

Sussex Archaeological Society.

SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARENTAGE OF THE COUNTESS GUN- DREDA, WIFE OF WILLIAM, FIRST EARL OF WARRENNE AND SURREY.

By SIR G. F. DUCKETT, BART.

"Life is too short for fighting shadows."

J. WILSON DUCKETT.

Of all controversies at the present time, that on the Parentage of Gundreda, wife of William de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, is the most unsatisfactory, as it is, probably, save on the score of historic truth, the least important. The subject of her parentage, as the daughter of William the Conqueror, has been so often ventilated in this and other journals, that it is not likely to come upon its readers for the first time, but whilst it is useless to seek any compromise, it is equally impossible to arrive at any solution of the question under the maze and labyrinth of diverging and converging views enunciated by the several disputants.

The latest contribution, in presumed elucidation of the matter, by Mr. Chester Waters [*"Archaeol. Journal,"* No. 162, 1884], is very far from satisfactory. It is neither clear nor convincing, and although drawn up with ability, may be rather considered as a piece of *destructive*

criticism, tending to convey the impression that all writers on the subject have hopelessly blundered except himself. His sketch-pedigree in proof of the descent endeavoured to be established is not conclusive, neither do his assumptions in respect of St. Anselm's valuable letter to Henry I. rest on solid grounds. We ourselves lay great stress on that letter, but arrive at other conclusions. Tabular pedigrees are specious and ostensibly decisive, but apt to deceive the uninitiated. They parade and suggest a completeness to which they have no right, unless irrefutable and convincing reference be given for every grade in the descent. This essential quality in Mr. Waters's case is conspicuous by its total absence, the several grades being unsupported by any reference to authorities.

The light and airy manner in which the modern school decide these questions is amusing, but not an obvious proof of their infallibility. The self-sufficient confidence with which genealogical inferences and canons of criticism are manufactured on a subject, like the present, involving caution, study, and long experience, and to be approached only with due respect, is one of the prevailing fashions of the day; but this class of critics cannot be allowed to ride rough-shod over those who take an opposite view, or cast ridicule on evidences received for centuries as authentic, according to their own goodwill and caprice. Seeing, however, that as regards the present controversy most, if not all, competent antiquaries have unfortunately passed away, to whom it would have belonged to refute the wild theories propounded on this subject, the present generation seems likely to be able to challenge all argument and set criticism at defiance. Meanwhile counterfeits must not mislead us. It is manifestly clear that what has been accepted as true in a nation's annals for seven or eight centuries, is more worthy of confidence than the alleged "discoveries," and far-fetched views of modern antiquaries.

On one point, and one only, do we agree with Mr. C. Waters, namely, that the Obartulary of Olugui is likely

to be the best (and perhaps only) chance of solving the problem of Gundred's relationship to the Conqueror.

The paper, now submitted to the Sussex Archaeological Society, was drawn up some time since on the appearance in the "Academy" of certain notices on the parentage of Gundreda. The gist of those several articles, in a condensed form, is contained in the 1st paper on the subject by Mr. Waters, to which allusion has just been made. This paper embraces, however, the same views, but urges nothing to alter in the least our opinion and belief in the Lewes Chartulary, or the Royal Parentage of Gundreda, so that we adhere to the original evidences on these points with greater tenacity. Until all existing Charters have been thoroughly ransacked, including, as we have said, the Chartulary of Clugni—supposing it to be still extant—we have no other authentic data on which to rely, besides what we have already. A thorough overhauling of such records might bring us nearer to the truth, but notwithstanding the embolism of the present age, in things temporal as well as spiritual, nothing has hitherto been discovered or adduced (in our mind) to impugne the authenticity of existing evidences.

In dealing with the question of Gundreda, Countess of Warrenne, there seems an infatuation on the part of some to be guided exclusively by Ordericus Vitalis, and to affiliate her to a common parent with one Gherbod, a Fleming. Much in the same way, and from the same cause, the battle for centuries known by no other designation than that of "Hastings" has obtained for itself the name of "Seclac," on the authority alone of this historian, notwithstanding that, with all due regard to his average reliability, he has grossly erred in making the said Countess to survive her husband, and in ascribing the earldom bestowed on the latter as the gift of the Conqueror.

The craze, again, of a few others, (if we may use the term), in deducing her descent from every improbable and far-fetched source, has taken such firm hold of

their convictions that, rather than institute research in the right direction, and verify existing evidences by a thorough investigation of all extant charters and other treasures of Lewes Priory—for the list given by Dugdale does not embrace more than are necessary for the general reader—where some specific mention of her parentage, as its foundress, might reasonably be expected,¹ the question is made hopelessly obscure for all future time. How can we ever expect, in fact, to disperee the clouds of illusive and feeble reasoning which have been spread over the subject—we will not say purposely, but rather erroneously, for all are more or less anxious to find out the truth—when two recent writers, to be presently quoted, unhesitatingly assert that Gundreda "had not a drop of Queen Matilda's blood in her veins."²

We will first bring forward somewhat in support of our own views, already made known in a former volume of the "Sussex Archaeological Collections,"³ before approaching this fallacious theory.

