop. Ranulf II's charter, to be dated somewhere between the two, also addresses him.³¹ Pipewell and its early benefactors sought episcopal confirmation from the bishop and received it.³² Ranulf II sought the same but did not gain it. Given what

²⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 613, 658-61.

²⁷ Bishop and Earl met at least once, BL Cotton Charter X 14.

²⁸ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 192.

²⁹ Franklin, 'Secular College', 98, 101-2; *Daventry Cartulary*, nos. 5, 6, 8.

³⁰ King, 'Pipewell Abbey', 176. Pipewell's strategic importance may have been recognised by others since Simon II de Senlis gave three estates forming a triangle around the site of the abbey to the Mauduit family as his daughter's dowry, *Beauchamp Cartulary*, no. 177. For Ranulf II's further ambitions at Belvoir, see below, p. 176.

³¹ BL, Additional MSS 37022, fo. 8r; *Charters of the Earls*, no. 85; King, 'Pipewell Abbey', 172.

³² *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 222-3; King, 'Pipewell Abbey', 173.

has been said of Chester diocese and Lincolnshire about the rarity of Ranulf II's recognition of the place of the bishop, it seems likely that he sought to secure episcopal sanction for his claims to Belvoir estates. The bishops did not do as he wished. Ranulf II's charter to Pipewell is one of the few occasions where positive evidence of his awareness of episcopal importance is apparent.

The bishops' consent to Simon II's acts contrasts with their refusal to acknowledge Ranulf II's claims and their commitment to legitimacy in the case of William de Neufmarché and Daventry. It implies a strong assertion of ecclesiastical authority in the county but also the use of that authority to back royal and local government there. It implies too, that episcopal power was more than merely administrative and dependent on more than secular power. It is worth noting, though, that in this instance it was effective when the local secular authority welcomed it.

In Huntingdonshire, the earl of Northampton again held the largest body of estates and acted as Stephen's governor. Again he appears in the address clauses of only two royal charters. Bishop Robert also addressed him.³³ The bishops appear in some form in eight of the twelve surviving royal charters issued for the county during the civil war. Stephen expected them to take secular as well as ecclesiastical action. If Thurstan de Montfort failed to return lands in Rutland to Thorney Abbey (Cambridgeshire), Bishop Alexander was to do so and the king was not to hear any further plea on the subject. Stephen's charters to both Thurstan and the bishop survive. So too do repetitions of both from the time of Bishop Robert.³⁴ Alexander had been ineffective. Nevertheless, the charter was issued at the royal hunting lodge of Brampton, the church of which Stephen had given the bishop and which was very close to the bishop's own house at Buckden. Stephen expected Alexander's and Robert's power to have some strength and he did so knowing the local context in which he was asking them to do it. As in Northamptonshire it seems too that the bishops' position was equal to that of the earl.

³³ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 671, 884; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 267.

³⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 885-8.

Again, the bishops backed Simon II de Senlis' attempts to assert control over his lands. Pre-war relations between the bishop and the Scottish royal family were good. Post-war this was not the case and Malcolm IV's early charters do not address the bishop.³⁵ This is odd in that he was trying to reestablish his authority in the county and in normal circumstances this would have entailed bringing in the diocesan, especially as other early donors addressed the bishop and the archdeacon and Henry II was using the bishop as a government official in the county.³⁶ The absence of the bishop from Malcolm IV's charters can be explained by hostility caused by the bishops' backing of Simon II during the civil war.

As at Fotheringay in Northamptonshire, Olifard estates at Sawtry were taken over by Simon II and used to found a monastery.³⁷ He associated himself with his tenant Alexander Maufe in the foundation and the early charters can be read as implying that both knew their actions were of questionable legality. Alexander confirmed that he had walked the bounds and had gained the agreement of the magnates holding the surrounding lands. He listed their names.³⁸ Malcolm IV had to accept the foundation and he granted the Olifard estates at Bothwell in compensation, but his early charters for Sawtry treat it as his own foundation. His first grants the lands there to Warden Abbey to found a monastery and confirms the lands as they were held in the time of his grandfather, King David. A second charter is also addressed to Warden rather than Sawtry.³⁹ The bishop played a significant part in Simon II's drive to assert his tenurial control. The foundation was made with the support and advice of the bishop and attended by Archdeacon Henry of Huntingdon.⁴⁰ Simon II stated that the foundation had been made by Bishop Robert and Alexander Maufe

³⁵ *RRS*, i, nos. 7, 16, 17, 21, charters of King David and his son Henry. (Barrow dates no. 21 to 1139x1141. Since it was witnessed by both Bernard de Balliol, who made his choice at the Standard, and Robert de Vere, who stayed loyal to Stephen, it may well have been issued prior to the battle).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 128, 142-3, 208-10, 285. For Henry II, e.g. *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, i, no. 97, ii, nos. 139, 140 (6); *RA*, i, nos. 158, 184. For other early benefactors, BL, Harleian Charters, 85 B 5, 85 B 6.

³⁷ BL, Cotton Charter, vii 3; *RRS*, i, no. 305.

³⁸ *MA*, v, 522-3, no. 3.

³⁹ *RRS*, i, nos. 128, 305.

⁴⁰ BL, Cotton Charter, vii 3.

and expressed his gratitude by granting Alexander a mill and Bishop Robert compensation for the renders of Sawtry church. As in Northamptonshire, Bishop Robert was prepared to accept and support dubious actions in order to bolster the royal and/or governmental secular power in the county. Malcolm IV was not prepared to recognise his authority because he had done so.

Bishop Robert de Chesney was in Huntingdonshire a great deal in the last years of the civil war and the first of Henry II's reign.⁴¹ He made his presence felt in the settlement of disputes including instances of lay seizures of land during the civil war.⁴² The bishops' estates were more extensive than in Northamptonshire and assarting continued on them during the civil war.⁴³ Robert also issued three confirmation charters for Thorney Abbey including one for a case settled in his presence.⁴⁴ As in the case of the dispute with Thurstan de Montfort mentioned above, the estates in question might be thought to be outside the bishops' jurisdiction. With Bishop Nigel of Ely, it's own prelate, unreliable and lacking standing, Thorney may have seen the bishops of Lincoln as a better guarantee. Gilbert Earl of Pembroke was also an outsider but when he granted the church of Everton to St Neots he made sure that Bishop Alexander confirmed his actions.⁴⁵ The confirmation charter has a particularly long *arenga* clause describing the trials affecting the area suggesting that he was well aware of why Gilbert was looking to him.

Bishop Robert was a political and religious force in Huntingdonshire and acted on that basis. His actions were influenced by his relationship with the king and his commitment to the legitimate government order. Bishop Alexander is less easy to categorise. At times he played the same role, but he is less evident in

⁴¹ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 229, 238, 243, 270.

⁴² *RA*, i, nos. 134, 226-7, 236, 238, 267.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, i, no. 153 where Henry II confirms those assarts made by the bishops in the time of his grandfather but orders those made during Stephen's reign to be checked by royal officials before they too can be confirmed.

⁴⁴ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 265, 267, 270.

⁴⁵ *MA*, iii, 470-7, no. 14; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 55.

Huntingdonshire than in other counties and perhaps less effective too. Stephen had to repeat his order to ensure that Thurstan de Montfort returned Thorney's estates. Archbishop Theobald issued similar charters in connection with Ramsey estates. His first ordered Bishop Alexander and his cousin Bishop Nigel to settle a dispute; a second was addressed to the bishop of Norwich as well. Theobald was angry that the cousins had not carried out his earlier mandate, '*... et vobis domine Lincoln' et domine Elyensis alia nos vice precipisse meminimus, eo magis mirantes quod nondum preceptum nostrum effectui mancipare curastis*'.⁴⁶ Bishop Robert, on the other hand, took part in the homage ceremony of one of Ramsey's knights.⁴⁷ Only one of Alexander's seven *acta* relating to the county dates from the civil war period.⁴⁸ Bishop Robert's relative energy seems to be more than just the survival of a greater number of documents and may even be a conscious reassertion of episcopal power. Alexander does seem to have kept a low profile in the county.

To some extent this was probably due to Geoffrey de Mandeville's activities in the area in the early years of the civil war.⁴⁹ Episcopal resources in the fens were very limited and Alexander seems not to have attempted to deal with the earl. Further, Ramsey's abbot may have had Angevin sympathies and provided a focus for local barons with loyalties to the Scottish royal family. Abbot Walter had certainly supported Bishop Nigel's revolt in the aftermath of his arrest. In 1140 Stephen was forced to rely on a Ramsey monk called Daniel to guide him through the fens to Ely. In 1143 the king was strong enough to replace Walter with Daniel thus ensuring the abbey's future loyalty. Alexander as a loyal bishop would not have been welcome at Ramsey up to that point if this was the case. The abbey held considerable immunities and was isolated and difficult to dominate in its fenland fastness. If it did not invite bishops they would have had problems asserting their rights. In this context, Bishop Robert's more prominent role at Ramsey could have

⁴⁶ *Chronicon Ramesiensis*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, (Rolls Series, 1886), 379-80 and Saltman, *Theobald*, nos. 207-8.

⁴⁷ *Cartularium Monasteria de Ramesia*, i, no. 198.

⁴⁸ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 54-5, 60-4. No. 55 has been dated to 1143x1148.

⁴⁹ For Geoffrey, Nigel and Ramsey see Davis, *King Stephen*, 77-9, esp. nt. 15.

been due either to an abbey cowed or more sympathetic, or to a conscious decision to make sure it stayed that way. Alexander's position was further complicated by the actions of his cousin. Bishop Nigel was somewhat unpredictable and opposed Stephen at times. It may be that Alexander had to be careful not to be seen as too close to him.

Huntingdonshire like Northamptonshire evidence implies that the bishops of Lincoln could possess considerable authority in regional society and that their ecclesiastical activity could be politically significant. Episcopal connections to the king and to his local representative were again important. In the absence of the secular authority, ecclesiastical authority was a major source of legitimate power in the county. Nevertheless, maintaining that position and exercising that authority was difficult. Alexander was unable to deal with Ramsey Abbey's or Geoffrey de Mandeville's opposition to Stephen. Here, the *Gesta Stephani*'s author's criticism of him might be justified. Even then, though, it is important to note that ecclesiastical administration in the person of the archdeacon continued throughout the civil war.⁵⁰ Huntingdonshire is the first county so far where it did so when the bishop's political role was limited.

7.2. Leicestershire

Modern historians have examined the history of Leicestershire in some depth and, as at Lincoln, its political history therefore needs no reconstruction. As at Lincoln too, the bishop can be slotted into this political history seamlessly. This is also the only county where a leading magnate's relationship with the bishop has been addressed and it offers the chance to explore how aristocratic society perceived the episcopate.⁵¹ Unfortunately it also offers the least evidence of any county in the diocese. Few charters survive from the mostly very small religious houses and the

⁵⁰ *HH*, App. 1.

⁵¹ King, 'Mountsorrel and its Region'; Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*; idem, 'Earls and Bishops', 9-20.

only surviving register of the most important of them, the abbey of St Mary's in Leicester, does not record the address clauses of the charters it lists.⁵² Since this imbalance might affect calculation of episcopal importance and involvement in the county it has been allowed for here.

Historically, relations between the bishops of Lincoln and the Beaumont family, the dominant landholders in the county, like those between the bishops of Chester and the earl of Chester, were difficult. Lincoln had burgesses in the town and the manor of Knighton just outside it in desmesne.⁵³ They provided the basis for the episcopal presence in the county symbolised in St Margaret's, the largest and wealthiest church in Leicester. The bishop rather than the town had jurisdiction over his burgesses. Orderic Vitalis described Beaumont policy in the first decades of the twelfth century thus: 'The town of Leicester had four lords: the king, the bishop of Lincoln, Earl Simon and Ivo son of Hugh. The count of Meulan, however, cunningly got a foothold there, the share of Ivo, who was castellan and sheriff and farmed it for the king, and with the king's aid and his own cunning brought the whole town under his control.'⁵⁴ By 1135 the bishop was the only landholder in the town apart from the earl. David Crouch has shown how Earl Robert (the count's son) began to move against the bishop's rights in Knighton in the 1120s and did so decisively after the arrests in 1139. Robert's general aim was '... increasing his hegemony over his *civitas*...', an ambition which extended to the county as a whole. In the north-west he founded Garendon with the same purpose in mind. Crouch has made clear that within Leicestershire the king was irrelevant to Earl Robert after 1141.⁵⁵

The bishops and, as noted above, their archdeacons hardly appear in the surviving evidence from the county. Bishop Alexander confirmed the foundation of Garendon

⁵² On these problems, see Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 15.

⁵³ Crouch, 'Earls and Bishops' for what follows.

⁵⁴ *OV*, vi, 18-20.

⁵⁵ Crouch cites the issue of only one royal charter as evidence of this. A second, a confirmation for Leicester Abbey, also exists. The editors of the *Regesta* date it to 1143x1154 suggesting it is likely to be later rather than earlier within this range. It might be seen as recognising the extent of Robert's

in 1133 and issued a more general confirmation for Leicester abbey during the civil war.⁵⁶ The only other surviving connection between him and the earl was in the dispute over Knighton. Robert de Chesney as archdeacon makes no appearance in the surviving sources whereas, as was noted above, his predecessor had held a prebend of the Beaumont college in the town and his successor was a *familiaris* of the earl. None of his charters issued as bishop for the county can be dated conclusively to Stephen's reign. Of the fifteen that might belong, three deal again with Knighton and the remainder are mainly general confirmations.⁵⁷ However, the bishops did issue charters for Owston, which had been founded by a tenant of Simon II de Senlis and had no connection with Earl Robert, and Leicestershire lands of Daventry (in Northamptonshire).⁵⁸ Out of the twenty-one charters in the largest surviving body of evidence from the period, the register of Garendon, the bishops appear in only three. Two record grants by outsiders and the third, which does record a gift from Earl Robert, dates to very late in the reign.⁵⁹ The register of St Mary's includes only one reference to the bishop and he was not involved in the reform of the secular college there.⁶⁰

The foundation of St Mary's was the occasion of a large gathering at Leicester, but no representative of the diocese was present.⁶¹ Earl Robert granted the abbey all the churches in Leicester except that belonging to the bishop. Pope Eugenius III granted the abbey the right to bury benefactors even if they were excommunicate and to appoint its own priests and vicars to its churches.⁶² Each of these reduced episcopal authority and importance in the town and together they are to be compared with Earl Ranulf II of Chester's alliance with Coventry against the Bishop of Chester. Earl Robert had been excommunicated by Bishop Alexander for seizing Newark castle. By the time that Eugenius III issued his bull both Geoffrey de Mandeville

power in Leicester. Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 80; *RRAN*, iii, no. 436.

⁵⁶ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 29, 39.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 146-8.

⁵⁸ *RA*, ii, no. 313; *Daventry Cartulary*, nos. 667, 697; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, 214-7.

⁵⁹ BL, Lansdowne MS 415, Register of Garendon, fo. 5r, 14r-15v.

⁶⁰ *MA*, vi, pt. 1, 463-8, no. 21.

⁶¹ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 201-2.

⁶² *Papsturkunden in England*, ed. W. Holzmann (3 vols., Göttingen, 1930-52), iii, no. 75.

and Robert Marmion had been buried in unconsecrated ground.⁶³ Earl Robert wanted to control episcopal ecclesiastical activity in the region he considered to be his, when he could not, he reduced and excluded it as far as was possible and attempted to set up an alternative. His famous agreements with Ranulf II earl of Chester and his involvement with Biddlesden in Buckinghamshire, discussed above and below, make clear that he was prepared to recognise and make use of episcopal authority elsewhere.⁶⁴ Its exclusion in Leicestershire must have been a conscious decision on his part.

Edmund King has shown how Earl Robert and Earl Ranulf II of Chester squared off against each other around Mountsorrel in the north-west of the county. Ranulf II was also keen to extend his power around Redmile in that north eastern part of Leicestershire caught between Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. As at Pipewell, in Northamptonshire the honour of Belvoir was his target. Ranulf II claimed Redmile and enfeoffed his tenant Robert Basset there.⁶⁵ At the same time another tenant, Hugh Wake, was trying to assert his rights to Waltham on the Wolds close by.⁶⁶ Ranulf II issued two charters for the abbey of Belvoir which were intended to advertise and secure his rights there. In one of them he admitted that William d'Albini, the rightful holder of the estates, had held the land and made the grant before the war.⁶⁷ One of Ranulf II's charters addressed the bishop and the archdeacon. As at Pipewell, there is no evidence that he got episcopal support and the bishops instead confirmed the actions of William d'Albini.⁶⁸

As King has shown Earl Robert of Leicester founded Garendon on lands held of the Earl of Chester.⁶⁹ One William Gerbert later granted the same land as it had been

⁶³ *RA*, i, no. 283. For Geoffrey, Crouch, *Reign*, 211, for Robert, above, p. 107.

⁶⁴ See, pp. 115, 186-7.

⁶⁵ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 50, 52; Belvoir Cartulary, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 24 (Rutland Manuscripts, vi), 140, 147

⁶⁶ King, 'The Wake Family of Bourne', 173.

⁶⁷ *Charters of the Earls*, nos. 50, 52.

⁶⁸ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 78-9.

⁶⁹ King, 'Mountsorrel and its region', 5, 9. For more detail, see, D. Postles, 'Defensores Astabimus: Garendon Abbey and its Early Benefactors', *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain*, ed. B. Thompson (Stamford, 1999), 97-116.

unjustly taken away from his father and given by Earl Robert. He promised that if he ever got the land back, he would increase the monks' endowment. He also made his grant to Garendon's mother house, Waverley, rather than to the new abbey itself, and thus denied the foundation's legitimacy. William's charter was addressed to the bishop of Lincoln.⁷⁰ The Earl of Chester's men generally addressed bishops no more often than their lord did, and Garendon charters rarely included him. In this case, only the particular circumstances meant that William's charter would include the bishop. He and the Earl of Chester were the victims. William could not approach the local secular authorities and probably not the king either. The bishop was his only option. The text also implies that William did not expect to get his land back in the near future; he was, perhaps, registering his claim with the only impartial local authority which would be able to act on the ending of the civil war.

Patterns of episcopal appearances in Leicestershire charters parallel those elsewhere in the Midlands. All those involved in the civil war considered the bishop to have some degree of authority. Those seeking to extend their own power either tried to exclude him or, if they were still only tenuously holding what they wanted, attempted to manipulate his power for their own benefit. Victims turned to the bishop. In this case, Earl Ranulf II's men were among them. Leicester, like Cheshire, is exceptional in that one magnate completely dominated it. Crouch has compared the aims of such men with their activity in Normandy. For him, they wanted to create consolidated territories semi-autonomous of the king. In Leicestershire, Cheshire and Warwickshire by focussing on particular foundations they tried the same in the ecclesiastical sphere.

⁷⁰ Register of Garendon, fo. 15. Cf Malcolm IV's actions at Sawtry in Huntingdonshire, p. 172.