It is not presumed for a moment to maintain that we have established the truth of this Princess's parentage, on which many men of ability and intelligence are still disagreed—argument by inference, however strong, is not so conclusive as direct evidence—still we believe, and many others are of opinion, that we have gone far to refute so much of it as refers to her presumed relationship to Gherbod, the Fleming.

When Ordericus Vitalis asserts her to have been "sister to Gherbod," we still believe that he intended us

¹ It would appear, since the above was written, that many of the early charters of Lewes Priory of the reigns of Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II., &c., are now at the Record Office, having of one time formed part of the Chapter House manuscripts at Westminster. These original documents are doubtless among those to which Dugdale refers, and their examination is being undertaken as to whether they throw any light on Gundreda's uncontroverted descent. [B. Atholstan, No. 8030, Sept. 4, 1886.]

² "Life and Times of St. Anselm," by Martin Hale, M.A., 1862; "Parentage of the Countess Gundreda," by K. O. Wilson ("Academy," No. 308, 1872).

³ "Observations on the Parentage of Gundreda," &c., "Sussex Archaeological Collections," XXVII.; "Queborland and Wincerefordland Antiquaries Transactions," II., 222 sq.; "Atholstan," No. 204, July, 1875.

to understand that she was his *foster-sister*, and in no way disposed to deny her relationship to the Conqueror and Matilda. We now see further cause to entertain this opinion. If the passage, in which the assertion is made, and *nowhere else repeated*, be attentively weighed, a very material point will appear to have escaped notice, going far (we consider) to establish the belief that the *near relationship* of Gundrada to the Conqueror was present in the writer's mind at the time he couples her name with that of Ghorbol. The passage is made up of King William's *own family* and belongings.

In the sentence "immediately preceding" the mention of Ghorbol, Ordericus brings forward the name of the Conqueror's *own niece* (Judith), and in that "immediately following" he refers to Adelaide, the *sister* of the same King, and lest *sister* should in this case be misinterpreted, he adds, *daughter* of the same father, Duke Robert.* The manifest inference to be drawn (in our mind) from these notices, and the *joint* enumeration of so many of the Ducal (and Royal) family, or relations in which they stood to the King, is, that Ordericus naturally classed them together as members of the *same House*, and for the following, if for no other reason. Were in these days a writer to quote two or more members of our English Royal Family, he would assuredly not interpose or associate with them the name of a somewhat obscure subject of the reigning Sovereign, unless that subject had been elevated to a very much higher position by marriage or other connection. In this instance Ghorbol had some time before been made Earl of Chester, a rank evidently acquired solely in virtue of his being Gundrada's foster-brother.

The passage in Ordericus runs thus:—"To the Count Gallère [*the Saxon Earl Walthof*], son of [*Earl*] Sivard, the most influential and powerful of the English, the King gave in marriage *with his niece* Judith the county of Northampton, and this he did chiefly with a view to

* See note following on Otto de Champagne (i).

gain him over to his interest; and William de Warenne, who had married Gundreda, the [foster-] sister of Gherbod, received the county of Surrey. Odo, Count of Champagne, nephew of Count Theobald III., who had married the King's sister (i.e.), daughter of the Duke of Normandy (their common father), obtained the county [territory or isle] of Holderness."²

The position which the Countess Gundreda holds in this paragraph, is that, we maintain, which was due to her birth alone, let Ordericus be right or wrong in naming her ["foster] sister to Gherbod." It may, however, be reasonably urged with equal probability, that, on account of his many shortcomings, he was in error in so doing, for no other authority whatever can be found to corroborate the statement, neither does he himself repeat it, in alluding to her afterwards as Countess of Warenne, or, in short, in any other part of his Ecclesiastical History. Independent of the errors of Ordericus, already pointed out at p. 9, we may draw attention to the Biographie Universelle for his want of trustworthiness, and to the preliminary matter of Guizot's French translation of his Chronicle. Under any circumstances the testimony of historians is as nothing in comparison with original documentary evidence.

In the Lords' Committee, for instance, on the dignity

² Rex Galliarum Guillelmo comiti, filio Steuilli, potentissimi Anglorum, comitatum Northamptonie dedit, aliq[uo] Juchth septem annis (*), et licet inter eos amicitia perduraret, in matrimonium conuenit, cum, &c. . . . et Guillelmo de Gouernon, qui Gundredam sororem Gherbodi conjugium habuit, dedit Berregiam. Odo vero Campanens (*), nepos Theobaldi comitis, qui sororem Roberti quondam regis, Alise uellicet Roberti ducis, dedit idem nomen Wilhermo (Ord. Vit., par. 31, lib. 17., 232).

(*) She was daughter of the Countess of Alençon, the Countess's sister by the half-blood.

(*) Odo de Champagne, was the son of Stephen II., Count of Champagne. On his father's death, being under age, he was dispossessed of his inheritance by Theobald III., Count of Chartres, and in 1060 sought refuge at the court of his kinsman (cousin), William, Duke of Normandy, following him into England in 1066. According to Bingham (lib. iv., 587), the Countess gave him his preference, the daughter, namely, of Herlin de Cantevilla and Herleva [Harriet or Arct], not as Orderic Vital source, the sister of the whole-blood, the daughter of Duke Robert of Normandy; [et Guillelmo mercatori sororem Adulphine, filiam nepos Herlini de Cantevilla et Herleva, Galliarum ipsius uulgo, in matrimonio dedit] (Dom Bouquet, lib. iv., p. 587).

of a Peer [re Arundel title and prerogative], having under consideration the case of Roger de Montgomery, Charters and Records were unhesitatingly held to be paramount to Chronicles and Historians, the mode and style of "Comes Rogerius," in his signature to Battle Abbey Foundation Charter, as "de Moutgum," being insisted on, as conclusive against the contention upheld by some historians, that he was "Comes de Arundel." So, in like manner, without adducing similar examples, the extracts by Dugdale and other Herald's from Lewes Priory charters ought necessarily to override the "unconfirmed" statement of Ordericus. And here it may be mentioned as noteworthy, and quite inexplicable, save on the score of oversight, that of all people Dugdale, in his Baronage, should be found to adopt Ordericus's version of "Soror Gherbodi," when at the same time he actually gives a reference in the margin, and over leaf gives another reference in the margin to his own (and Dodsworth's) Monasticon, published many years before, which quite repeals it.*

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But a still further illustration may be added in support of Guadrodia's descent.

In the well-known controversy between Brooke and Camden, regarding William de Warenne and his wife, the former held that the "Rex," who had made W. de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, was the Conqueror, whereas Camden maintained that it was his son William Rufus. The argument of Brooke was, that the words "pro salute" in the Foundation Charter of Lewes Priory, showed that the Conqueror was still alive, for had he been dead, the wording would have been "animâ," overlooking, however, the fact that the title of "Rex" was given to Rufus in the same sentence.† Nevertheless in

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* See account of Dugdale's Baronage in Monk, with account of Anthony à Wood's Errors and Corrections in MS. B. 1. 1.

† It may be of interest to quote the entire passage, observing that in the copy made by Ashmole, the word "animâ" occurs in place of "salute." It runs thus—

Carlo Willmo p'ni fundatoris Priuatiu de Lewes.
In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, Amen.

By Register de Lewes.

Rex Willmo de Warenne.

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that controversy neither of those Herald's questioned Gundreda's parentage in the remotest degree, and in Brooke's Catalogue she is named in the list of the Conqueror's issue. It was left to a future age to form the wild supposition of Queen Matilda having had a child born out of wedlock, or even by a former marriage!

So far, therefore, the preceding adds materially to strengthen the theory we have elsewhere adduced,¹ and throws additional light on the passage in Ordericus.

We now turn to a totally different view of the subject, or obverse of the medal.

To show how opinions may differ on the question of Gundreda and her descent, two recent writers² have boldly denied to her (as already stated) any place whatever in the Royal Family of England. Both endeavour to show, arguing from different premises, that she bore no relationship either to the Conqueror, or to his Queen Matilda.

Without entering at any length into the questions of affinity and consanguinity as prohibitions to marriage, or matters—we may almost say quibbles—destined to lead one away from the investigation of historic truth, for, as regards the former, whenever existing, a dispensation from the Pope could (and did) at any time rectify, we will endeavour to disprove (if possible) the fallacious reasoning of Miss, and some of the latest theorists, as far as they have come to our knowledge, in disproof of the parentage in question.

The first who appears to have thrown any doubt on

et Gundreda mater mea, et pro sancto animo meo, et antea eximia mea et pro animo sancti usq[ue] Willm[us] Regis, qui me in Angliam terram adduxit, et pro ejus libertatem meamque vocis feci, et qui meam paternam donationem confirmavit, et pro sancto domino meo Matilda Regina, mater usque mea, et pro sancto domino meo Willmo Regis h[uius] mi, post ejus adventum in Angliam infra hanc curiam feci, et qui me Dominum Surregum fecit, et pro sancto oculenti hereditate usque meo, de ab concordio, etc." (Ash. MS. 814, fo. 84.) Bibl. Bodl.