7.3. Oxfordshire

In 1135 the bishop was one of the most important landholders in Oxfordshire. Thame and Dorchester gave him a considerable presence in the south of the county and Banbury dominated its northern edge. Bishop Alexander would build a castle at the latter. A third scattering of estates lay along the north bank of the Thames just before it reached Oxford.⁷¹ Dorchester was no longer the bishops' to intervene in since it had been converted to an Augustinian priory, but estate management was vigorous at Thame and Banbury. Fully a quarter of the bishops' knights were enfeoffed on these estates.⁷² Bishops also held an important place in the spiritual life of the county. As well as their own foundations at Dorchester and Thame, they were patrons of Eynsham and Robert d'Oilly consulted bishop Alexander when he regularized Oseney c. 1129.⁷³ Thame was founded in response to the failure of a lay attempt at foundation and to provide for its monks.⁷⁴ Oseney later saw the bishops of this period as useful inclusions in forgeries.⁷⁵ More generally, Oxfordshire was a central focus of southern England and Oxford itself the hub of a communications network and the site of an important castle. There were extensive royal estates in the county and hunting lodges at Clarendon and Woodstock. Henry I and Stephen were both in Oxfordshire a great deal.⁷⁶ Before 1139 Bishop Alexander was regularly involved in royal government.⁷⁷ Episcopal importance in the various

⁷¹ *DB*, 154a, 155a-d; Bates, *Remigius*, 8-10, 21.

⁷² *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 25, 232, 251; *VCH*, Oxfordshire, ii, 4; Amt, *Accession*, 11, 55.

⁷³ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 26.

⁷⁴ *The Thame Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter, Oxford Record Society, 25-6 (2 vols., 1947-8), i, nos. 1, 5; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 58.

⁷⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H.E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 89-91, 98-8, 101 (6 vols., 1929-36), i, nos. 1, 2, 40; iv, nos 17-18; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 53. For Oseney, see, D.Postles, 'The foundation of Oseney abbey', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 53 (1980), 242-4; idem, "'Patronatus et advocatus noster": Oseney abbey and the Oilly family', *Historical Research*, 60 (1987), 100-02.

⁷⁶ *Pipe Roll 31 Henry I*, ed. J. Hunter, Record Commission (London, 1831); *VCH*, Oxfordshire, i, 436-7; H.E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1936), 90-1; Amt, *Accession*, 64. For royal itineraries: *RRAN*, ii, pp. xxii-xxiii; iii, pp. xxxix-xliv. Stephen was in Oxfordshire: Jan. 1136, Apr. 1136, Nov. 1137, Jan. 1139, Jun. 1139, Oct. 1139, Jan. 1140, Jun. 1142, Sep-Dec 1142, 1145, summer 1146, 1149 (twice), 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154.

⁷⁷ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 367, 627, 636, 638-9, 649.

spheres of life in the county on the eve of the civil war is most apparent in the foundation of Godstow nunnery in 1139. The entire court was present as Alexander dedicated the new monastery and he was among its most generous benefactors; only the archbishop of Canterbury gave more. Bishop Alexander's confirmation charters for the new abbey are his most prolix and extensive.⁷⁸

It is odd then, that the bishop almost completely disappears from the county from 1139 onwards.⁷⁹ He appears in one of each of Godstow's, Oseney's, and Sandford's and two of each of Eynsham's and St Frideswide's charters from this period.⁸⁰ The Oseney charter was issued by Henry of Winchester as legate in 1142 and the St Frideswide's ones (from a total of sixteen) by Robert of Gloucester and the Empress in 1142. The bishop may have been excluded from the former because its d'Oilly and St John patrons had gone over to the Empress, but Stephen's captain in the county did not address him in the grant he made to the abbey either.⁸¹ No patterns of allegiance emerge in use of the bishop in Oxfordshire.⁸² Eynsham was the bishops' own house but the two (out of a total of thirty) charters which do address him were issued from far off by an outsider. It is surprising too that there is no evidence of episcopal involvement in the dispute between St Frideswide's and Oseney over the ownership of the chapel of St George in Oxford castle. Archdeacon Walter was provost of the chapel and was forced to fight for his cause alone but Bishop Robert de Chesney had held a prebend there himself.⁸³

Seven of Bishop Alexander's *acta* relating to the county survive from the civil war

⁷⁸ *RRAN*, iii, no. 366; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 34-5.

⁷⁹ Emilie Amt's is a good political history of the county in these years. For the most part this is assumed in what follows.

⁸⁰ *English Register of Godstow*, iii, no. 848; *Cartulary of Oseney*, i, no. 23; *The Sandford Cartulary*, ed. A.M. Leys, Oxfordshire Record Society, 19, 22 (2 vols., 1938-41), i, no. 127 (fifteen charters date to Stephen's reign); *Eynsham Cartulary*, i, nos. 34, 46; *The Cartulary of the monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford*, ed. S.R. Wigram, Oxford Historical Society, 28, 31 (2 vols., 1895-6), i, no. 24; ii, no. 816.

⁸¹ *Cartulary of Oseney*, i, nos. 62, 62a; iv, no. 19a; vi, no. 1117.

⁸² E.g. *Eynsham Cartulary*. Stephen loyalists: i, nos. 78-81, 85a, 90, 124, 154, 163. Matilda supporters: i, nos. 58, 64-5, 67, 119, 127, 154, 174.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, i, App. 1, 418.

period. One is a confirmation for Bec, and two each for Eynsham and Thame deal with internal, domestic business. One further charter for Eynsham orders Guy de Chainey to return to it what he had taken. The seventh charter is a general confirmation for Osenev which mentions invaders of its lands and offers protection. The eighteen charters of Bishop Robert de Chesney relating to the county which might date to Stephen's reign fall into similar categories.⁸⁴ Nine for Eynsham and Thame deal with internal matters.⁸⁵ Another four for the former are late confirmations, including one for his brother's gift.⁸⁶ Three confirmation charters for Osenev, again including one of his brother's gift, probably date to after the cessation of hostilities.⁸⁷

In Oxfordshire the bishops of Lincoln were neither politically nor socially significant during the civil war period, nor can they be shown to have actively supported the king. Given their conduct in the four northern counties of the diocese this needs some explanation. It might partly be due to distance from Lincoln, but the bishops were very active in the management of their own estates and Robert de Chesney spent time in Oxfordshire before his election. They most certainly possessed the material base to become involved too. Episcopal spiritual authority may have been more affected by distance. Bishop Alexander's concession to Oxfordshire parishes that they need not continue their annual Pentecostal processions to Lincoln might be read as suggesting that the bishops had had some importance in the county's religious life when based in Dorchester, but had lost much of it since.

Emilie Amt has shown that the fighting that took place in Oxfordshire was for the most part 'official' and that there was little private warfare.⁸⁸ This contrasts with the diocese as hitherto discussed and with Chester and it may be that the explanation

⁸⁴ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 115-18, 120, 123-4, 126, 208-10, 232, 259, 261-4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 116-18, 122, 232, 259, 261-2, 264.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 115, 120, 123-4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 208-10.

⁸⁸ Amt, *Accession*, 48-54.

lies here. Most episcopal estates lay to the north of the county, while most monasteries lay to the south. Most of the fighting took place in the latter while the former was relatively peaceful. Amt explained this by the scale of the episcopal estates there and the common allegiance of local magnates to Stephen (although she did not include the bishop among their number). Further, monasteries were keen to receive confirmations from Stephen, Matilda and Duke Henry. This suggests that they are likely to have taken a determinedly neutral stance with regard to the fluctuating politics of the county.⁸⁹ Some also seem to have been happy to accept lands regardless of the rights of the donor.⁹⁰ If the bishops were associated with king and/or government then monasteries might have taken the view that bringing them in would complicate matters.

However, since the bishops were associated with king and government elsewhere in the diocese it is surprising that they were not more engaged on his behalf in the county. Bishop Robert is especially interesting in this respect. Before his promotion Robert was a strong supporter of his brother William, Stephen's commander in Oxfordshire.⁹¹ As was noted above, he was archdeacon of Leicester from 1142 but cannot be shown to have been active there. William probably made Robert a canon of St George's Chapel in the castle he controlled and the future bishop witnessed and consented in several of his brother's grants.⁹² He also witnessed charters of Simon II de Senlis, loyalist earl of Northampton, and Roger d'Oilly, his brother's closest local ally.⁹³ After promotion Robert was much more circumspect. Only one instance has survived of Robert backing William's position. The earliest charter granting the chapel of St George to Oseney is a confirmation by Matilda. It confirms the grant as made by John de St John and Henry d'Oilly, but when Stephen confirmed the same grant in 1149 it was made by William de Chesney and Richard de Camville, Stephen loyalists. Bishop Robert witnessed Stephen's charter

⁸⁹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 643-4, 679-80, 697, 853-4. For St Frideswide's seeing the 1140s as a 'fresh start' despite the civil war, see J. Blair, 'St Frideswide's Monastery: Problems and Possibilities', *Oxoniensia*, 53 (1988), 221-58, 228.

⁹⁰ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 632-3, 875.

⁹¹ For William's career, Amt, *Accession*, 50-3.

⁹² *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, no. 211.

supporting his brother's claim.⁹⁴ Episcopal absence may therefore have been policy.

A number of explanations for this situation are possible. Episcopal anxiety and fear of involvement in high politics is the simplest. It is perhaps possible to differentiate between episcopal thinking on 'official' and 'baronial' warfare because the bishops clearly were active elsewhere. Either they were powerless in such situations or considered it their duty to remain neutral in the circumstances. If the first is the explanation then the bishops deserved the criticism they received, if the second, then their position can be linked to other examples of ambiguity in the relationship between King Stephen and his bishops. It is difficult to be confident of making the correct choice, but it is worth noting in favour of the second that Bishop Robert at least seems to have made a policy decision to withdraw on his election.⁹⁵

7.4. Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire

There is little evidence of episcopal political importance in these two counties during the civil war, so little that they can be discussed as one. Distance may well have been a factor here and the bishops held few estates this far south.⁹⁶ There was also fighting in both Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. In the former the Beauchamp family held Bedford against Stephen from 1141 until 1146.⁹⁷ In the latter Stephen besieged High Wycombe at some time between 1149 and 1153, while in the south of the county Hugh Bolbec, one of the largest local landholders, indulged in raiding church lands.⁹⁸ King Stephen seems to have been keen to control Buckinghamshire since he also set up Hugh de Gournay in the royal

⁹³ *Cartulary of Eynsham*, i, nos. 78, 84, 163. See also, *Thame Cartulary*, no. 5.

⁹⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 632-3.

⁹⁵ David Crouch has recently suggested that Bishop Robert's brother William was considering his position at this late date and may have been looking to secure it regardless of his links to Stephen. If this is the case, then Robert may simply have been acting in the interests of his family as he had hitherto, *Reign*, 239.

⁹⁶ *DB*, 143d-144a, 210b-c.

⁹⁷ *GS*, 184; *RRAN*, iii, no. 487. See Crouch, *Reign*, 206 nt. 50 for discussion.

⁹⁸ *RRAN*, iii, no. 456; *Red Book of the Exchequer*, i, 312; *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson (2 vols, Rolls Series, 1858), ii, 200.

borough of Wendover and issued five charters for Missenden abbey, the major religious house in the county.⁹⁹ However, beyond these facts it is difficult to build up a picture of political life in general in the two counties. Few religious houses existed and those that did were small and have left at best only brief cartularies. In Buckinghamshire the problem is more severe still since the cartulary of the major religious house, Missenden abbey, contains no address clauses.¹⁰⁰ Chronicle references are also rare.¹⁰¹

Even so, episcopal political significance still seems to have been minimal. Bishop Robert de Chesney is addressed only once in charters surviving from Bedfordshire and issued only four himself.¹⁰² In Buckinghamshire he issued two general confirmation charters and a very late notification of the settlement of a dispute, but no more.¹⁰³ Bishop Alexander appears in and issued more charters for Bedfordshire but most of them can be dated to before the outbreak of hostilities.¹⁰⁴ No civil war charters relating to the county incorporate him. Charters from Harrold Priory, which was solidly backed by loyal supporters of the king, only rarely address the bishop. The same goes for Dunstable.¹⁰⁵ Simon II de Senlis whose Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire charters for the most part address the bishop did not do so in Bedfordshire.¹⁰⁶ Stephen loyalists did not feel the need to address the bishops and the king himself did not expect the bishops to play a political role in either of the two counties. The bishops are addressed in only one wartime and two post war charters of Stephen.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ *VCH*, Buckinghamshire, iii, 113; *RRAN*, iii, nos., 585-90.

¹⁰⁰ *The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey*, ed. J.G. Jenkins, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Record Branch (3 vols, 1938-62).

¹⁰¹ *VCH*, Bedfordshire, ii, 25; J. Godber, *A History of Bedfordshire, 1086-1886* (Luton, 1969), 52. For other studies, G.H. Fowler, 'The Shire of Bedford and the Earldom of Huntingdon', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Publications*, 9 (1925), 23-24.

¹⁰² *Dunstable Cartulary*, no. 126; *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 108-9, 242-3.

¹⁰³ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 171-2, 570.

¹⁰⁴ *Dunstable Cartulary*, nos. 106-8; *Records of Harrold Priory*, ed. G.H. Fowler, *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Publications*, 17 (1935), no. 2.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., *Records of Harrold*, nos. 37, 55-6; *Dunstable Cartulary*, nos. 105-9, 146, 148, 174, 190-3, 242-3, 248-9, 861-2.

¹⁰⁶ 'Honour of Wardon, Potton and Halstead Charters', ed. G.H. Fowler, *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Publications*, 11 (1927), nos. 1a, 1b.

¹⁰⁷ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 683, 745-6, 861-2, 919-20, 960.

Episcopal ecclesiastical involvement was also limited. However, Archdeacons Nicholas of Bedford and David of Buckingham were extremely effective. Both were also integral to local society. David's predecessor and Nicholas held lands in their own right in their respective counties.¹⁰⁸ Both were in regular contact with Lincoln and they acted as their bishops' deputies, but they did so with a great deal of autonomy. They acted too, beyond their minimal institutional duties and seem therefore to have possessed some spiritual authority rooted in their own personalities and office rather than episcopal power. Indeed, in these two counties, while episcopal absence from the sources may be partly explained by effective deputizing, what relevance bishops' had beyond ecclesiastical administration was probably somewhat dependent on the archdeacon's own position.

Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire were too far away for the bishop to be politically or religiously influential for the most part, especially in a civil war context. Relative stability in the two counties may also have limited need for what the bishops could offer. There is no evidence of conflict beyond that mentioned above and the huge Giffard estates may well have acted as something of a 'dead hand' with the earl in Normandy for most of the period. Gilbert earl of Pembroke who held the estates during the civil war had more pressing issues to deal with elsewhere and devoted little attention to Buckinghamshire.¹⁰⁹ Extensive Leicester estates held by powerful local families may also have contributed to regional stability.¹¹⁰ This is borne out to some extent by the fact that in one part of the region bishops were involved.

At Biddlesden in the north west of Buckinghamshire, Robert of Meppershall failed to do service to his lord the earl of Leicester. Earl Robert diseised him and gave his

¹⁰⁸ For Nicholas, *MA*, v, 682-3, no. 2; *ibid.*, vi, 950, no.1; *Dunstable Cartulary*, nos. 106, 108, 161. For David, *BL*, Harleian MS 4714, Biddlesden Cartulary, fo. 1r, *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, no. 371; *RA*, ix, no. 256; *Cartulary of Missenden*, ii, no. 272.

¹⁰⁹ Crouch, *Reign*, 130, 194.

¹¹⁰ The Pinkneys were very keen to support Earl Robert's Biddlesden in its first years, Biddlesden Cartulary, fo. 21r, 258r; *BL*, Harleian Charter 86 C 49; *Red Book of the Exchequer*, i, 317-18. The

land to his steward, Ernald de Bosco.¹¹¹ Ernald, in counsel with the earl, realised that his claim was weak and determined on founding a religious house on the land. This would remove Robert of Meppershall permanently and legitimise his own claims in the region. Crouch noted that Earl Robert gained episcopal confirmation for his actions and put this down to reconciliation with the bishop. Ernald's foundation charter and Earl Robert's confirmation of it both incorporate the bishop in their address clauses. So too do other early de Bosco charters for the abbey.¹¹² Bishop Robert de Chesney gave two early confirmations the second of which pressed the archdeacon to maintain the house's freedom. He also made sure that Robert of Meppershall remitted his claims to the land in his presence.¹¹³

Elsewhere, the bishops appeared in very few Leicester charters and were excluded from Leicestershire. Like Ranulf II of Chester, on occasion Earl Robert must have needed the episcopal authority he was so wary of. In contrast to his response elsewhere, in this instance the bishop backed what he probably knew to be an illegal usurpation of land and therefore a shaky foundation. This is best explained in two ways. Firstly, Earl Robert and Ernald de Bosco offered firm lordship in an area already heavily dominated by Leicester estates and thus strengthened the stability of the region. For this, as in Northamptonshire, the bishop might well have been prepared to overlook inconsistencies. Secondly, it might also be that the bishop was upholding the rights of lordship against Robert of Meppershall. It should not be forgotten that the Chester/Leicester *conventio* incorporated a clause dealing with William de Alneto, a minor baron who had taken advantage of the disruption caused by the tension between the two earls to escape their lordship and make personal gains.¹¹⁴

Turvilles were important honorial barons, see, Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 116-19.

¹¹¹ Land ownership here was still more complex but, luckily, not in relation to this context. BL, Harleian Charter 85 G 48; *MA*, v, 367. For a brief history of the foundation, Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, 79-82.

¹¹² Biddlesden Cartulary, fo. 1; BL, Harleian Charters 84 H 18, 84 H 45; *MA*, v, 367.

¹¹³ *EEA*, 1, Lincoln, nos. 81-4.

¹¹⁴ Stenton, *First Century*, 255-6.

Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire suggest that episcopal authority above and beyond institutional duties and rights had geographical limits. However, even there, semi-autonomous archdeacons integrated into local society maintained ecclesiastical government throughout the civil war. Oxfordshire remains difficult to assess. Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire show that bishops had authority only where local society desired it.

Shropshire in Chester diocese offers a useful contrast to Oxfordshire. Both counties were the only ones in their dioceses where the 'official' civil war dominated politics, but the bishops of Chester were present in the first. Despite their loyalty to Stephen, they had a relationship with the Angevin fitzAlan family, so they too could choose neutrality where it was most effective. Two differences present themselves: Shropshire was relatively peaceful while Oxfordshire was massively disrupted; bishops were looked to in the former but not the latter. Both perhaps help explain the Lincoln bishops' absence from Oxfordshire; partly it was beyond their capabilities, partly regional society did not look to them. Their own neutrality may have been principled, but it may have been irrelevant nevertheless.

This idea that bishops' authority might depend on local desire for it is a useful point for Derbyshire in Chester diocese. There, despite Earl Ranulf's power and Earl Robert de Ferrars' weakness, the latter could appeal to the bishops' authority with some faith. The bishops of Chester possessed some influence in the shire despite their own lack of estates and their enemy's strength because the Ferrars, Mowbray and Peverell families and tenants respected it. Overall, beyond Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire the evidence from the two dioceses and the conclusions that can be drawn from it are remarkably similar. Lincolnshire equates to Staffordshire, Northamptonshire has parallels with it too, and perhaps with the southern section of Warwickshire. Leicestershire is clearly Cheshire and northern Warwickshire. Bishop Roger de Clinton had been Bishop Alexander's archdeacon at Lincoln and his new cathedral at Lichfield, with its chapter drawn from local families, might have been conceived of as a similar centre for local society.

Charter evidence suggests that the bishops of Lincoln, like the bishops of Chester, were important figures in, and possessed of considerable authority in, most of their diocese. The nature of their role and power is more difficult to define given the nature of the evidence. However, Chapters One, Two and Five allow it to be argued that it is more likely to have been based in religious and royal authority than secular strength. There is even less evidence of episcopal private military activity at Lincoln than there is at Chester. Again, if the bishops' did use their material resources, they did so legitimately. Both bishops were closely connected to the king and his government during Stephen's reign, but had also been associated with it in Lincoln for over fifty years by 1135. Bishops Alexander and Robert were both possessed of considerable ecclesiastical power and some spiritual authority. Lincolnshire evidence proves that they were the spiritual fathers to some of their flock and that their cathedral could become a centre for local life. Nevertheless, like the Chester bishops, their authority was not Dalton's, it did not try and broker peace, it tried to hold to the legitimate order. In Northamptonshire it was a political force in its own right used to bolster Earl Simon II de Senlis' position, elsewhere it was politicised by magnates reaction to it. It is difficult to separate episcopal governmental and ecclesiastical authority and motivation because both had similar ends.

PART III
THE BISHOPS AND THE KING

CHAPTER EIGHT

BISHOPS AND ROYAL GOVERNMENT

Historiographically, each of the four bishops of Chester and Lincoln has been considered neutral in the civil war. None witnessed regularly for Stephen and the two new bishops were not king's men but reformed churchmen supposedly elected outwith royal control. The local evidence makes clear that in fact all of them were loyal to Stephen and involved in maintaining government in the shires. Even where local issues dominated, their connections with the king and government still influenced their conduct and the way the political community reacted to them. Part Three will show that this much more positive picture of the association between these bishops and the king and their involvement in politics is true of the episcopacy as a whole.

Chapter Eight reinterprets the royal charter evidence. It describes how historians have hitherto relied on witness list statistics to calculate bishops' relations with the king, explains how this is methodologically flawed and proposes that the address clauses of the same charters are a much more secure resource. It shows how they can be used to make general points about bishops' loyalties and principles and the identity and legitimacy of royal power and, following on from Chapter One and the case study evidence, it emphasises that bishops' appearances in address clauses can be used to illustrate continued episcopal participation in government during the civil war. With Chapter One, it provides a firm evidential basis for Chapter Nine, which outlines how historians have hitherto interpreted events and evidence within a conceptual framework of episcopal political ideology which assumes conflict between Church and State. It shows that an alternative in which principled co-operation is the key element is more valid and re-examines the most important elements of the relationship between King Stephen and the bishops on that basis.

It is worth repeating here some of the caveats set out in the Introduction. Firstly, this is neither to say that the relationship between the king and the bishops was

perfect nor that it was particularly successful. Nevertheless, reality should not detract from the importance of the principles and motives behind it. A better relationship between king and bishops has to entail neither that his control of the Church nor its loyalty to him personally was much stronger than traditionally allowed. If bishops were committed to supporting and maintaining legitimate authority then royal control was less essential, and that commitment could be to the system rather than the person. This is important because it explains the ambiguities in the association between king and bishops apparent in the local, and well known in the national, evidence. Reform did make great strides in England during Stephen's reign and the English Church was becoming more and more part of a European one, but Chapter Nine emphasises that this was not necessarily at the expense of its relationship with the king.

8.1. Charters

Historiographically, the absence of bishops from the attestation clauses of royal charters has been the most significant evidence for their withdrawal from both active allegiance to the king and active participation in politics after the arrests of the bishops. It has also been seen as affecting the legitimacy of Stephen's regime. Bishops witnessed thirty-three of the thirty-nine charters surviving from 1136 and nine from the first half of 1139, but only ten of the thirty or so issued between June 1139 and the Battle of Lincoln.¹ Chroniclers noticed this phenomenon too. William of Malmesbury claimed that at Whitsun 1140 only one bishop attended the king and he a Norman bishop at that, '... the others disliked coming or feared it.'² On occasion witness list statistics have been the sole evidence cited for an individual bishop's association with the king; the fact that Bishop William Turbe of Norwich witnessed only five surviving royal charters has been used as evidence for his

¹ Davis, *King Stephen*, 32, nt. 26; Callahan, 'Arrest', 100, 102-3.

² *HN*, 77.

neutrality.³ David Crouch saw an apparent reduction in the frequency with which the bishops of Salisbury, Lincoln and Ely witnessed royal charters across 1137-1138 as signifying the eclipse of their power and influence at court. J.W. Leedom used a seeming absence in the last years of the reign as the basis for his claim that the church hierarchy joined the cause of Duke Henry. There is no other evidence for either of these propositions.⁴

Analysis of relations between kings and their most important subjects on the basis of attestation statistics is a recognisable theme in Anglo-Norman historiography but in recent years it has come in for some criticism.⁵ Witness lists could be truncated, interpolated, added to, forged, wrongly copied and so on.⁶ Where large numbers attested just where each individual stood in the king's favour was perhaps not at issue. Chester evidence shows that distance and poverty might keep bishops away from the king even in peacetime. Not all present need have witnessed. In an important article Yoshitake showed that at least four bishops who did not appear in the witness lists of any surviving royal charter were at court between the arrest of the bishops and the Battle of Lincoln. However, he did not question the method *per se* and used it himself for the post-1141 period.⁷ Reconsideration has therefore yet to reach Stephen's reign.

After 1139 there was no longer a court for bishops to attend because it quickly became a military household that had to move rapidly and at short notice around the country. This was no place for a bishop, it was very difficult to predict where the

³ Harper Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe', 145.

⁴ Crouch, *Reign*, 93. On that period see below. Ironically, Callahan saw the bishops as returning to Stephen in the last years of the reign, 'Arrest', 108.

⁵ C.W. Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986) and also, C.A. Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility in the Reign of Henry I. The Second Generation* (Philadelphia, 1988). For criticism, see D. Bates review of Hollister, *Albion*, 19 (1987), 591-3, 593 and his 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics. The Prosopography of Britain and France from the tenth to the twelfth centuries*, ed. K.S.B. Keats Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), 89-102, 89-93, 97-8, 100.

⁶ Although D. Greenway, 'Ecclesiastical Chronology: *fasti* 1066-1300', *Studies in Church History*, 11 (1975), 53-60, points to the unlikelihood of late additions to witness lists by this date.

⁷ Yoshitake, 'Arrest', 107-9. Callahan's 'Arrest', is a fervent response to this. Yoshitake actually has five extra bishops but just because Roger de Clinton received two charters granting him the church

court would be at any time and it was increasingly dangerous for clergymen to travel.⁸ In any case, as Chapter One and Part Two have shown, the place of a bishop in a time of civil war and collapse of central government was in his diocese, not at the centre. His duties were to the properties and rights of his own office and church, to his flock, to government there and to the general maintenance of peace. It is also difficult to date Stephen's charters, particularly those which might have been issued after the arrest of the bishops.⁹ Far fewer were issued during the mid 1140s than either before or after. Further, the majority of 'charters' issued by the Anglo-Norman kings were writs or writ charters and usually had only very few or even lone witnesses. Attestors were most often members of the household and/or the administration.¹⁰ Most of Stephen's wartime charters were of this type, but Callahan did not recognise the distinction. He contrasted the aftermath of the arrest of the bishops with several charters issued later in the reign which did have numbers of episcopal witnesses. These last were substantial documents issued on an important occasion or on issues of great significance.¹¹

Investing the presence or absence of bishops in witness lists with symbolic importance as signifying a withdrawal of ecclesiastical sanction for royal power is also difficult to justify. English charter scholarship has long emphasised the prosaic nature of attestation clauses of writs and writ charters of this period.¹² Norman evidence offers a historiographical parallel. In early ducal Normandy, '.... as the perception of ducal authority declined redactions of charters turned from models which emphasised the authority of the duke to those which focussed on the

of Wolverhampton does not imply attendance. Roger's charters are, *RRAN*, iii, nos. 452-3.

⁸ *GS*, 42, 104; *HN*, 70-2.

⁹ A problem Callahan recognised but failed to address, 'Arrests', 102.

¹⁰ *Royal Writs in England from the Conquest to Glanvil*, ed. R.C. van Caenegem, Selden Society, 77 (1959) 147; T.A.M. Bishop, *Scriptores Regis* (Oxford, 1960), 2-3; P. Chaplais, 'The Seals and Original charters of Henry I', *EHR* 75 (1960), 260-75, 266; idem, *English Royal Documents. King John - Henry VI* (Oxford, 1971), 4-7.

¹¹ Callahan, 'Arrest', 108. For example, *RRAN*, iii, no. 183 is a large traditional confirmation of an important manor to Chichester cathedral; no. 402 is a grant of two hundreds to an abbey; and nos. 511-2 are charters issued by the king and queen at London to Holy Trinity priory confirming major gifts of land. Other charters cited, nos. 300, 513, 760.

¹² *Royal Writs*, 158; R. Mortimer, 'The Charters of Henry II: What are the criteria for authenticity?', *ANS*, 12 (1990), 119-34, 121-2.

testimony of witnesses.’¹³ However, as ducal power grew and as charter issue became more a matter of routine administration so, as David Bates has shown, the charged symbolism of attestations was reduced. He applied this specifically to the Norman episcopacy. Marie Faroux had interpreted a gradual decline in the attestations of bishops as a decline in their political importance as ducal power grew and changed, but Bates showed that in fact this was due to a diplomatic change in the charters themselves. As charters developed witness list became smaller and less significant. Nevertheless, bishops’ relative absence from them was of little practical significance because they remained fundamental to ducal power and politics.¹⁴ Whatever diplomatic changes were occurring in Normandy had already progressed much further in England.¹⁵

Bishops should not be expected in the attestation clauses of Stephen’s charters, and therefore in practical and symbolic terms their absence should not be over-stressed. Attestations to royal charters are not the place to look for the relationship between the bishops and the king through the civil war; Chapters Three to Seven have made it clear that that dynamic, whatever it was, existed at a local and regional level. In shifting attention from witness lists to address clauses, the focus is shifted from centre to locality. Chapter One described how historians have passed over bishops in Henry I’s charters and the same is true of Stephen’s, but the situation is made even more complex because some have questioned the substance of the latter’s address clauses *per se*.¹⁶

Graeme White has stated of Stephen’s charters that ‘Address clauses are only one form of evidence, the details and contents of their formulae being of less importance to the chancery and beneficiaries than the instructions they conveyed.’¹⁷

¹³ C. Potts, ‘The Early Norman Charters: A new perspective on an old debate’, *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 2 (Stamford, 1992), 25-40, 38.

¹⁴ D. Bates, ‘Le rôle des évêques dans l’élaboration des actes ducaux et royaux entre 1066 et 1087’, *Les évêques normands*, 103-115, *passim*; Prosopographical Study’, 95.

¹⁵ See D. Bates, ‘The Earliest Norman Writs’, *EHR*, 100 (1985), 266-84, for comparison of the two traditions.

¹⁶ Crouch, *Reign*, 87.

¹⁷ White, ‘Continuity in Government’, 127. White’s are the only extended discussions of the subject

He and others have doubted the capacity and the willingness of those who appeared in address clauses to fulfil the king's requirements and, indeed, the extent to which the king expected them to do so. Nevertheless he relied on address clauses to calculate the extent to which Stephen's earls served as his regional deputies.¹⁸ Confusion and a lack of a clear understanding of the significance of the address clause is well illustrated by the appearance of William fitzAlan, pre-war sheriff of Shropshire and prominent Angevin supporter, in a charter of the Empress. White understood William to be a loyal sheriff with considerable powers. Marjorie Chibnall, on the other hand, concluded that William did not actually hold an office in the shire and that he had only a very limited capacity to fulfil the Empress's wishes.¹⁹ This is perhaps a unique problem produced by the civil war, but Stephen's reign also offers a unique opportunity - the comparative study of three issuers of ostensibly royal charters. The Shropshire evidence outlined above hints at how valuable this might be.

Two hundred and forty-one of Henry I's charters are addressed generally, usually using a variation of the formula, '*H. rex Angl' ... archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, comitibus, baronibus, vicecomitibus, ministris et omnibus fidelibus suis Francis et Anglicis totius Anglie salutem*'.²⁰ Nine hundred and ninety-eight are addressed to officials either royal or local and, of these, four hundred and seventy-seven include bishops. The majority of these are of the writ charter or writ type; they notify or mandate or do both. Stephen's charters follow a similar pattern. One hundred and eighty-seven are addressed generally, four hundred and seventeen are addressed specifically and of these two hundred and eleven include bishops. Fully

and are therefore often referred to in what follows.

¹⁸ White, 'Continuity', 125, 133.

¹⁹ Ibid., 129; M. Chibnall, 'The Charters of the Empress Matilda', *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, ed. G. Garnett and J. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994), 276-98, 287.

²⁰ Eg. *RRAN*, ii, no. 1875. The following figures use the *RRAN* series as a basis. New charters published by N. Vincent are differently weighted. Of 12, 6 are generally addressed, 2 generally to lay officials, 1 to an individual and 3 to bishops and other officials, 'New charters of king Stephen with some reflections upon the royal forests during the Anarchy in Kent', *EHR*, 114 (1999), 899-920, App. 1.

half of Stephen's writ charters and writs address at least one bishop specifically.²¹ Those charters that are generally addressed fall into three main categories, two being those issued to Normandy and to other continental interests and the more extensive general confirmations.²² A third, rather catch-all, group can be formed from those charters that made important statements of policy or were related to subjects or grants of greater significance. The Oxford Charter of Liberties, the restorations of property to churches which followed it and the remorseful return of the church of Wolverhampton to Worcester after it had been granted to Chester are so addressed.²³ These charters confirmed actions which advertised Stephen's piety and understanding of his responsibilities with regard to the Church. Important and large grants to churchmen and laymen, appointments of new abbots and confirmations of the inheritance of powerful laymen are also generally addressed.²⁴

A series of charters to Miles of Gloucester from 1136 and 1137 might be used to illustrate this. Three charters issued at Reading in January 1136 which granted Miles much and were part of the setting up of the king's relationship with him are addressed generally, are reasonably extensive and are well witnessed. A charter issued at Fareham within the next year which detailed a single grant to Miles is addressed only to the relevant bishop and shire officials. It is shorter and has only three witnesses. A further charter confirmed land received by Miles from the bishop of Exeter: it is a brief writ addressed to the relevant bishop. This was standard practice.²⁵ The general address clause was then a formula which was applied in relatively specific circumstances in Stephen's charters.

²¹ The few remaining charters are addressed to the specific individuals involved.

²² *RRAN*, iii, for Normandy and the continent, e.g. nos. 67, 69, 70, 74, 194, 204, 280, 327, 576, 598, 608-9, 749; general confirmations, e.g. nos. 144, 189, 203, 335, 338, 399, 427, 583, 616, 696, 797, 798, 866, 921, 928.

²³ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 271, 341, 945-949, 969.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, e.g. nos., 452, 477, 481, 489-90, 633, 655, 659, 695, 944; laymen, 174-5, 312, 386-8, 577, 764; Stephen's charters to Geoffrey de Mandeville, 273, 276; important grants to William de Roumare as earl of Lincoln, 493-4; appointments of new prelates or confirmations to them, 153, 169, 358, 455, 760, 895-6; confirmations of foundations or grants to new houses, 300, 366, 460, 585, 615, 873.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, nos., 386-390. For similar features in Normandy, see Bates, 'Earliest Norman Writs',

However, this was not the case in the charters of the Empress Matilda and Duke Henry. Of sixty-eight charters of the Empress which are included in the *Regesta*, which were issued during the reign of Stephen and deal with English subjects, forty-one are generally addressed, twenty-seven address either local officials or individuals and of these only nine address bishops (four of them the bishop of Lincoln).²⁶ Those individuals addressed outside Matilda's brief period of control of the kingdom are just that; they cannot be shown to have held positions in local government and are, for the most part, known Angevin loyalists.²⁷ Of sixty-five charters, within the same constraints, issued by Duke Henry all but ten were generally addressed. Of those ten, two were addressed to bishops and one was a letter asking for Archbishop Theobald's advice.²⁸ Two were mandates to individuals, an archdeacon and the abbot of Reading, and one a mandate to the men of Bedfordshire.²⁹ The others were addressed to individuals loyal to the duke's cause.³⁰ In both cases, the use of the general address clause is indiscriminate across charters, writ charters and writs.

Marjorie Chibnall used the address clauses of the Empress's charters to reconstruct her power and status. During Matilda's time as Lady she addressed local officials in regions only nominally under her control: she understood her writ to run everywhere. She only addressed such officials during the brief period in 1141-1142 when she was in power. Of the twenty-seven of her charters addressed specifically, twenty-five were issued in this period.³¹ Chibnall did not comment on the presence or absence of bishops in these charters but that pattern parallels the more general

273.

²⁶ *RRAN*, iii, 190, 368, 377, 644, 648, 697-8, 701, 897.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, nos., 316a, Miles earl of Gloucester; 378, 461, 820, William fitzAlan (see further comment below); 647, Robert d'Oilli; 597, Roger earl of Warwick; 791, John fitz Gilbert and William of Salisbury; 794, Duke Henry; 854, Ralph de Querceto.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, nos., 364, 420, 707.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, nos., 705, 709-10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 88, Rouen; 365, Eustace fitzJohn and Jocelin the castellan; 708, Roger of Berkeley; 901, Roger earl of Hereford and the burgesses of Gloucester.

³¹ Exceptions: *RRAN*, iii, nos., 88 (1150-1151) at Rouen with her son on the foundation of a new house at Wallingford, addressed to the constable of Wallingford etc.; 461 (c. 1148-1151) probably, 1148, to William fitzAlan and his brothers.

one. Every charter in which the Empress addressed a bishop dates to this period.³²

Where the king and the Empress or duke issued charters on the same subject the most noticeable difference is often in the address clause: where the king addressed a bishop or at the least a lay official, his rival did not. Matilda addressed four charters to the bishop of Lincoln, all issued during her time in power. Two of these are duplicated by charters of the king in which he too addressed the bishop. In one of the latter cases, a series of charters to Godstow abbey, a further similar charter issued by the Empress in 1143 did not address the bishop.³³ In a further pair of duplicate charters the king granted the 60s. alms of Peverel the priest to Oseney Abbey (1139-1140) addressing the bishop of Lincoln and the officials of Oxfordshire, while the empress made the same grant (1141-2) with a general address.³⁴ The duke too issued duplicate charters. The king included the bishop of Lincoln in the address clause of a charter confirming a grant of land to Thame abbey, 1139x1153. The duke confirmed the same in December 1153 in a generally addressed charter. Similarly, the king granted two hides to Cirencester abbey between May 1152 and August 1153, addressing the bishop of Winchester. The duke confirmed those two hides, as granted by Roger earl of Hereford, between April and May 1153 at Gloucester, but did not address the bishop. During the same period he confirmed a grant by Rainald de Coches to Gloucester abbey in a generally addressed charter. Stephen's confirmation, which cannot be dated more closely than 1139x1153, addressed the bishop of Worcester. Even after peace had been settled, the duke did not always address the relevant officials. When he granted a mint to Lichfield recognising Stephen's earlier grant and charter, his address clause was general while the king's included the local officials of Staffordshire.³⁵ In the Chester and Lincoln evidence, the same general pattern

³² Chibnall, 'Charters', 285-7; see also *Royal Writs*, 59; Chaplais, 'Seals and Original Charters', 266.

³³ *RRAN*, iii, nos., 368, 644, 648, 697. Duplicates: 367-8; 643-4. 2nd charter of the empress, 367-8, 370. Chibnall makes an important point about duplicates as drafts, but this is unlikely here, 'Charters', 281.

³⁴ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 627, 630.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, nos., 874-5, Stephen's charter does not mention the donor, Duke Henry's does. Geoffrey de Iveto was an Angevin supporter, it may be that Stephen had ignored him on purpose. If there was

appears where there are no duplicates. Charters of the king address the bishop, those of the Empress and duke do not.

Neither address clauses nor episcopal presence were formulaic. Royal charters can be understood as involving three different parties: the king, the beneficiary and the addressees. In the case of those documents produced in the royal chancery, the king expected that his authority would be recognised and accepted by those he addressed. Beneficiaries would not have included the addressee in charters they produced themselves or sought from the king if they did not understand, firstly the actual local power whether practical or abstract of the addressee, secondly the right of the issuer to command or notify the addressee and, thirdly the willingness of the addressee to recognise that right. In terms of the bishops then, the address clauses of royal charters show that they were seen by the king and by locals as holding some type of power in the localities and that that power was intimately associated with the king. This authority and connection was as important in the place of the bishop in the regions as its more practical manifestations.

Bishop Alexander of Lincoln was addressed five times in charters for Lincolnshire between 1139 and 1141. He and his successor Robert in four of the ten charters issued for Northamptonshire and eight of the twelve for Huntingdonshire for the civil war period.³⁶ Nigel, bishop of Ely, once reconciled, witnessed at least four royal charters and possibly up to another nine; he was also addressed four times.³⁷ Bishop Robert de Sigillo of London witnessed only six, but was addressed fifteen or sixteen times.³⁸ William Turbe, bishop of Norwich witnessed five charters, but was

conscious omission of the donor from the first charter then the bishop was complicit; 192-3; 361-2; 457-8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 125, 290, 605-6, 655 and probably also 879 for Alexander in Lincolnshire. Nos. 613, 658-61, 878-96 for Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, witnessing, nos. 171, 183, 760-1, and dated only to the limits of the reign itself, nos. 671, 673, 758-9, 879-81, 891, 936; addressed, nos. 138-9, 251, 842 (note that the index of *RRAN*, iii, does not include the first three). For his reconciliation with the king, no. 267.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, witnessing, nos. 183, 300, 402, 760 and unnamed, 170-1; addressed, 511, 512-3 (by the queen), 535, 541 (by the queen), 542, 555, 565 and unnamed, 223, 501, 503 (by the queen), 504, 507-10, 520, 761, 769, 877, 915-6, 932. Vincent, 'New Charters', no. 10, is dated 1141x54. Bishop Richard de Belmeis II, elected 1152, appears in only a few of the king's charters, he witnessed twice,

addressed in nine and probably ten.³⁹ These eastern bishoprics were most likely to be influenced by the king but, even so, the first two have traditionally been considered as outside the range of government and neutral and the last two still neutral even though they lay well within regions where Stephen's writ ran. The only exception to the domination of address over attestation is Bishop Hilary of Chichester. Only two charters addressed to him survive but he witnesses fourteen.⁴⁰ His loyalty to Stephen is unquestioned, and it is also worth noting that royal government was at its strongest around his diocese. The continued association of these bishops with the king is much clearer in the address than the attestation clause. In each of these cases too, looking beyond the bishop in the royal charters shows continued good relations between king and cathedral. Lincoln has been discussed. Ely received nine charters, Chichester and London four and Norwich one from the king during the civil war period.⁴¹

The contrast with those dioceses in or on the edge of Angevin domination is striking. The bishops of Bath, Exeter, Hereford and Worcester were not addressed by the Empress or the duke during the civil war.⁴² Only Bath was addressed during Matilda's brief moment of power.⁴³ He witnessed two and Exeter four of Stephen's charters.⁴⁴ Bath and Worcester received grants from the king in the midst of the hostilities.⁴⁵ There are only a very few of Stephen's charters extant for the region and contrasting address and attestation figures is impossible, but these dioceses might be compared with Chester, where, although only very few royal charters are

nos. 750, 866 and was addressed three or four times, *RRAN*, iii, nos. 137, 232; Vincent, 'New Charters', no. 1 and possibly no. 10.

³⁹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 106, 110, 176-7, 229, 234, 401-3 and, given its similarities with no. 401, probably no. 876. An unnamed bishop of Norwich appears in two charters dateable only to the limits of the reign, nos. 289, 291.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, addressed, nos. 448-9. No. 181, is addressed to an unnamed bishop of Chichester and can only be dated, 1135x1154. Witnessing, nos. 171, 183, 221-2, 272, 402, 511-3, 633, 760, 958.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, iii, Ely, nos. 261-9; Chichester, nos. 182-5; London, nos. 562-6; Norwich, no. 618.

⁴² Even Gilbert Foliot witnessed only one charter, and he also witnessed one of the king's, *ibid.*, iii, nos. 183, 867.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 190.

⁴⁴ Bath: *ibid.*, iii, nos. 402, 958. Exeter: nos. 402, 511-2, 991. Not including the treaty of 1153, no. 272. Both were addressed in no. 593, dated 1138x1145.

⁴⁵ Bath: *RRAN*, iii, no. 784. Worcester: no. 969, and possibly, nos. 966-7.

extant, their relationship with the bishop is clear and is strengthened by the local evidence. Only in the case of Bishop Jocelin of Salisbury is there evidence of regular communication with the Angevins. Even he was addressed in four but witnessed only one of Stephen's charters.⁴⁶ His links with the king were stronger than has been accepted. However, he witnessed two of Matilda's charters issued in Normandy and one of her son's in England and was addressed by them acting together.⁴⁷ These and another eight charters involving the bishop or his cathedral were the product of dispute over possession of Devizes castle; they were the product not of co-operation but hostility. Bishop Jocelin was the only bishop to have been dominated by the proximity of the empress into recognising her authority but he did so grudgingly.⁴⁸

For the most part, the Empress and later the duke cannot not have had the right to address the episcopacy, nor were they perceived as a legitimate source of authority by them. This was true even of the West Country which had long been under their control. This confirms the connection between episcopal and royal authority. An increased use of the general address clause in royal charters has often been noted of the mid twelfth century; many of Henry II's charters, writ charters and writs are so addressed.⁴⁹ It has been explained as a return towards the diplomatic of the more traditional charters and diplomas or to continental practice. Chibnall saw the increasing domination of this form of address in the charters of the empress as evidence of a more disciplined control of diplomatic as her administration improved.⁵⁰ Stephen's charters did not 'develop' in such a way, and Matilda's charters could still be addressed specifically where her status was recognised. Therefore the development may be better explained as originating in the inability of the Empress and the duke to address local officials with any expectation that their

⁴⁶ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 4, 5, 12, 863 and 183 (not including the 1153 treaty).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 88, 168, 206, 461.

⁴⁸ This leaves the bishops of Canterbury, Durham, Rochester, York and Winchester. The first and last had exceptional relationships with the king, both Durham and York were heavily disrupted and few royal charters for them or for Rochester have survived.

⁴⁹ Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19, notes the change but gives no reason for it; *Royal Writs*, 153, 162; Chibnall, 'Charters', 278, 287.

charters would be accepted.

Bishops' presence in address clauses of royal charters contrasts with their absence from the witness lists of the same. Their absence from charters issued by the duke and the Empress suggests their continued connection with the king and recognition of that within the wider political community. It implies too that Angevin government lacked legitimacy even in those areas in which it was most secure. It can be used to show that bishops were also more active in government than has hitherto been allowed.

8.2. Government

Between 1136 and 1139 bishops can be shown to have played the same role in government that they had in Henry I's reign. Two charters of Belvoir priory offer an example. Adelia Bigot was ordered to restore to the monks their tithe from Bradley in Suffolk. If she did not do it then Aubrey de Vere would but, in a second charter, it was actually Everard bishop of Norwich who was ordered to make sure that the tithe was returned and that no more claims were made on the subject for lack of his justice.⁵¹ In 1138 the bishop of Bath was ordered to carry out a settlement made in his court in the time of Henry I; if he did not the king's justiciar was to step in.⁵² Around 1139-40, the bishop of Lincoln was among those informed of the rights of Eynsham abbey to a Sunday market; if these were broken, a fine of ten pounds was to be levied.⁵³ A similar continued involvement in local administration is visible at Wymondham priory.⁵⁴ The granting of a hundred to Romsey abbey at a rent payable to the sheriff was addressed to the bishop as well as the sheriff. Other exemptions from judicial or financial elements of the sheriff's

⁵¹ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 82-3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, iii, no. 954.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 293.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 974.

control also addressed him.⁵⁵ Transfers of property to laymen and between churchmen and laymen and not just simple grants to the Church did so too.⁵⁶ Not only was there a continued relationship between the two powers; the bishop retained his position of importance within the shire. Indeed, at both Chester and Lincoln episcopal jurisdiction and influence continued to be increased. At a local level too, then, the office of bishop continued to be intimately related to kingdom and king.

Continued episcopal presence in address clauses is evidence of involvement in what ‘continuity’ there was in local government in Stephen’s reign after 1139. Royal government continued to operate within the normal institutional framework throughout the civil war, albeit within a much reduced geographical area and with a much reduced effectiveness. White set out well the constraints within which episcopal activity in this field must be considered. He saw: ‘... a picture of a king continuing to govern, and of loyal administrators answering to him in the centre and in the localities, but also of frustration, disruption and obstruction at every turn.’ Where the king’s government continued to operate, ‘... even here, in eastern, southern and south Midland England, while royal grants and confirmations were sought, writs issued, courts held, coins minted and revenues collected, the king’s administration was often ineffective.’⁵⁷ In the South East, Hilary of Chichester was involved in the same fashion and on the same wide range of issues as bishops had been under Henry I. His administrative role and his loyalty to the king have long been recognised. Under Henry II, he would be appointed sheriff in 1154 and royal justice, 1155-7.⁵⁸ It is with other bishops that illustration of their role in government entails reassessment of their careers. Both Bishop Nigel of Ely and Bishop Robert of London were reconciled to the king and returned to their traditional governmental roles.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 879, 881, 965, 986, 990.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 307a, 925.

⁵⁷ White, *Restoration and Reform*, 36, see also 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 67, 88; *RRAN*, iii, nos. 448-9; Mayr-Harting, ‘Hilary, Bishop of Chichester’, 213-5.

⁵⁹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 138. No. 251, the granting of an exemption of thirteen and a half hides from

As in Henry I's reign, bishops were addressed on secular as well as on ecclesiastical issues. Again too, even royal confirmation charters addressing the bishop are evidence of his wider power and responsibility rather than purely ecclesiastical issues. Maintenance of such confirmations was potentially complex. Among them survives a charter which explicitly links centre and locality by informing the addressees that any other writs which disagreed with the present one should be ignored. Nevertheless, in order to avoid over-reliance on the ecclesiastical for evidence, what follows will be limited to the activity of bishops in secular government.

An order that the priory of Montacute hold its lands in peace across several counties is addressed to the respective bishops as well as to lay officials. Full justice was to be done to the priory and the king was not to hear claims of injustice.⁶⁰ The only charter addressed to the bishop of Chester through the period of hostility informs him of the foundation of a hermitage, but it also states that the new hermitage was to be free from secular exactions.⁶¹ The bishop of London was not addressed in early post-arrest charters dealing with issues in London, but did appear later; he was addressed on the granting of tithes from the farm of the city of Colchester to the abbey there; on an exchange of land and on the restoration of land seized by Geoffrey de Mandeville to Holy Trinity in London.⁶² A confirmation of the manor of Wrabness in Essex to the abbey of Bury St Edmunds addressed to the bishop and to the local lay officials insists that this should be the case regardless of other writs.⁶³ Newly published charters, confirm this continued role. The bishop was informed of grants of assarts and a fair to Barking and St Osyth's respectively, which were not to be impleaded.⁶⁴

danegeld, hidage, murdrum and so on was addressed to the bishop as well as to the (unnamed) officials of Cambridgeshire.

⁶⁰ *RRAN*, iii, no. 593.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 570.

⁶² *Ibid.*, iii, nos. 137, 218-19, 221-3, 507, 535 and on less explicitly governmental issues, e.g. 501, 503-04, 509-13, 515, 520, 538, 541-2, 555.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, iii, 769.

⁶⁴ Vincent, 'New charters', App. 1, nos., 1, 10.

At Norwich, where the bishop is usually considered as reformed, neutral and uninvolved, he was addressed on a wide variety of subjects. Some issues were mainly ecclesiastical, such as a church being held in peace. But even here there was perhaps a wider meaning, since the beneficiary of the charter was to be protected in its rights.⁶⁵ On occasion involvement in the settling of a dispute is clearer still. The bishop and the sheriff of Suffolk were ordered to make sure that a priest held a church of the abbey of St Benet's, Holme, by the same tenure as his father had.⁶⁶ In 1153 the bishop was addressed in a confirmation of an exchange which was to stand until a case could be settled properly.⁶⁷ He was also informed of a grant of fairs and a market and the penalties for abusing them.⁶⁸ There is a famous case of the operation of a royal court of justice within the garden of the palace of the bishop of Norwich.⁶⁹ Negative evidence, cases where the right of the bishop and secular officials to become involved is forbidden, is also useful. The abbot of Ramsey was to hold a particular piece of land in demesne and not to be impleaded, and if the heirs of a layman laid claim to a manor granted to Bury St Edmund's, that claim was not to be heard by the bishop, '*...ne amplius respondeant inde Rog(ero) filio Ric(ardi) filii Walch(elini) neque heredibus suis neque alicui aliter qui quicquam inde clamet pro aliquo brevi quod inde veniat*'.⁷⁰

Lincoln evidence illustrates the extent to which the undoubted local activity of the bishops could be (although it did not have to be) associated with the royal government. Again some of the evidence is negative. The bishop was ordered to refrain from impleading the abbey of St Frideswide's in Oxford save in the king's presence: *nisi coram me, quia de propria elemosina mea sint*.⁷¹ A charter for Reading emphasises the importance of its position under his tutelage to those

⁶⁵ *RRAN*, iii, no. 713.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 401.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 177.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, no. 118, 291.

⁶⁹ *English Lawsuits*, i, no. 331; H.M Cam, 'A Shiremoote of king Stephen's reign, 1148-1153'. *EHR*, 39 (1924), 369-71.

⁷⁰ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 670, 769.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, iii, no.650.

ordered to protect its rights to a church.⁷² The bishop was addressed on markets and also on the quitclaim from, and then the grant of, a toll.⁷³ In these and in a charter confirming the rights of the abbey, Thorney, in the borough of Stamford, there was no ecclesiastical need to address the bishop.⁷⁴ A grant of land to the abbey of Newhouse in Lincolnshire from the royal desmesne was to be classed by the addressed officials as still retaining the exemptions applicable to that desmesne.⁷⁵ The priory at Bridlington was to hold the church of Horncastle and to be protected from any contumacious action over it.⁷⁶ Eye priory was to have justice concerning its church at Welbourne: '*Mando vobis quod plenam justiciam faciatis*'.⁷⁷ Again, as well as ecclesiastical issues, those of laymen were also referred to the bishop.⁷⁸ A series of four charters concerning the activities of Thurstan de Montfort show the bishop acting for the king against a powerful lay lord. Stephen ordered Thurstan to re-seise the abbey of Thorney of land he had seized at Wing, the charter ends with a *nisi feceris* clause with the bishop as enforcer. Thurstan did not do as requested and so the bishop received a writ ordering him to take steps. In this instance this was not effective; exactly the same pair of charters for Bishop Alexander's successor survives from a later period in the reign.⁷⁹

Both Lincoln and Norwich might profitably be considered in light of Stephen's earldom policy.⁸⁰ Local evidence from the former suggests that it came nearest to

⁷² Ibid., iii, no. 680.

⁷³ Ibid., iii, nos., 881, 889, 890.

⁷⁴ Ibid., iii, no. 879.

⁷⁵ Ibid., iii, no. 605.

⁷⁶ Ibid., iii, no. 125.

⁷⁷ Ibid., iii, no. 290.

⁷⁸ Ibid., iii, nos. 412-3.

⁷⁹ Ibid., iii, nos. 885-8.

⁸⁰ Stephen's earldoms have been variously interpreted. Warren, *Governance*, 92-4, was the first to suggest that they were a principled restructuring of government. Stringer, *Reign*, 52-5 and Crouch, *Reign*, 325-6, follow him. The thesis is spelt out in most detail in the last, 84-90. None of these would suggest that many of the earls actually fulfilled this role. Davis had seen their creation as planned, but at best misguided and at worst foolish, and as engendered by a collapse in government, *King Stephen*, 30-3, App. 1. Graeme White is the only modern historian who holds to the older interpretation of Round (*Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 273) that for the most part earldoms were symbolic creations. He is also the only historian to have carried out a really extensive survey into the actual conduct of these figures through the civil war, 'Continuity', 124-30, 133-5, and *Restoration and Reform*, 55-64. There is, of course, an extensive literature on the Anglo-Norman earl, for which see White in the first instance.

Durham in that respect and that it had relations with the local secular power similar to some continental bishoprics. It also shows that the king addressed the bishops more often than the local earls. At Norwich too the king upgraded the bishop's judicial and military power and it was used in the interests of the kingdom and region rather than for private gain. Castle service transfers to the diocese and Bury St Edmund's were noted above. Jocelin of Brakelond would have Bishop John of Norwich opposing Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmund's desire to leave England to take the Cross on the grounds that it would not be in the country's best interests and would endanger the security of counties of Norfolk and Suffolk if the two of them were out of the country at the same time.⁸¹ Bury at least played an important part in Stephen's maintenance of power in the region. As at Lincoln and Lichfield the abbot was also granted a mint, three in fact, and Stephen was keen to maintain the abbey's extensive judicial rights even when the case was one of treason against himself. Both prelates had problems with Hugh Bigod, eventually earl of Norfolk, and both would have been in opposition to his claims to the castle; at Bury the tremors from the civil war would still be present long after the end of the reign.⁸²

In both those regions under some form of government and those which can best be understood as without any 'sovereign' authority, the institutions of local government could continue to some extent irrespective of high politics.⁸³ Traditional institutional frameworks continued to provide a space and framework within which disputes might be settled. Crouch interpreted an episode in the Anglo-Norman *Wigmore Chronicle* which took place in a 'grand congregation' as a meeting of the county court, and he is probably correct to do so.⁸⁴ Van Caenegem's catalogue of lawsuits includes a sworn inquest of the men of a vill, a perambulation of bounds, a meeting of a hundred court and the portmanmoot of Oxford.⁸⁵ The

⁸¹ *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*, ed. and trans. H. E. Butler (Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1949), 54.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 65-8; *Feudal Documents from Bury St. Edmund's*, ed. D.C. Douglas (London, 1932), 99.

⁸³ White, *Restoration and Reform*, 14, 17, 55-64.

⁸⁴ *Wigmore Chronicle, MA*, vi, 345; Crouch, 'From Stenton to McFarlane', 191. Crouch also pointed to a general lack of evidence of the actual operation of such courts through this period; there is nevertheless, enough to make the present case.

⁸⁵ *English Lawsuits*, nos. 314, 326, 334 (*RRAN*, iii, no. 547), 336.

continuity of this type of government can also be perceived in the rights coveted by some magnates. Dalton has described how Ranulf II of Chester and William of Aumale aimed to control regions through the local government structure of wapentake centres.⁸⁶ In Lincolnshire and in the West Midlands this led Ranulf into conflict with the bishops. Most clearly in the evidence from the diocese of Chester, bishops and their officials and deputies continued to work within them.

Despite historiographical flagging up of conflict between ecclesiastical and royal law (for which, see Chapter Nine), here too there was continued co-operation. Modern historiography's recognition of the survival of several mutually beneficial jurisdictions through the reign of Henry I was true too of the ecclesiastical court and of Stephen's reign. The *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, representative of the mentality of a working secular clerk of the 1120s or 1130s, assumed the interdependence of the two powers.⁸⁷ Involvement in foundations of, and grants to, monastic houses could be intensely politicised. In a dispute over sanctuary in the diocese of Hereford, the bishop, an Angevin supporter, accepted the king's writ on the subject. Although this case would be moved to the court of the archbishop of Canterbury, its place in the traditional framework of government was recognised.⁸⁸ This case occurred where the king's writ most definitely did not run, but powerful magnates both accepted and did not usurp or override the legitimacy of the traditional system.⁸⁹ The king's own right backed the Church's authority and he raised no objection to the removal of the case to the archbishop's legatine court. Indeed, as far as the *Leges Edwardi* was concerned sanctuary remained legally a process of co-

⁸⁶ P. Dalton, 'William, earl of York and royal authority in Yorkshire in the reign of Stephen', *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 155-65; idem, 'Aiming at the impossible'; idem, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*. Though see Crouch, *Reign*, 160 nt., for caution over such a methodology. Crouch, 'Stenton and Macfarlane', 191, sees the desire to control sheriffs on the part of magnates as evidence of a similar importance of the county court.

⁸⁷ O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace*, 37, 161, 163, 167-75.

⁸⁸ *Historia Pontificalis*, 47-9; *Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, nos. 77, 93-6; Saltman, *Theobald*, 38-43 and, in the context of 'continuity in government', White, *Restoration and Reform*, 16.

⁸⁹ On the *conventio* see King, 'Dispute Settlement'; D. Crouch, 'A Norman *conventio* and bonds of lordship in the middle ages', in *Law and Government*, 299-334. On abbeys, Crouch, *Reign*, 313, citing P. Dalton, 'Politics, patronage and peace: the foundation and endowment of religious houses in northern England in the reign of Stephen', an unpublished conference paper, abstracted in, *Anglo-*

operation between the church and the king.⁹⁰

When three of the knights of Bury St Edmunds were accused of treason against the king, the abbey defended its rights to prosecute them against the royal officials.⁹¹ The royal court decided for the abbey. Luton through the early 1140s saw powerful men attempting to assert their right to appoint to a valuable and strategically placed church. It was the king's court which eventually decided that the case was in the bishop's jurisdiction.⁹² In each case the emphasis lies in co-operation not competition. In this vein, the oft-quoted local case at Stone where Robert de Stafford and the bishop of Chester's representatives combined honorial, royal and ecclesiastical jurisdictions might also be mentioned. This practical co-operation is also how best to approach the relationship between King Stephen and the bishops.

However, episcopal willingness to be associated with, and work with and for, royal government did not extend to the other types of government modern historiography has identified and emphasised.⁹³ Bishops' absence from the Empress's charters for the West Country has already been noted. Beyond the 'sovereign' governments there was a second tier of magnate government which has received a sympathetic press from modern historians. The complaints of churchmen against it have been pooh-poohed. White attacked their sweeping generalisations and Crouch commented that difference lay only in a change from regular to irregular exactions.⁹⁴ There is a general message in the chroniclers that non-royal government was bad government and there is plenty of specific evidence of

Norman Anonymous [the newsletter of the Haskins Society], 16 (1998), 3-4.

⁹⁰ O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace*, 164.

⁹¹ *English Lawsuits*, no. 331.

⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 296.

⁹³ White has produced the major studies on this theme, 'Continuity', *passim*; *Restoration and Reform*, 12-76. On the 'sovereign' governments see, e.g. Stringer, *Reign*, 5; White, *Restoration and Reform*, 14, 15, 22, 36-55. G.W.S. Barrow provides more detail for Scotland, 'The Scots and the North of England', *Anarchy*, 231-54, though Crouch, *Reign*, 322-3, injects much needed caution in understanding of the extent of the legitimacy of the Scots' control.

⁹⁴ King, 'King Stephen and the Anglo Norman Aristocracy'; *idem.*, 'The anarchy of king Stephen's Reign'; *idem.*, 'Introduction', *Anarchy*; Stringer, *Reign*, 55-8; Crouch, *Reign*, 324-9; White, *Restoration and Reform*, 55-64, esp. 55-6.

complaints against it.⁹⁵ Opposition was not limited to carping 'in print' but guided episcopal action. The local studies above make clear that churchmen did recognise the difference and opposed magnate government wherever they could. Magnates can be seen to have attempted to exclude episcopal authority from areas under their control. This would have led to a further deterioration of the relationship, but also suggests an awareness of episcopal opposition to their aims and interests. The legitimacy ascribed to the order imposed by magnates by modern studies should not be overstated and was not accepted by contemporaries. That government might be better carried out when there was co-operation should be clear from the relationships of the bishops of Lincoln and Chester with Simon de Senlis II and Robert de Stafford II respectively. Opposition of churchmen did have some effect. Bishops were not satisfied with the 'shadow of peace, but not peace complete', that magnates could provide, but were committed to that of the king.⁹⁶ In conclusion, no analysis of 'continuity in government', whether royal or local, should be undertaken without considering the role of the bishop, nor should the latter's activity be analysed without acknowledgement of its connection with the government system.

⁹⁵ *GS*, 102, 158-60, 164, 214; *HH*, 728-34; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, variant 'E', 1137, for chronicle references. See Saltman, *Theobald*, 547, for church councils, and for papal annoyance, *Papsturkunden in England*, ii, no. 36; iii, no. 58.

⁹⁶ *GS*, 150.

CHAPTER NINE

KING STEPHEN AND THE BISHOPS

Interpretation of the relationship between King Stephen and the bishops usually begins with the so-called 'Charter of Liberties' issued to the Church within a few months of the king's coronation. Its first clause has been understood as showing the extent to which his initial success was dependent on ecclesiastical support:

*Ego Steph[anu]s dei gratia assensu cleri et populi in regem Anglie electus et a Will[elm]o Cantuar[isiensi] archiepiscopo et Sancte Romane Ecclesie legato consecratus, et ab Innocentio Sancte Romane Sedis pontifice... postmodum confirmatus, respectu et amore dei Sanctam Ecclesiam liberam.*¹

Stephen's brother, the bishop of Winchester, and the bishop of Salisbury persuaded first the archbishop of Canterbury and then the magnates that oaths taken to Henry I and Empress Matilda as to the succession could be broken with impunity. Coronation by churchmen made his status permanent and would later both limit active opposition to his rule and maintain the principle of royal government. Papal recognition came quickly in a letter of 1136, and was reaffirmed when in 1139 Rome stuck to its initial decision. The contents of the charter were the price Stephen had to pay for that support. Edward Augustus Freeman was indignant because the bishops had sworn fidelity to the king saving the liberties of the church, 'Such a form of oath, a form which we may be sure that any earlier king would have cast aside with indignation, a form in which men made their duty as members of the commonwealth conditional on the observation of the vague and undefined privileges of one class, a form which might involve an appeal from the king and witan to a foreign power shows how low English kingship had fallen.'² Bishop Stubbs was the first to compare the text unfavourably with Henry I's coronation charter. Since the latter was much more concerned with secular matters and gave much less away to the Church it could be inferred that the ecclesiastical rather than secular power worried Stephen most.³

¹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 271.

² E. Freeman, *The Norman Conquest of England* (6 vols., London, 1876), iv, 246-7.

³ W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, 6th ed., (3 vols., Oxford, 1897), i, 326.

It was Round who first showed that the 'Charter of Liberties' was not a coronation charter, but focussed more specifically on ecclesiastical matters and therefore not to be compared to Henry I's more general statement. He also noted that it made few real concessions.⁴ Megaw came to a similar conclusion by comparing the charter with other general proclamations of policy, position and good will issued in kings' early years.⁵ While most modern historians have followed them, some, including Davis and Barlow, have held to Freeman and Stubbs.⁶ Barlow concluded that, while the saving clause of the charter could be argued as taking '... back most of what had been given away; even if it was no more than a sop to the royal dignity...', still '... Stephen's surrender was abject...' R.L. Poole and H. Teunis both compared Stephen's charter with John's.⁷

The more general influence of the interpretative framework Freeman used was outlined in the Introduction. It has sometimes been used simplistically. For example, the transfer of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln's castleguard duties from the city to Newark has been explained by his supposed desire for separation from the state, cross marks disfiguring coins as representing ecclesiastical opposition to the king and Gilbert Foliot's hostility to Stephen by his commitment to Canterbury. Master Vacarius's dispute with the king has been built by some into a symbol of the wider conflict between Church and State.⁸

Understanding of Stephen's reign is often governed by that of those that preceded and succeeded it; see for discussion of this, Crouch, *Reign*, 342 and especially White's reassessment of the 1150s, *Restoration and Reform*, *passim*.

⁴ J. H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Study of the Anarchy*, (London, 1892), 25-6.

⁵ Megaw, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', 27-30.

⁶ For those following Freeman: Brooke, *English Church*, 178; Crosby, 'Organisation', 5; H.B. Teunis, 'The Coronation Oath of 1100: a Postponement of decision. What did not happen in Henry I's reign', *Journal of Medieval History*, 4 (1978), 135-44, 141; Barlow, *English Church*, 91-2, 304-6; Davis, *King Stephen*, 29, 31-2; J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda, the civil war of 1139-1153* (Stroud, 1996), 47. For those following Round: J. Bradbury, 'The Early Years of the Reign of Stephen', *England in the Twelfth Century*, 17-30, 22-3; Stringer, *Reign*, 63; Crouch, *Reign*, 298-309.

⁷ R.L. Poole, 'The Publication of Great Charters by the English Kings', *Studies in Chronology and History*, ed. A. L. Poole (Oxford, 1934), 307-18 (repr. from, *EHR*, 27 (1913), 444-53), 307, followed by Teunis, 'The Coronation Oath of 1100'. Both to be used with caution, see, C.R. Cheney, 'Eve of Magna Carta', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 38 (1955-6), 311-41, 337-8; P. Stafford, 'The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo Saxon Royal Promises', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 10 (1982), 173-90, 188.

⁸ P. Seaby, 'King Stephen and the Interdict of 1148', *British Numismatic Journal*, 50 (1980), 50-

A second political ideology, founded in the secular and ecclesiastical administrative evidence like so much modern understanding of the episcopate, has also had a great deal of influence. C.R. Cheney was concerned with ‘...the issues of Church and State as they arose in the day to day working of English church government, when dogmas were somewhat diluted with considerations of expediency and philosophic ideas bruised by hard fact. We shall be concerned not only, or mainly, with two opposing schools of thought each of which finds it needful to make certain concessions, but mostly with men who believed in compromise as a matter of principle and who would draw the line in various places to make the boundary between *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, ecclesiastical and royal government.’⁹ May-Harting, similarly, considered in what the basis of Bishop Hilary of Chichester’s loyalty to the king lay. Fear of the king was not enough; Hilary did not lack courage and was too much of a royalist for it ‘... to be merely a question of submission when prudent or unavoidable.’ However, ‘It may be doubted, for all his acuteness of mind whether he much valued ideas or ideals for their own sake. Rather he took life as he found it; he threw the weight of his allegiance and his efficiency behind whatever seemed to work best’.¹⁰ In this approach then, bishops were rationalists with no deep ideological commitment either way. For Cheney especially, this was a virtue in itself. There is some merit in his viewpoint; coping with the power and policies of the king was a difficult problem and did often entail backing down from positions of principle.¹¹

In terms of Stephen’s reign, this ‘type’ of bishop, the more traditional ‘king’s man’ and the ‘reformer’ might all be expected to take the standard historiographical path. However, Parts One and Two and Chapter Eight suggest

60, 58-9; Brooke and Morey, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, 91; P. Stein, ‘Vacarius and the Civil Law’, *Church and Government*, 119-37, 131.

⁹ Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 87.

¹⁰ Mayr-Harting, ‘Hilary Bishop of Chichester’, 224.

¹¹ E.g. letter of Archbishop Theobald to Walter Durdent, bishop of Chester, warning him that he should be wary of losing the king’s favour, and another to Alfred, bishop of Worcester, telling him to reconsider his refusal to grant a church to a master Solomon, a royal clerk on whose behalf the king, the queen and even the pope had spoken. Alfred should know when it was expedient to do right and when it was expedient to be more careful. *Letters of John of Salisbury*, i, nos. 98, 104.

that, while Anglo-Norman bishops might have been rational pragmatists, they were also possessed of deeper sensibilities and, in terms of the present context, innately committed to king and government. Historians of the European Church, Becket and post-Becket English Churches, have not subscribed to any of these types or contexts to the same extent as Anglo-Normanists. Indeed, as in this thesis, a model of principled co-operation is the norm.

Within the European Church as a whole, the issues raised by the Investiture Controversy were rarely explicitly discussed across the remainder of the century and there was little debate about the exact relationship between the two powers. The continued existence of both and the continued co-operation of them as the only legitimate model of government was a given.¹² The church continued to understand its role in terms of providing prayer, counsel and service to the ruler for the greater good. In the same way, the continued duty of the ruler to protect the church through the secular sword and his rights was maintained and his further rights over the temporal possessions of the church remained accepted by all. What was Caesar's was to be rendered to Caesar.¹³ More specifically, historians of the Becket and post-Becket churches in England and the ducal Church in Normandy have long dismissed the influence of earlier conflicts and accepted that churchmen could be both committed to king and government and to Church and papacy.¹⁴

Becket historiography plays down continuity between Anslem and Langton. It sees the Investiture Controversy and its attendant problems as non-issues by the later twelfth century.¹⁵ Barlow concluded his study of the relationship between church and state in Stephen's reign with the church's relieved return to co-operation with King Henry II.¹⁶ Within the crisis period, the ties that bound bishops to the king were still strong and not limited to either the conventional or

¹² Benson, *The Bishop Elect*. The title is a misnomer in this context; Benson's work contains what is still one of the most lucid discussions of the Investiture subject, 313, 343; S. Chodorow, *Church Political Theory and Church Politics in the Mid Twelfth Century: The Ecclesiology of Gratian's Decretum* (Berkeley, 1972), 57-8, 60 and on the historiographical development, 212-14.

¹³ Benson, *Bishop Elect*, 313, 316-19; Chodorow, *Church Political Theory*, 217-19, 227-37.

¹⁴ E.g. Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 21, 107, 139; Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 165, 181-3.

¹⁵ Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 165.

¹⁶ Barlow, *English Church*, 307-09.

the self interested. Most had difficulty deciding whether Henry II or Becket had the greater right on his side.¹⁷ Gilbert Foliot's continued commitment to the papacy and John of Salisbury's to the upkeep of a strong secular government and of co-operation between church and state are well known.¹⁸ Gilbert was not just a royalist looking for compromise for the benefit of his king, but had a deeply held belief in the co-operation of the two powers.

Later in the century when papal involvement in law was rapidly increasing, there was no ideological conflict between acting as a papal judge delegate and a loyal bishop of the king, '...[It] was quite possible for a man to be a canon lawyer and a royalist.'¹⁹ Cheney quoted a series of later twelfth-century letters from Rome on the election of new English bishops as proof of judicious and rational compromise being of the highest importance: 'Choose such men that you honour God in all things and make useful provision for your souls and the peace of the realm. '; '...cause to be appointed suitable clergy, who should be men not only distinguished by their life and learning but also loyal to the king, profitable to the kingdom and capable of giving counsel and help.'²⁰ However, each of these could equally reflect principled commitment

Reform and commitment to the papacy and the canon law combined with total allegiance to the duke are constant themes in analysis of the archbishops of Rouen throughout the twelfth century.²¹ The underlying assumption of compromise that is assumed in the historiography of the English church has no place in that of the Norman. Geoffrey Brito was close to Henry I in England and would defend him before the pope at Rheims in 1119, but was also in close

¹⁷ Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 117, 142-3, 152-3; Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 181-183; M.G. Cheney, *Roger, Bishop of Worcester*, 17-18.

¹⁸ John of Salisbury, *Policratus*, ed. C. J. Nederman (Cambridge, 1990), xxii-xxiii; on Gilbert, Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 142-3, 152-5. See also, Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, chapters 4 and 7.

¹⁹ Mayr-Harting, 'Hilary Bishop of Chichester', 211.

²⁰ Cheney, *From Becket to Langton*, 21. The original source of Alexander's letter is Ralf de Diceto, *Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols Rolls Series, 1876), i, 367, and that of Innocent III can be found at *Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III concerning England (1198-1216)*, ed. C.R. Cheney and W. H. Semple (Oxford, 1953), 166.

²¹ T.P. Schlunz, 'Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen (1164-1183): A Career Churchman in the Twelfth Century', unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Illinois, (1973), 166, 191, 214.; Poggoli, 'From Politician to Prelate', 111-17. For the pre-1066 ducal church see, Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 190-206, 226.

touch with the pope, held several church councils influenced by papal policy and acted as a papal judge delegate. In 1128 his council would be presided over by a legate, and also attended by Henry I. David Spear has rightly suggested that this should be compared with the council of 1125 in England.²² Archbishop Hugh of Rouen was a theologian with a strong interest in the canon law and in reform, but he was also first abbot of Henry I's burial foundation at Reading and heard the king's confession on his deathbed.²³ He was, of course, essential to Stephen's victory in 1139.

Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux is as valuable here as elsewhere. He has in the past been considered representative of a slightly old-fashioned position during the Becket controversy, but his views were contemporary with Stephen's reign.²⁴ Like Gilbert Foliot, he looked for compromise and did try to protect his king in the Becket conflict, but his letters show that he did this rather because of his sincere belief in harmonious co-operation between the two powers than his ambition and/or rationalism. Early in the dispute Bishop Arnulf supported Becket, but even when he wrote to him, emphasised, '*...quia neque pax ecclesie sine regno, neque regno salus poterit nisi per ecclesiam provenire*'. Later when legates proved obstinate to a compromise he had helped negotiate, he put his position to the pope:

...quoniam in observatione regie dignitatis nullatenus videbatur nobis libertas aut dignitas ecclesiastica pregravari. Siquidem dignitas ecclesiastica regiam provehit potius quam adimat dignitatem et regalis dignitas ecclesiasticam conservare potius consuevit quam tollere libertatem; etenim quasi quibusdam sibi invicem complexibus dignitas ecclesiastica et regalis occurrunt, cum nec Reges salutem sine ecclesia nec ecclesia pacem sine protectione regia

²² D. Spear, 'Geoffrey Brito Archbishop of Rouen, 1118-28', *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 123-39, 127-30.

²³ T.G. Waldman, 'Hugh of Amiens, Archbishop of Rouen, 1130-1164, the Norman Abbots and the Papacy: the foundation of a textual community', *ibid.*, 139-53. For biographical details, Barlow, *English Church*, 90, 114-15, 306. William of Malmesbury included Hugh's letter to Pope Innocent II describing the deathbed of Henry I, *HN*, 13-14. It is perhaps worth noting in the context of the present discussion, that William is slightly snide about Hugh's devotion: 'a man with good reason devoted to him [Henry I] and his heirs in return for benefits so great', 12. I have been unable to consult, P.A. King, 'A Twelfth Century Anglo-Norman Prelate: Hugh archbishop of Rouen, 1130-1164', unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Harvard, 1970.

²⁴ Schriber, *Dilemma of Arnulf*, 39-40, where Arnulf's 'paradigm' has become outmoded. See above, p.11, nt. 30.

consequatur.²⁵

More generally, his letters show that he was committed to local and international reform, the papacy and to the king/duke and the good government of the realm throughout his life.²⁶

Bishop Arnulf also counters Cheney's view that secular churchmen's politics lacked ideological and theoretical depth. Beryl Smalley and John Baldwin have shown that this was more generally the case during the Becket controversy and in the late twelfth century.²⁷ The editor of John of Salisbury's *Policratus* concluded that 'Above all it was a constant concern to unify theory and practice that constituted the hallmark of John's political and intellectual life.'²⁸ John and Stephen Langton and his peers were very different from their mid century predecessors, but Arnulf was not. Rotrou archbishop of Rouen also wrote on similar issues in similar terms.²⁹

For England, it has long been recognised that Anselm remained committed to his service to the king and to both powers. For him, William I was the model of a pious king, working with and for the church and for the betterment of justice, peace and Christianity in the kingdom.³⁰ For the most part, beyond the saint, most episcopal interaction with King Henry has been understood in more prosaic terms. However, recently, Martin Brett has begun to approach Henry I's reign in similar fashion through analysis of English canon law scholars. As yet, only Patrick Wormald has seen how important his arguments are. He quotes him at length: 'The leaders of the English church sought a new clarity in the organisation of both *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. They would neither have seen any threat to the latter in their labours for the former, nor considered commitment to the former in any way compromised by their loyalties to the

²⁵ *Letters of Arnulf*, nos. 42, 55.

²⁶ For letters to the pope on political matters, *ibid.*, nos. 7, 26, 40; on rulers, no. 106, for ecclesiastical activity, e.g. nos. 63, 70, 77, 93.

²⁷ Smalley, *Becket Conflict*, 13-16; J. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: the social views of Peter the Chanter and his circle* (Princeton, 1970), *passim*.

²⁸ *Policratus*, xix.

²⁹ Rotrou of Rouen to Alexander III, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard (7 vols., Rolls Series, 1875-85), vii, 86.

³⁰ Barlow, *English Church*, 288, 302; W. Frohlich, 'St Anselm's Special Relationship with the Conqueror', *ANS*, 10 (1988), 101-11, 108.

latter. Naturally they aimed to master canon law and canonical procedure as well as those of lay society. In other words, to understand what concerned most such people most of the time we must simply forget Investiture.' He goes on to say, 'There is no more than a superficial paradox in the suggestion that such servants of a masterful king were as active in one law as in the other.'³¹ Chapter One of this thesis confirms Brett's thesis at the practical level. Underlying developments in the church did not have to entail change in its relationship with the king. It is also worth noting that, traditionally, canon law development in England was a product of the new ecclesiastical freedom Stephen's reign brought. Clearly, it was neither novel then nor necessarily opposed to the royal interest.³²

In fact, Bishop Stubbs long ago took a similar position. Exceptions to the rule of royal control which proved to the satisfaction of Brooke that there was an underlying reform mentality which undermined royal power in the English church under Henry I included the granting of a legation to Archbishop William of Corbeil. Stubbs said of Archbishop William's council of 1127, '...the canons of the council had thus the threefold sanction of the national church, the king and the Holy See; without any concession being made by either as to the necessity of confirmation by the other two.' The council, '...completed the harmony of the Church and State which was one of the great objects of Henry's policy and which was rudely broken by the quarrels of Stephen...'³³ Stubbs, then, and Brett too, still saw conflict in Stephen's reign. Given the domestic and international contexts this is unlikely, but only Saltman, who argued that Archbishop Theobald was loyal to Stephen, and Stringer, who saw that the church's refusal to crown Eustace was in the best interests of the kingdom, have

³¹ Brett, 'Collectio', 171; Wormald, 'Quadripartitus', 142. See also, Wormald, 'Laga Eadward', *passim*. Brett's last comment on Stephen's reign was in 1975, *English Church*, 91, where he contrasted it with Henry I's and saw the relationship as fundamentally changed.

³² For Brooke's older implication that this was new, *English Church and the Papacy*, 236-45. For modern views, Cramer, 'Ernulf of Rochester', 491-4; M. Brett, 'The *Collectio Lanfranci* and its competitors', *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: essays presented to Margaret Gibson* (London, 1992), ed. L. Smith and B. Ward, 157-74, 161-2; idem, 'Canon Law and Litigation: the Century before Gratian', *Medieval Ecclesiastical Studies in Honour of Dorothy M. Owen*, ed. M.J. Franklin and C. Harper Bill (Woodbridge, 1995), 21-40, 35, where he points out that Brooke had already himself proven this to be not the case.

³³ Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, i, 374-5.

come close to saying so. Neither has been as influential as his approach merits.

This is in some ways surprising because within the historiography there are oddities which seem to suggest this framework but which have not been followed through to their logical conclusion. This is most apparent in the standard explanation for the absence of the Peace of God as discussed in the Introduction. It is accepted that it did not appear because the church still understood the king's peace as the fundamental mainstay of justice in the kingdom but that it might be worthwhile to look for involvement in maintaining that peace has not been followed up.³⁴ It is now a commonplace that Stephen's coronation 'bound' the church and the magnates to him and that this was crucial to the Angevin failure to garner support and helped to maintain, however latently, respect for royal power.³⁵ 'Bound' is essentially negative, grudging and passive, but still implies that the church and actions it had taken were fundamental to attitudes during the reign. This too can be approached in more positive fashion.

The simplistic examples of use of the traditional framework listed above suggest the same because each is relatively easily dismissed. Sir Richard Southern and Cary Nederman have shown that there is no evidence for principled conflict between Stephen and Vacarius and that John of Salisbury reconstructed the dispute for his own literary and philosophical purposes. Cross marks on coins had no such significance. Explanation of Foliot's conduct must take into account his Angevin sympathies and Stephen's good relationship with Theobald and should not assume that commitment to the king excluded commitment to the archbishop.³⁶ In fact this is an example of that classification of bishops as 'king's men' or 'reformed' that has already been discussed and which is

³⁴ Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 133; Holdsworth, 'Ideal and Reality', 68-70; idem, 'The Church', 213.

³⁵ Holdsworth, 'The Church', 212.

³⁶ R. W. Southern, 'Master Vacarius and the beginning of an English Academic Tradition', *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to R. W. Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), 257-86, 273-5; C. J. Nederman, 'The Changing Face of Tyranny: the reign of King Stephen in John of Salisbury's thought', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 33 (1989), 1-20, *passim*; M. Archibald, 'Dating Stephen's First Type', *British Numismatic Journal*, 61 (1991), 9-23, 19.

particularly important in terms of Stephen's reign.³⁷

It is worth adding here too, three further developing factors that worked against conflict, separation and neutrality. Firstly, there was a growing interest among educated churchmen in justifying their service to kings and government in terms of the greater good of the Christian kingdom.³⁸ This can be connected to Brett's findings on the law and also to, secondly, a developing abstract conceptualisation of the 'crown', 'justice' and the *status regis*. Crouch described the last as linking '...king, subjects and the prayers of the church in a common purpose'.³⁹ Thirdly, John Gillingham's work on Anglo-Norman identity has shown that a new commitment to, and interest in, England was developing in the mid-twelfth century. As patron of both Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon, Bishop Alexander of Lincoln at least was part of it. Henry, Geoffrey and their successors such as William fitzStephen and especially Gerald of Wales were deeply devoted to their localities, regions and the kingdom. What follows re-examines the most important evidence of the relationship between Stephen and the bishops in light of this revised context. It begins with 1136-1139 and then moves on to the arrests in that last year before discussing new elections to bishoprics and church councils. It ends with the last five years of the reign.

9.1. 1136-1139

The first three years of Stephen's reign have often been seen as setting patterns for the remainder of the reign and as maintaining a self-conscious continuity with Henry I's regime. Chapter Eight showed that this applied to episcopal involvement in government. It also applies to the more general relationship

³⁷ Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 7-9; Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 395-401.

³⁸ G. Duby, *The Three Orders. Feudal Society Imagined* (London, 1980), 256-7.

³⁹ M. Strickland, 'Against the Lord's Anointed: aspects of warfare and baronial rebellion in England and Normandy, 1075-1265', *Law and Government*, 56-78; G. Garnett, 'The Origins of the Crown', *The History of English Law: Centenary Essays on Pollock and Maitland*, ed. J. Hudson (London, 1996), 171-271. For the *status regis*, G. Post, 'Status Regis', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 1 (1964), 1-103; Crouch, *Reign*, 85, nt. 4.

between Church and King much more positively than is usually allowed. To return to the Charter of Liberties, Round also emphasised the ceremonial importance of the great council: it was a statement of Stephen's legitimacy and authority and a return to an older style of kingship.⁴⁰ For Henry of Huntingdon it was the most splendid court that had ever been held in England.⁴¹ If the continued importance of the imagery of kingship through Henry I's reign is allowed, the charter can therefore be seen as part of the creation of the vision of kingship for the new reign. It was the end-product of months of discussion following promises made at the coronation; but rather on the nature of the new reign than the price the king would pay.⁴² It is evidence of a commitment to Christian kingship and good government by the king moulded, publicised, and supported by the Church. Wide circulation was a part of the process.⁴³ Ceremony, Christian kingship and the support of the church were to be features of attempts to maintain Stephen's status as they had been Henry I's.⁴⁴

Contemporary chroniclers saw Stephen as breaking his promises almost immediately and Henry of Winchester claimed the same when he went over to Matilda in 1141.⁴⁵ Most recent studies see him instead as trying to maintain them. Around the same time as the Oxford Charter was issued, he restored lands to Glastonbury and to Winchester which had been theirs in the time of William the Conqueror.⁴⁶ Both charters are among the more impressive documents surviving from the reign and served a similar purpose to the Charter itself - they were the practical action to its ideological statement. Despite Henry of

⁴⁰ Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 25; Crouch, *Reign*, 46-7.

⁴¹ *HH*, 707.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 704-5, and on the probability of an earlier meeting at Oxford in January, nt. 19 and Crouch, *Reign*, 47, nt. 52. See, on the whole subject of such oaths and negotiation processes and for what follows here, Pauline Stafford's stimulating study, 'Laws of Cnut'. On this issue 187-8, where she makes the point that the process '... provided the ideal opportunity to persuade the king to make promises [but]... there was no united ecclesiastical order with a masterplan to shackle kings.'

⁴³ *HH*, 704; *HN*, 36; Poole, 'Publication of Great Charters', 310-2 argued for a restricted circulation, but modern consensus disagrees, Cheney, 'Eve of Magna Carta', 337-8; Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, 61; *CS*, I, ii, 762-3 and on the *Leges*: O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace*, 47-9.

⁴⁴ *cf.* Crouch, *Reign*, 38 where conscious association with the bureaucratic kingship of his predecessor is emphasised.

⁴⁵ *HH*, 704; *HN*, 34-6, 48-50, William blames Stephen's councillors not the king. On Henry of Winchester in 1141, *ibid.*, 30. Frank Barlow follows the chroniclers, *English Church*, 304-05.

⁴⁶ *RRAN*, iii, nos. 341, 945-9.

Huntingdon's comment, Stephen tried to hold to exemption of the Church from forest exactions. Before 1139 vacancies were entrusted to a churchman, Stephen's brother yes, but a committed reformer nevertheless. The early election to the see of Bath was completed with his advice.⁴⁷ At Exeter, the new bishop was the nephew of his predecessor and an archdeacon of the diocese, which suggests a relatively free election process.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the siege there, the king was quick in acting responsibly and piously in making reparations for damage to the cathedral.⁴⁹ Here Stephen was concerned to show himself a Christian king keen to fulfil his duties as protector and benefactor of the church.

Cnut's coronation oath had provided the stimulus to Archbishop Wulfstan's collection of Laws and the most recent editor of the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* has made a similar connection between it and the Oxford Charter. Bruce O'Brien has suggested that they are a private commentary on the charter by a secular churchman involved in local ecclesiastical government. This must remain thought-provoking speculation since there is no textual evidence of a link between the two, but what is clear is that the *Leges* exemplify the mentality of a secular churchman in practical affairs around the time of Stephen's accession.⁵⁰ The author assumed and relied upon the intimate co-operation of the two powers for the government of the Church, and, by extension, the kingdom. Exercise of ecclesiastical power took place with the support and co-operation of the secular. There is no evidence of dissatisfaction or opposition to the status quo. Those who ignored the bishop's justice would be shown by him to the king, 'And so will the sword justly help the sword.' The importance of the king's peace and his duty to maintain it is stated together with explanation of his and his deputies involvement in practical legal issues.⁵¹ The *Leges* included a

⁴⁷ Crouch, *Reign*, 46, nt. 50.

⁴⁸ *EEA*, 11, Exeter, xxxiv-v.

⁴⁹ *RRAN*, iii, no. 285.

⁵⁰ O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace*, 47-9. Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 136 fnt. 22, dates the *Leges* to before Easter because he can see no evidence of the Charter in them.

Liebermann's position was 1114x1136, *Über die Leges Edwardi Confessoris* (Halle, 1896), 1-16. O'Brien's arguments are dependent on the model of Pauline Stafford's examination of Cnut. He firstly assumes a context for the *Leges*, he sees it as a compilation created as a response to an event and in particular the promulgation of a royal charter comparable to that of Archbishop Wulfstan to Cnut. By a process of elimination he reaches Stephen's. He has no stronger proof, but, to repeat, the possibility is tantalising.

⁵¹ O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace*, 37, 161, 167-75.

version of the Peace of God which in this instance was buttressed by royal power. If breakers of the peace of Holy Church scorned the sentence of the bishop then the king's justices would attach them.⁵² It is, therefore, not the case that there was no Peace of God in England, but it was very closely connected to the king. The Peace is discussed at greater length below.

The relationship between the king and the papacy was similarly co-operative in these first three years.⁵³ While this is now generally accepted, Alberic of Ostia's legate council of 1138 has been understood as embodying changes in the Church and in the relationship between Church and king. An external legate who had already played an important role in making peace with the Scots held a council of a newly reforming church which dealt with issues of internal peace for the first time since the Norman Conquest. The king's authority was in decline and the Church both took advantage of this and felt the need to establish its own more strongly. These patterns would be repeated *a fortiori* in the later councils of the reign.⁵⁴ However, Stephen attended the council and its acts can be shown to have been in accordance with his interests. Its very occurrence and the legate's presence sanctioned his legitimacy. Theobald of Bec was elected archbishop and the abbots of Battle, Crowland and Shrewsbury were deposed.⁵⁵ Little is known of the last two but Battle's experience is detailed in the abbey's chronicle. Abbot Warner had incurred the royal disfavour and become embroiled in quarrels with the king. He therefore chose resignation rather than let his abbey suffer any more. He was succeeded by Walter de Lucy, brother of Stephen's adviser, Richard. The chronicle then emphasised the continued loyalty of the new abbot to the king and the good relations between the house and

⁵² Ibid., 163.

⁵³ For Stephen's defence at the 2nd Lateran in 1139, CS, I, ii, 779-80; Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 75-6; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 210. On the order to the bishop of Winchester to secure his brother's release in 1141, Barlow, *English Church*, 304-7. And for the insistence on no change to the succession in 1143, *Historia Pontificalis*, 85-6.

⁵⁴ CS, I, ii, no. 139; Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 133-4.

⁵⁵ Barlow, *English Church*, 94, lays to rest the idea of the election of Theobald as a papal appointment. Some modern studies seem more inclined to ascribe it to the influence of the Beaumont family, Davis, *King Stephen*, 27; Crouch, *Reign*, 92-3. Their argument depends solely on the Beaumont patronage of the abbey. No similar influence has ever been argued for in the elections of either Anselm and Lanfranc, nor would it be of Becket's successors from their various backgrounds. Theobald's election need not have been overly influenced by any one other than the king.

Stephen for the remainder of the reign.⁵⁶ The council thus allowed the king both to reward his supporters and to ensure the loyalty and support of a strategically and ideologically important abbey. At Crowland, it might be speculated that there was a political background; fenland abbeys would cause difficulties for Stephen later in the reign.⁵⁷

The legislation of the council was not inherently opposed to royal authority. Both powers faced the same problems and the Church was playing its part in the maintenance of peace in the kingdom parallel to and in co-operation with the king, not opposed to him. It emphasised the equivalent spiritual power of the Church and was a reassertion of the traditional importance of its role in government. Given the political situation in that year, it might be that the council was the ecclesiastical parallel to new earldoms in restructuring government in response to new developments. Reaffirmation of papal and English ecclesiastical support, and association with the government of the Church might also have been valuable. It was these patterns that were to be repeated in future councils.

Megaw understood Stephen's good relations with the Church in this period as conscious political policy. Stephen knew that he had committed perjury and that his position was weak, he needed the legitimacy and the power that the Church could provide. Both Bradbury and Crouch have shown that Stephen neither felt such a need nor conceived of his relationship with the church as 'political'.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the former, following Cheney, has argued elsewhere that bishops' loyalty was still far from 'outright', they were still rational pragmatists.⁵⁹ This is to see them as Cheney did, as pragmatic and rational. It is a combination of three traditional foci in interpretation of the Stephen's bishops: Gregorian reform, rationalism and looking forward to 1139. However, the eminently traditional relationship between the two was inherent to both, not just the king. The pre-arrest evidence suggests that the church still saw the kingdom's viability as

⁵⁶ *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. E. Searle (Oxford, 1980), 139-42.

⁵⁷ *John of Worcester*, iii, 261-2 is the sole reference to the depositions at the council. *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey* doesn't mention the council as the place of its abbot's resignation.

⁵⁸ Bradbury, 'Early Years', 22; Crouch, *Reign*, 296-8.

⁵⁹ Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*, 47.

resting with the king and still supported him and his actions as far as it could. It also implies that episcopal identity continued to be intimately associated with him and the kingdom on the eve of the civil war.

9.2. 1139

For Davis, the arrests of the bishops was Stephen's fourth and most important mistake. It cost him the positive support and co-operation of the Church, left him humiliated and distrusted and exposed his 'moral weakness'. Following Stubbs, he also saw the arrests as costing the king his administration. More recently, Geoffrey Koziol has discussed the event in terms of the breaking of a ritual space from which the king's status and legitimacy never recovered.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, only the *Gesta Stephani* among the chronicles saw the arrests as condemning king and kingdom to war.⁶¹ William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Newburgh follow their accounts with the arrival of Matilda in England; for them this was the crucial event.⁶² Reassessment by more recent historians has played down the importance of the arrests. Yoshitake, as has been noted, showed that episcopal support and the administration collapsed in the aftermath of the battle of Lincoln rather than of the arrests. Fifteen bishops attended Stephen's court between the arrests and the king's defeat at Lincoln, including four who did not attest royal charters at all.

However, Yoshitake, relied on the *Life of Christina of Markyate's* description of Abbot Geoffrey of St Albans' fear of going to court and saw attendance as by necessity rather than commitment and the traditional withdrawal as simply delayed until Stephen was out of commission.⁶³ Stringer and Crouch have gone further, insisting that the relationship was not dramatically affected. The king

⁶⁰ Davis, *King Stephen*, 29, 31-2; Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, 367-9. Edward Kealey follows Stubbs for the most part, *Roger of Salisbury*, 199-200. Koziol, 'Sacrality', 141.

⁶¹ *GS*, 51.

⁶² *HN*, 60; *HH*, 723; *WN*, 61.

⁶³ *Life of Christina*, 166-70.

continued to work with his brother and was still keen to be seen to be a pious and liberal king. Bishop Roger's death by Christmas left his possessions to the king who, despite his rights to them, returned much to the chapter to help it escape its poverty.⁶⁴ He was also careful to restore the rights of the abbeys of Abbotsbury, Malmesbury and Sherborne.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, even Stringer and Crouch take the traditional approach for the post-1141 period.

That the citing of the king by Henry of Winchester was an extreme measure has long been recognised. 'His claim that castles were *spiritualia* was worldly in the extreme, an extraordinary paradox; his refusal to recognize the baronial character of the bishops at a time when civil war was about to break out was perverse, and his attempt to put a king publicly on trial was outrageous by contemporary ways of thinking.'⁶⁶ His support among fellow churchmen was minimal. Many agreed with the archbishop of Rouen that the bishops had been rightly charged and that the king was within his rights. Archbishop Theobald was obliged to back the legate, but did not do so with any great zeal. According to John of Salisbury, Henry of Winchester ordered the archbishop's lands seized and person proscribed because of his tardiness.⁶⁷ In 1141, after the capture of the king, he and many other churchmen would again be dragged unwillingly behind the legate.⁶⁸ It is nothing new to warn against attributing the motives of bishop Henry to the rest of the episcopacy.

The nature of episcopal custody of castles and its connection with king and government was discussed in Chapter One. Within the context posited there, Archbishop Hugh's argument that bishops should simply not hold castles was relatively simplistic, but still very effective.⁶⁹ Contemporary canon law and continental practice accepted that bishops did so, but that in time of war resources should be the king's to do with as he would. Even the author of the

⁶⁴ *JW*, iii, 259 (wrongly placed in 1138); *GS*, 65; Barlow, *English Church*, 118. See also *RRAN*, iii, nos. 789-90.

⁶⁵ *HN*, 70. Malmesbury did offer money and had trouble with the pope on that account but William felt the bribe was justified.

⁶⁶ Barlow, *English Church*, 305.

⁶⁷ *Historia Pontificalis*, 42.

⁶⁸ Saltman, Theobald, 16.

⁶⁹ Waldman, 'Hugh of Amiens', 147-8. Coulson, 'Castles of the Anarchy', 16, couched Archbishop Hugh's thinking in terms of secular law.

Gesta Stephani, highly critical of Stephen's conduct in this instance, was clear that what was Caesar's should be rendered to Caesar.⁷⁰ The military power and identity of the bishop was intimately associated with the king and, indeed, the debate over it and over the royal rights which took place in the aftermath of the arrests confirmed the traditional order in the understanding of all.

This was further reinforced by an aspect of the crisis often passed over, its public resolution, an event of great ritual significance. William of Malmesbury describes the end of the council thus:

*Non omiserunt tamen legatus et archiepiscopus quin tenorem officii sui prosequerentur: suppliciter enim pedibus regis in cubiculo affusi, orauerunt ut misereretur ecclesie, misereretur anime et fame sue, nec pateretur fieri discidium inter regnum et sacerdotium.*⁷¹

This last phrase, '*inter regnum et sacerdotium*', was translated by K.R. Potter and has been retained by Edmund King in his new edition as 'between monarchy and clergy'. Frank Barlow in a learned summation of the English evidence for use of the phrase preferred 'royal and priestly orders of government'.⁷² Exact definition is difficult, but it is certain that '*regnum et sacerdotium*' would have had more resonance in the twelfth century church than Potter allows.

King took William literally, a split between Church and king had occurred, whereas Barlow had seen the king as amenable to compromise, and most modern surveys minimise the significance of the event.⁷³ However, King at least, did recognise the event's potential. In a context which allows for a maintained importance of ritual in Anglo-Norman kingship the abasement can be seen as an important restatement of the traditional relationship between Church and State. William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon describe a

⁷⁰ *GS*, 53, 79.

⁷¹ *HN*, 59; *Historia Novella*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter (London, 1955), 34.

⁷² Barlow, *English Church*, 269-71. Barlow for the most part prefers not to translate the phrase. This seems very sensible. See also as an introduction to an extremely complex subject, G. Tellenbach, *The church in western Europe from the tenth to the early twelfth century* (Cambridge, 1993), 65, 270; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 1, 17, 19-24, 230-3, 553-4

⁷³ King, 'Introduction', *Anarchy*, 17; Barlow, *English Church*, 306; Stringer, *Reign*, 66-7; Crouch, *Reign*, 97.

potentially very powerful ceremony. For the latter, the king did not do his part, but it was still an 'awesome' abasement by the Church.⁷⁴ The former talked of a desire to maintain a relationship rather than of it splitting. Koziol has argued for a lack of ritual in English kingship during this period, but this narrative is very similar to the process of 'begging pardon and favour' which he has shown elsewhere to be fundamental to the building of Capetian France. Supplication and petition were ways of mediating political power. Koziol emphasised that the French episcopacy was essential to this creation of new royal power that differed from other secular powers. He also showed that 'begging pardon and favour' was a crucial aspect of their own relationship with their king.⁷⁵ In 1139, in England, the abasement and supplication of the churchmen was likewise aimed at strengthening and supporting royal authority and re-emphasising the traditional relationship between Church and State.

William did not mention a further event for which the *Gesta Stephani* is the only source: that after the settlement the king did penance for his sin:

*... ecclesiastici rigoris durtiam humilitatis subiectione molliuit, habitumque regalem exutus, gemensque animo et contritus spiritu, commissi sententiam humiliter suscepit.*⁷⁶

This can be seen as a counterpart to the Church's abasement before the king and can be understood as part of a reconciliation process which emphasised royal piety and Christian kingship.⁷⁷ Just as in the pre-arrest relationship between bishops and the king, the practical and the symbolic elements of 1139 emphasise a continued co-operation and commitment on both sides rather than conflict between them.

⁷⁴ *HH*, 727.

⁷⁵ Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favour*, 7-14, 45, 55, 130-1, 274

⁷⁶ *GS*, 53. The *Gesta* does not mention the church's abasement. The dichotomy between the two may be relevant, but seems too coincidental!

⁷⁷ For early medieval parallels, see, Nelson, 'Kingship, Law and Liturgy', 135-6 and especially, Hamilton, *Practice of Penance*, 174-82.

9.3. Elections⁷⁸

Historiographically, Stephen's inability to influence episcopal elections has been seen as symptomatic of a loss of control of the whole Church and of the growing distinction between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.⁷⁹ The composition of the episcopate had been and would be dominated by ex-royal clerks, king's men, whose actions and loyalties could be guaranteed; now freely elected, reformed churchmen were politically neutral and keen to withdraw from political involvement. While 'bound' to the king they were not actively committed to him. Bartlett has recently reasserted the statistical basis of this argument, by listing the origins of new bishops. Ten of William I's fifteen new bishops were royal clerks, six of William II's eight, sixteen of Henry I's twenty-eight, ten of Henry II's twenty-eight, eight of Richard I's sixteen and eleven of John's nineteen, but only one of Stephen's nineteen. Ten ecclesiastical clerks were elected in Stephen's reign, one in William I's, none in William II's, four in Henry I's, thirteen in Henry II's, and seven each in Richard I's and John's. The remainder of new appointments were monks.⁸⁰

Superficially, as with attestations to royal charters, the statistics are conclusive. However, the histories of the sees of Lincoln and Chester suggest firstly that Stephen did not lose control to the extent usually assumed and secondly that a reformed, freely elected bishop could also be committed to king and government. Similar conclusions can be reached for most of the other elections. Like canon law development these new bishops, with 'wider and more specifically ecclesiastical horizons', and with an interest in the liberty of the Church, had begun to appear in Henry I's reign, and were also elected in the pre-1139 period, in which, historians have generally accepted, Stephen did control the Church. In Henry I's cases at least, the king chose each of the men and their

⁷⁸ For potted biographies and each election see, Saltman, *Theobald*, 90-152; Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 7-33; Barlow, *English Church*, 92-103.

⁷⁹ Brett, *English Church*, 104-5; Barlow, *English Church*, 100, 103; Stringer, *Reign*, 65; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 217. The exception being Crouch, for whom Stephen simply didn't care, *Reign*, 304. Given the potential material power of episcopal possessions, if no more, this seems unlikely.

⁸⁰ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 397.

loyalty to him has never been questioned.⁸¹ Generalisation on the basis of origins is a mistake. Bishop Hilary of Chichester was not an ex-royal clerk and was a favourite of both the papacy and the legate, but he had also been Stephen's original candidate for York and would be the closest bishop to the king after his election.⁸²

With the exception of York and Hereford, the only election made in the face of royal interests was that of Robert de Sigillo to London during Matilda's brief rule in 1141.⁸³ Even here Stephen could exclude the bishop from his see until they came to an agreement, and thereafter Robert's reception of writs and governmental activity, discussed above, shows that they could work together. On Robert's death the election of his successor was ostensibly free because Bishop Richard Belmeis II's family dominated the cathedral chapter and he had himself been archdeacon of Middlesex. However, he paid five hundred pounds for his election and there was a family tradition of service to the king. The Shropshire branch was consistently loyal through the civil war.⁸⁴ Stephen also had other friends in the chapter. To use just the evidence from the case studies in this thesis, Archdeacon William owed his position in the Chester diocese to the king and the canon Baldric de Sigillo was Keeper of the king's seal and had had a prebend created for him at Lincoln.⁸⁵ In 1148 the Chapter, led by Archdeacon William de Belmeis, appealed against the Interdict, which had been laid on England.⁸⁶ Loyalty in the chapter and royal recognition of its importance is a common feature of the period of the civil war, and can also be seen at Durham, Lincoln and Salisbury. The loyalty of the two other candidates for London, the city's own and the abbot of Battle, would have been guaranteed, Stephen was well in control.

Gilbert Foliot's betrayal of his archbishop in seeking out the king when he entered England in the same year is well known. He was almost certainly covering his legal tracks, but he attracted much attention and is evidence of the

⁸¹ Brett, *English Church*, 111-2.

⁸² Saltman, *Theobald*, 101-2; Mayr-Harting, 'Hilary, Bishop of Chichester', 211-3.

⁸³ Saltman, *Theobald*, 95-6; Barlow, *English Church*, 96.

⁸⁴ Saltman, *Theobald*, 117-9.

⁸⁵ See above, p. 136.

continued commitment of the Church as a whole to legitimate kingship. The other bishops refused to take part in his consecration and it was in defending his conduct that Archbishop Theobald set out for Duke Henry the Church's commitment to only one ruler.⁸⁷ He himself later accepted royal jurisdiction over sanctuary. A somewhat similar case can be found at Whitby in 1148. Abbot Benedict resigned in the presence of Archbishop Henry Murdac at Beverley, '*non ferens molestias a quibusdam suis adversariis sibi illatas*'. Said adversaries were probably close to the archbishop.⁸⁸ The monks consulted him but he refused to sanction the resignation unless one of three candidates nominated by himself was chosen. The monks chose the individual they thought to be the most worthy (who was also the most independent of the archbishop), and returned not to the archbishop but to the king at York. Stephen gave his consent and the new abbot did homage to the king. In spite of Murdac's attempt to bring Whitby under his control, it was to the king and to loyalty to the king that the monks remained committed.

This episode took place during the disputed election in the see of York, the most obvious example of the new influence of the reforming party and the papacy.⁸⁹ Here, uniquely, Stephen was defeated and defeat was costly since the archbishop was central to the cohesion and the government of the North. However, even at York, defeat was not complete and the new archbishop was frustrated. The cathedral chapter again, the city, regional leaders and much of lay society rejected him. As the election to Whitby demonstrates, so too did some religious. When local charter collections are compared to those of the dioceses of Lincoln and Chester, there is a notable absence of addresses to and confirmations by the archbishop; even more notable, because there was an immediate rush of the same after the election of Archbishop Roger.⁹⁰ The desire for archiepiscopal

⁸⁶ *Historia Pontificalis*, 46.

⁸⁷ *Historia Pontificalis*, 48-9.

⁸⁸ *Cartularium abbathiae de Whiteby*, ed. J.C. Atkinson, Surtees Soc., 69, 72 (2 vols., 1879-81), I, 8-9; One of the candidates was the archbishop's nephew.

⁸⁹ D. Knowles, 'The Case of St William of York', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 5 (1936), 162-77, 212-4, reprinted, *The Historian and Character* (Cambridge, 1963), chapter 5; Stringer, *Reign*, 65-6. On the regional political context, Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, 169-76.

⁹⁰ For charters addressed to Henry, see *Early Yorkshire Charters*, i, nos. 567, 1156; vi, no. 126. For Roger, in the first few years after the civil war, i, nos. 32, 83, 642; ii, no. 102; iii, no. 1321; v, nos., 173, 245, 319; vi, nos. 21, 130, 132; viii, nos. 51, 102; xi, nos. 18, 20, 98, 249; xii, nos.

involvement in ecclesiastical and monastic issues and for the legitimacy the office could provide among laymen that is then evident must also have been present during Stephen's reign as it was elsewhere, but Archbishop Henry cannot have been able to provide the requisite legitimacy or power to fulfil an essential part of his office. Even Murdac was dependent upon the king. The eventual compromise between them has usually been interpreted as a defeat for Stephen but to gain the city, the see and legitimacy Murdac needed him. Once restored, Murdac went to Rome to argue Eustace's case for the king.⁹¹ William FitzHerbert's continued legitimacy was recognised in his reinstatement, but he had retained his reputation and respect, in England at least, throughout the reign. Even at York, then, Stephen's failure and the opposition of the Church were not complete.

Most other elections of the period have been considered as either free or under the influence of the archbishop or legate.⁹² The example of Walter Durdent makes clear that these were not necessarily in opposition to the king. At Worcester, where Theobald ensured the election of John of Pagham, it may be significant that Angevin attacks on the city which began after the death of Bishop Simon continued through the first years of his office.⁹³ Henry of Winchester's support for Jocelin de Bohun for Salisbury may have taken advantage of Stephen's capture - each had rejected the other's original candidate - but had no long-term consequences.⁹⁴ What is known of Jocelin's conduct suggests that he was at least opposed to Angevin dominance of his region, whether on his own behalf or the king's. A dispute with the Empress was settled only at the request of the pope. He was forced to hand over the castle of Devizes to duke Henry after recovering it from Matilda, and then to extend the agreement once Henry became king. Henry took a dislike to the bishop early in

77, 79. Seven charters issued by Scottish nobles addressed Henry, ii, nos. 1017, 1019-20; vii, no. 15; viii, nos. 99-101. This pattern parallels those noted in Part Two, the Scots were keen to see Henry accepted.

⁹¹ *Historia Pontificalis*, 83.

⁹² Rochester had always been the prerogative of the archbishops of Canterbury and is therefore not relevant here. For the complicated history of its incumbency in Stephen's reign see, Flight, 'John II, Bishop of Rochester'.

⁹³ Crouch, *Reign*, 256.

⁹⁴ Jocelin may also have had connections with Robert of Gloucester. Again, the long-term consequences for Stephen were limited. I owe this possible connection to my external examiner,

his reign which may well have originated in Stephen's time.⁹⁵

At Durham, through the difficult years of the early 1140s, the chapter was loyal to Stephen, and while William St Barbe was freely elected the king would have been well satisfied.⁹⁶ It is difficult to separate local, diocesan and regional loyalties and motives from loyalty to the king there but, whatever lay behind the cathedral's policies, it served the king's interests.⁹⁷ Hugh du Puiset's election surely cannot be considered as neutral. Archbishop Theobald supported it too.⁹⁸

The election of William Turbe as bishop of Norwich has been considered the 'most free' of the whole period.⁹⁹ William had been a Norwich monk since childhood and was prior. He replaced a secular ex-royal clerk who had resigned under a cloud. Unlike his predecessor he was committed to the cult of the new boy martyr which has itself been understood as against government interests. His modern biographer considered that he remained neutral throughout the civil war. However, Bishop William was addressed regularly in royal charters and worked consistently as a part of, and with, the royal government in his diocese. He was also one of the bishops trusted by the king enough to be sent to the papal council at Rheims in 1149. A free election of a monastic reformer did not entail opposition to the royal interests or a lack of commitment to the king. There were thirteen elections after the arrests of 1139, up to eight of which could be said to have been outwith Stephen's influence or free, but of these four were or became loyal to the king. Jocelin of Salisbury's election was not opposed to the royal interests and neither, as far as can be discerned, was that of John of Paghams. Henry Murdac was eventually reconciled and succeeded by William FitzHerbert. Even Gilbert Foliot was not always opposed to the king.

Professor Kemp.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 239-42; Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, 142-3.

⁹⁶ *cf.* Barlow, *English Church*, 92, where it is argued that Durham passed out of Stephen's control and into the hands of his enemies.

⁹⁷ On Durham, see Young, *William Cumin*; *idem*, 'The Bishopric of Durham in Stephen's Reign'.

⁹⁸ As a neutral election, Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 8. Recognised as a loyalist election, G.V. Scammel, *Hugh de Puiset Bishop of Durham* (Cambridge, 1956), 13-14; Saltman, *Theobald*, 120-2; Barlow, *English Church*, 102.

⁹⁹ Saltman, *Theobald*, 103; Barlow, *English Church*, 98; Harper Bill, 'Bishop William Turbe',

9.4. Church Councils

Eight, perhaps ten and maybe more, Church councils were held in Stephen's reign and these too have been associated with the escape of the Church from royal control and its growing autonomy, self confidence and independent power.¹⁰⁰ They have also been understood as an independent effort to protect the Church and to maintain peace begun because the king's government could no longer fulfil its duties. This process began with the legatine council of 1138 which included legislation on violence for the first time and accelerated rapidly into the canons of the council of 1143. These were '... in effect a single extended and detailed excommunication of all who attack the clergy and their churches...' They were repeated and extended in 1151.¹⁰¹ That the councils were attempts by the church to deal with the civil war violence after the collapse of centralised government, and that they are illustrative of a growing dynamism and coherence in the English Church cannot be doubted. That these attempts were antagonistic, consciously or not, to the king and his status is less certain. Like that of 1138, the later Church councils can be reinterpreted as evidence of a close relationship between king and episcopate based, at the very least, on mutual need. They had a practical and a symbolic importance to the relationship between Church and State, and to the relationship of both to the governance of the realm.¹⁰²

Avrom Saltman first noted that the king attended several and that it was therefore unlikely that the church was opposed to him in holding them.¹⁰³ Stephen attended three councils and almost certainly a fourth.¹⁰⁴ He could not attend one and refused to attend another.¹⁰⁵ He probably, but not certainly,

143.

¹⁰⁰ CS, I, ii, nos. 137-8, 141-6, 150-1.

¹⁰¹ Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 134-5.

¹⁰² The arguments presented below owe a great deal to the stimulation provided by Janet Nelson's work on the Carolingian church. See especially, 'National synods'.

¹⁰³ Not everyone has agreed, but the argument of Brooke and Morey that the hostility between Stephen and Gilbert Foliot was rooted in the latter's commitment to the archbishop and the Church seems less important than the other possible reasons. Stringer and Crouch both follow Saltman. Saltman, *Theobald*, 33; Brooke and Morey, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, 88-91, 91; Stringer, *Reign*, 64; Crouch, *Reign*, 295, 298.

¹⁰⁴ CS, I, ii, nos., 137-8, 144, 150.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 141-2.

attended that held after his release in December 1141; in any case this council at least was not opposed to him.¹⁰⁶ The papal legate Imar of Tusculum probably held a second council at London in 1145; the large gathering associated with it included the king. Imar witnessed one of Stephen's charters.¹⁰⁷ Stephen's non-attendance at the other council held by the legate in that year should therefore not be over-emphasised. The same might be said of the two legatine councils held in 1143 as well as that which he attended (especially as that which he did attend has been the most significant historiographically- see below).¹⁰⁸ Each council was held within that area which always remained under royal control, and as such with his acquiescence and under his aegis.¹⁰⁹ The editors of the canons of the councils have suggested the possibility of a number of further councils in the several large gatherings of bishops around Archbishop Theobald in the later 1140s; it should be noted that the king too was present at several of these.¹¹⁰

It is also worth noting that the contrast with Henry I's reign is not as strong as might be assumed because four councils were held in his last ten years and a series had also just come to an end in Normandy. None of them has been interpreted as opposed to royal authority.¹¹¹ William I had also held a series of English councils which established his kingship and leadership in the Church as well as introducing reform.¹¹² As with canon law and non-royal clerk elections, much that has been seen as new and representative of changed relations between king and church in Stephen's reign was nothing of the kind. Contrasts can be

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 143. Some have assumed his attendance, e.g., Crouch, *Reign*, 189.

¹⁰⁷ *CS*, I, ii, no. 146; *RRAN*, iii, no. 460.

¹⁰⁸ *CS*, I, ii, nos. 144-5.

¹⁰⁹ They were held too, not in Canterbury but in Westminster, London, or, under bishop Henry, at Winchester. Stephen was in London very regularly through the reign, see itinerary, *RRAN*, iii, xxxix-xliv. For 'London' meaning 'Lambeth', *Canterbury Professions*, no. 95. This would not materially affect the argument. Jane Martindale has shown that in eleventh century Aquitaine place was fundamental, it was perhaps not so important in Stephen's England, but it should not be dismissed, 'Peace and War in Early Eleventh Century Aquitaine', *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood*, 4, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992), 147-76, 153.

¹¹⁰ *CS*, I, ii, no. 147 and preceding note. For numbers of bishops witnessing royal charters in this period, see *RRAN*, iii, nos. 183, 301-2, 402, 511-12, 760. These, like the councils were at London save on two occasions at Canterbury.

¹¹¹ *CS*, I, ii, nos. 130, 132, 134, 136; Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, i, 374-5; R. Foreville, 'The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Church and Government*, 19-39.

¹¹² *CS*, I, ii, nos. 85-98 for councils and legatine visits between 1066 and 1087.

drawn too strongly. Comparison, especially with William I's, councils might be more useful.

Interpretation of the councils has been shaped particularly by those of 1143 and 1151 and especially by chapter two of the latter:

*Quia vero ecclesie per Angliam constitute occasione placitorum corone regis pertinentium attemuantur supramodum et destruuntur, nolumus eas sicut hactenus super eisdem placitis baronibus respondere. Ideoque precipimus quatinus huius nostre institutionis transgressoribus et terris eorum episcopi in quorum parrochiis fuerint iusticiam satagant ecclesiasticam exercere. Qua in re si episcopi neglegentes extiterint, ab eisdem damna ecclesiis illata requirantur.*¹¹³

Historians have been split on interpretation of this clause. Either it is evidence of the church withdrawing from the royal courts and from a royal justice system in which it had no longer any faith or it refers only to those barons who had usurped royal rights and were holding courts to which they had no right. Either it would rely on its own resources and its own courts or the king's own court and own rights were not in question and were reaffirmed. To some extent, interpretation has been based in the wider context in which the various historians view the relationship between Church and State.¹¹⁴

The king's presence surely makes it highly unlikely that a serious attack on royal power occurred. The first canon of the council insisted that the right to ecclesiastical contributions to the building and supply of the castles was unique to the king - it differentiated between illegal exactions and royal rights and in doing so reaffirmed the latter. Canon five also emphasised the co-operative rather than the antagonistic in the relationship:

Sanctorum patrum vestigia secuti precipimus ut hi qui anathematis sententia condemnantur, si per annum integrum in ea pertinaciter perseverent, infames et detestabiles habeantur, ut neque in testimoniis neque in causis audiantur et in principis sit potestate ipsos exheredare.

¹¹³ Ibid., no. 150.

¹¹⁴ Brooke, *English Church and the Papacy*, 180-2; Barlow, *English Church*, 131; Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 134; Crouch, *Reign*, 339 take the former view. For the latter,

If a person remained excommunicate for a year then the king would be expected by the Church to exert his authority in support of its actions. Hitherto this has not been noticed by historians of the period; in fact it was a reaffirmation of a traditional interrelationship between the two powers.¹¹⁵ Both had faced a serious reduction in their authority and security and recognised a mutual need for support. The Church was much more assertive and it was trying to deal with the problems that arose from the civil war, but it did so with the king's acquiescence and his co-operation. The council cannot be said to have marked a shift away from the king's peace and the sustaining of that peace; instead it assumed its existence and it aimed at its continuance.

Some have seen this conciliar legislation as owing a great deal to the Peace of God. It was noted above firstly, that the logic of explanation of the latter's absence has not been followed through, and secondly, that when it was published it was as part of a vision of a combined government in which royal authority and ecclesiastical authority worked together.¹¹⁶ The Peace tradition with which this best compares is Norman, a tradition of which Stephen himself was well aware because he still legislated on it there. It was a Peace which was early incorporated into secular peace and control and early assumed the backing of the secular power.¹¹⁷ Like the Peace, the councils were attempts to fill a void left by collapsing secular authority but, in England, the Church worked with that authority. They might be seen as a peculiarly English version of the Peace, incorporating both the Church's own dynamism and its continued co-operation with the king.¹¹⁸

Saltman, *Theobald*, 34; Holdsworth, 'War and Peace', 82; Stringer, *Reign*, 64, 70.

¹¹⁵ Holdsworth, 'Ideal and Reality', 70, 74; Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 135. It should be noted that Holdsworth in 'The Church', 215, has a very individual approach to chapter five, seeing it as dealing only with church court issues, which would associate him with the arguments of those historians who have emphasised the church's autonomous action in the councils but is not an interpretation made by any of them.

¹¹⁶ Holdsworth, 'War and Peace', 81-2; Stringer, *Reign*, 70-1.

¹¹⁷ *RRAN*, ii, no. 1908; iii, nos. 608-9. Note that the interest here was in the divvying up of the revenues between Church and State. Holdsworth, 'Ideal and reality', 68-70; idem, 'War and Peace', 81-2; Brett, 'Warfare and its restraints', 130-3. On the history of the Peace in Normandy, Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 163-4, 174, 176, 204-5. Jane Martindale's 'Peace and War in Early Eleventh Century Aquitaine', offers valuable parallels and a useful counter to the 'normal' view of the Peace, 149-50, 157. In general, *The Peace of God: Social violence and religious response in France around the year 1000*, ed. T. Head and R. Landes (Ithaca and London, 1992), Introduction, 6-8 and *passim*.

¹¹⁸ Cf Dalton, 'Churchmen' as discussed above, p. 14.

The councils can also be discussed in terms of the ceremonial and Christian kingship which has been suggested here as continuing through Stephen's reign. They were almost the only large-scale occasions of the civil war period and potentially offered an opportunity to make the authority, legitimacy and public status afforded to the king manifest. Mere attendance meant that the church accepted and was prepared to be associated with the king. He was thereby linked to, and seen as involved, with the only legitimate source of authority accepted by all sides and the only coherent hierarchy and corporate body in the kingdom.¹¹⁹ Janet Nelson's description of Carolingian synods is equally relevant to the councils of Stephen's reign: 'Repeated meetings over time, collective action and the articulation of common concerns fostered a conscious solidarity on the part of the bishops and a sense of responsibility for the leadership of their whole society...'.¹²⁰ Stephen can only have been part of this. His presence also emphasised his traditional role as overseer and protector of the church.

Historiographical marginalisation of Christian influence and emphasis on administrative and chivalric kingship has been noted. Crouch claimed that Stephen failed in the former.¹²¹ Chivalric modes can be seen in Stephen's conduct but also in that of his opponents. Chivalric kingship would have made Stephen 'one of them' and it has been suggested that this was one of the purposes it fulfilled under Henry II. However, it would not have answered Stephen's problems; he had to assert his difference.¹²² Christian kingship enabled him to do so and at the same time associate himself with the Church and higher authority. This phenomenon is also apparent in the re-appearance of crown-wearings in Stephen's reign.¹²³

¹¹⁹ R. Turner, 'Richard I and the episcopate in his French domains', *French Historical Studies*, 21 (1998), 518-42, 521, 537, showed that Richard's failure to work with the episcopate in his Plantaganet domains cost him dearly. He also noted that the French king rather than the English king possessed what sacral kingship held, and held the role of protector of the Church there.

¹²⁰ Nelson, 'National synods', 241.

¹²¹ Crouch, *Reign*, 84. See above, p. 43.

¹²² There is no study of Stephen and chivalry, *per se*, but see the valuable comments made by Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: the conduct and perception of war in England and Normandy, 1066-1217*, (Cambridge, 1996), 49, nt. 94.

¹²³ On crown-wearing at Christmas 1139 at Salisbury at the same time as Stephen assiduously settled the estates of the diocese and also held a church council, thus combining both kingship and Christian kingship, see *GS*, 96-8; *HN*, 70; Crouch, *Reign*, 114.

Their increase was an attempt to display and to emphasise Stephen's status as king. At Lincoln, in the aftermath of his recapture of the city from Ranulf II of Chester, by acting in the face of superstition he persuaded Henry of Huntingdon that he 'possessed great boldness and a spirit that was not fearful of danger.'¹²⁴ He perhaps recreated William I's Christmas crowning in the ruins of York in 1069.¹²⁵ It is worth noting that the fourth version of Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* ends here, at a high point of Stephen's recovery. The most explicit involvement of the church in this process was in the re-coronation of the king after his release from arrest on Christmas Day 1141, an event which David Crouch has described as a 'stage managed reaffirmation of his kingship'.¹²⁶ While the extent of the church's involvement in crown-wearings cannot be so clearly marked, it was traditionally its role to arrange such events and to oversee the presentation of kingship.

If this interpretation is correct then the king was central to the system church councils, including those of 1138 and 1139, aimed to uphold. Janet Nelson's emphasis on the centrality of the king to national synods of an earlier period is as relevant here: 'the bishops assigned a precise and crucial role to the king in the fulfilment of their aims, rightly seeing in royal dominion their one effective safeguard against magnates' local lordship.'¹²⁷

9.5. 1148-1154¹²⁸

Rheims, Theobald's disobedience, ensuing exile and the imposition of an interdict took place at the same time as a second crisis, the refusal of the Church to crown Eustace as king.¹²⁹ Traditionally, these events have been seen as illustrating the king's inability to dominate the Church, its own increasing unity

¹²⁴ *HH*, 749. The only source for the crown-wearing and the superstition. Note that it was Henry who had earlier noted the end of crown-wearings in Stephen's reign, 725.

¹²⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, variant 'D', for the year 1069.

¹²⁶ *Gervasii Cantuariensis*, i, 123-4; Crouch, *Reign*, 189.

¹²⁷ Nelson, 'National synods', 246.

¹²⁸ For this period and the details listed below, see Saltman, *Theobald*, 23-41; Barlow, *English Church*, 98-103; Davis, *King Stephen*, 111-13; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 211; Stringer, *Reign*, 72.

¹²⁹ *Historia Pontificalis*, 85-6; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 211.

and growing papal influence. Occasionally it has even been used as the basis of suggestions that Archbishop Theobald was at heart an Angevin sympathiser.¹³⁰ It is in this period that obvious parallels between the archbishop and Anselm and Becket can be drawn. However, most recent studies have seen this as one of Stephen's best periods in the secular sphere and the death of Eustace as more important than the refusal to crown him in the long run.¹³¹ Ironically enough, it was in this period that bishops also began to reappear at court in greater numbers.¹³² Theobald's legatine council in 1151 saw co-operation between Church and State, and even mutual antagonism towards papal influence.¹³³

John of Salisbury is the best source for Theobald's exile. Implicitly, he compared it with Becket's and he noted that Theobald's supporters were not proscribed and could visit him and supply him without fear of royal reaction. The exile was much less divisive and its resolution much easier than Becket's or Anselm's.¹³⁴ Further, the English bishops were united on their king's side. Stephen sent three bishops to Rheims to represent the English Church and the same three were there commissioned to support Theobald when he consecrated Gilbert Foliot as bishop of Hereford. All three refused. One of the three was the known loyalist Hilary of Chichester, but the other two, Robert of Hereford and William of Norwich, have usually been considered neutral.¹³⁵

For the purposes of this thesis, the most important aspect of the exile is the archbishop's attitude towards Stephen. Theobald prevented the papal excommunication of the king. John of Salisbury gives no explanation for this, but Keith Stringer has provided it. He argued that Theobald recognised that excommunicating the king would release men from the oath they had taken to him at his coronation and leave the way free for a real decline into anarchy.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Davis, *King Stephen*, 118.

¹³¹ For the traditional appraisal of this period, see Leedom, 'The English Settlement'; G. White, 'The end of Stephen's reign;', *History*, 75 (1990), 3-22; Stringer, *Reign*, 46-8. On Eustace's death, *GS*, 239; *WN*, 127; Holdsworth, 'The Church', 211-2.

¹³² *RRAN*, iii, nos. 103, 308, 402, 511-3, 760; Callahan, 'Arrests', 103.

¹³³ *HH*, 759; Barlow, *English Church*, 101.

¹³⁴ *Historia Pontificalis*, 42, 51-2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6, 48.

¹³⁶ Stringer, *Reign*, 72.

Theobald's exile also brings out the importance of papal commitment to continuity of kingship in England from 1139 on, in English ecclesiastical thinking. John of Salisbury describes Duke Henry's unhappiness at the prospect of Gilbert Foliot's election and Theobald's explanation of the new bishop's conduct on arrival in England to him. Gilbert went straight to Stephen.¹³⁷ Theobald told Duke Henry that the English Church could have only one king. Theobald's exile is, therefore, evidence of ecclesiastical commitment to rather than opposition to the king. No bishop, save Gilbert Foliot, can be shown to have joined the duke's party before the peace settlement of 1153.

Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that there was a new unity, a new strength and a new preparedness to oppose the king in the Church by the 1150s, manifested in the refusal to crown Eustace. At first sight this contradicts the present argument. However, Stringer, with great insight, has shown that:-

'The independent political role taken by the bishops in 1152 was in essence forced on them by the crown's inability to perform its protective function, a development they had hardly welcomed. It underlined that the Church, lacking an effective means of self defence, needed a strong king as the only guarantee of public order, and thus had the paradoxical effect of reinforcing the traditional identity of interests.'¹³⁸

If the Church grew while royal authority declined, good government by an effective king still remained its priority. Stephen could still offer that and was king. Eustace, on the other hand, became an obstacle to return to peace and strong kingship. Bishops were committed to the system rather than the person. This explanation resolves the ambiguities that are apparent in the relationship between King Stephen and the Church. Simultaneous developments in Anglo-Norman understanding of kingship and the kingdom can only have encouraged it.

¹³⁷ *Historia Pontificalis*, 47, 49.

¹³⁸ Stringer, *Reign*, 72.

CONCLUSION

What follows is relatively brief; hopefully, each Part of this thesis is, to some extent, self-contained, but their mutual influence should be apparent enough to obviate the necessity for extended repetition. Like the conclusion to Part Two, the conclusion to the whole is relatively simple. It is though, I think, important. The bishops of King Stephen's reign were much more significant figures in national and local government, politics, religious life and society than has hitherto been the recognised. Bishops themselves were more committed to the king and government, more religiously aware and possessed of more spiritual authority than historians have allowed. Parts Two and Three with their new narrative histories make this clear. Revised conceptual frameworks make them possible, underused charter material provides the evidence.

Several other conclusions or at least pointers to further research can also be made on the basis of the material presented here. Chapter One confirms recent thinking on Henry I's regime's collaborative and co-operative nature and implies that it is also worth reconsidering the nature of his kingship. Chapter Two and Part Two contribute something to burgeoning more positive reassessment of the twelfth-century secular clergy, its religion and its spiritual authority. This last is still frustratingly intangible, but that it was important cannot be doubted. Bishops' experience of magnate society as described here contrasts somewhat with the modern positive consensus and supports those who continue to emphasise the importance of aggression, aggrandisement, ambition, autonomy and so on in the characters of at least some aristocrats. As a whole the thesis suggests that the history of Stephen's church and reign, and the Anglo-Norman church and period more generally, need to reconsider the episcopacy.

How historians have come to see Stephen's bishops in particular ways has been a major feature of this study; contexts, types of evidence and methodological approaches have been the answers. Change the first and the last, and look at the charter evidence in the second, and the remaining basis for traditional views of Stephen's bishops is the chronicle material, and in particular the *Gesta*

Stephani.¹ Much of this thesis contradicts the quotation with which it began. It has, therefore, to be considered before it ends.

It was noted in the Introduction that modern reassessment of many aspects of Stephen's reign has been wary of exaggeration, localism and the effects of ecclesiastical authorship in the chronicle material. This applies with regard to the *Gesta*. For instance, its author can have had only a very limited knowledge of episcopal activity at Lichfield or Lincoln. If, as R.H.C. Davis argued, the author was Bishop Robert of Bath or at least a close connection of his, then the bishop's capture and failure to defend his city must have influenced the portrayal of the episcopacy in the chronicle.² There is great admiration for a neighbouring bishop, Robert of Hereford, who was more successful.³

Whether Davis is correct to ascribe authorship to Bath is unprovable, but he was very perceptive with regard to the *Gesta* as a whole.⁴ He noted that it is wrong to simply treat it as a history, despite its own claims to that effect: '...the author is quite exceptionally conscious of, or even obsessed with, the exalted nature of episcopal orders... The very structure of the history as originally conceived is based on the author's conception of the sanctity of the episcopacy.'⁵ He was teaching a lesson too. For the *Gesta*'s author the civil war was Stephen's punishment for arresting the three bishops in June 1139. Not only that, he could only explain the fall of the bishops by their own failings in office. Further, the episcopacy's failure to resolve either the civil war or local conflict could only be explained in similar terms. His response, conditioned by all three, was to

¹ Similarly, Brian FitzCount's criticism of Henry of Blois seems not to be applicable to the bishops of Chester and Lincoln at least. At local level they were consistent in their attitudes to the king, but, perhaps more importantly, in their response to regional conflict and relations with magnate society. Indeed, this consistency may itself have contributed to their importance. Generally too, Part Three suggests that the English ecclesiastical hierarchy was more consistent in its commitment to the king and his government than Henry's conduct might suggest. Henry is, and was to contemporaries, difficult to assess but, for present purposes he cannot be considered representative of the episcopacy as a whole. Henry of Huntingdon's writing on bishops was heavily conditioned by his conception of the nature of the world, in particular, the rise and fall of the great. His *De Contemptu Mundi* cannot be read as straight history. William of Malmesbury was wrong to say that Stephen was attended by only one bishop at Christmas 1140. For references, see p. 1, nt. 1.

² *GS*, xxxiv-viii.

³ *Ibid*, 104-6.

⁴ Barlow, *English Church*, 21, esp. nt. 83.

⁵ *GS*, xxxiii.

reassert his already strongly held episcopal ecclesiology in his discussion of each.

Analysis of the *Gesta*'s text has to take this into account and its statements moderated accordingly. The author does himself recognise that Stephen was in the right in June 1139 despite his captives' episcopal status. There is simply no evidence that Bishops Alexander and Roger de Clinton took up arms for questionable purposes and there is a considerable amount which suggests that they and their peers were at least trying to exercise their authority and fulfil their office. However, they were doing so within the realities of civil war and breakdown of government which the *Gesta* makes much of, but no concession too. In fact, the *Gesta Stephani* actually exemplifies many of the points made in this thesis about secular clerks new self-awareness, confidence, and commitment to the king, the kingdom, their office and their flock. While bishops may not have been as effective as its author would have wished and may not have lived up to the ideals he believed in, they held to very similar ones themselves and were committed to working towards them as best they could. It therefore reflects rather than condemns their attitudes and actions.

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