¹ "Observations on the Parentage of Gundreda," &c. ("Sussex Archaeological Collection," XXVIII, : "Gloucestershire and Westmoreland Antiquarian Transactions," III, 221 sq.; "Archæologia," No. 2817, July, 1872.)

² "Life and Times of St. Anselm," by Martin Hale, M.A., 1882: "Parentage of the Countess Gundreda," by O. E. Waters ("Academy," No. 1165, 1878).

Gundroca's descent from Matilda and the Conqueror was the late Mr. Stapleton, in a paper in the "Archæological Journal" (iii., p. 20 *seq.*), the illogical reasoning of which was first entirely made manifest by the late Mr. Blauw ("Archæologia," xxxii., 108). Without naming others who have followed in the same track, the writer of an article in No. 368 of the "Academy" (1879), wishes us to believe, and undertakes to show according to his own view, that the Countess Gundreda was not Queen Matilda's daughter by any marriage, and that her descent from the reigning families of Flauders and England must be henceforth looked upon as a "discarded fable."

The assertion, also, by the author of the "Life of St. Anselm" (i., 421) that the Countess Gundreda "had not a drop of Matilda's blood in her veins," is as startling as unfounded, if any regard is to be attached to historic evidence. The theory of this writer is, that Gundreda was the sister of one Richard Cuet, a person who became a monk of Bernonsey. Such an hypothesis cannot be maintained for a moment, as we shall satisfactorily demonstrate, or even in the face of what Ordericus asserts, that she was the sister of Ghorbod,¹⁰ (not even made out in this case as a half-brother, but a totally different man).

One of the chief arguments in disproof of Gundreda's parentage adduced by the writer in the "Academy" (No. 368, 1879), rests on the *old* assertion that the words "*filie mee*" in the Conqueror's charter, giving to the monks of St. Pancras the manor of Walton in Norfolk, are an interpolation. A minute inspection of this faded and obliterated charter, warrants no such imputation. The words "*filie mee*" are interlined (in a hand of the 16th century),¹¹ in explanation of words which were originally written, and which have disappeared from decay. Such was the opinion of some of the highest

¹⁰ Ord. Vit., p. 11, l. 14, 158.

¹¹ Mr. Walter asserts them to be "in a modern hand." This is erroneous; the orthography speaks for itself.

NA This is a copy of the original charter of the Conqueror, as it appears in the original, with the words "filie mee" interlined in a modern hand.

authorities after repeated examination of this document some years ago ("Archæologia," xxxii., 117).

Since the plea of "interpolation," however, was first propounded in respect of this charter, another theory has been started. The same writer now accuses the monks of Lewes of having forged the Confirmation deed of their founder ("Arch. Journal," No. 103, 1880). This assertion is satisfactorily answered in the sequel.

To say the least, as regards interpolation, if the doctrine be once admitted that words or passages in any instrument can be styled as interpolated, which it may be convenient to get rid of, there must be an end to all history and to all tradition, sacred or profane.

The arguments held by the author of "St. Anselm's Life" in disproof of Gundrada's parentage, appear to be threefold.¹ First, that the words "*filia*" and "*mater*," in the Conqueror's and William de Warenne's charters, -- for he does not go upon the ground of any interpolation or forgery, to impugn their authenticity -- signify respectively "*god-daughter*" and "*god-mother*" ("Life of St. Anselm," iv., 420; "Academy," April 9th, 1883); secondly, that she was the sister of Richard Guet (as just observed), quoting the "Chronicle of Bermonsey" in proof of it; and thirdly, that St. Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had interdicted a projected marriage between her son (William de Warenne II.) and a daughter of Henry I. on the score of consanguinity.

Now, the absolute improbability of the first of these suppositions is self-evident, and cannot be maintained,

¹ "Still it may be urged" (says the writer) "that, after all, the first Earl William calls the Conqueror's Queen '*mater sua*;' and the Conqueror is as true to her as to her mother of Gundrada's '*filia*.'" --

"Precisely so. Gundrada was Matilda's godchild. Peter, mother of the King, were the ordinary appellations of god-sons and god-children. Nothing was more common" ("Life of St. Anselm," i., 420).

In conclusion --

"Should the reader really care to inquire who, then, was Gundrada, I would refer him to the following passage in the '*Registrum de Gornowenno*' (Harl. 281): 'A. D. 1078 Henrico Rege et Guet filio comitis Warenne,' &c., &c."

Table 17

St. Anselm's Life
1883
Academy
April 9th

if language has any meaning, for, unlike "Sorel," as *foster-sister*, (the interpretation first adopted by ourselves, for which there are good and "derivative" grounds),¹⁴ the words "comaster," and "filia," have uniformly been used in strict and legal phraseology to designate "god-mother" and "god-daughter," from a time long antecedent and subsequent to that of which we are treating, as the quotations below sufficiently demonstrate, and cannot be similarly treated.¹⁵ Even admitting, for the sake of argument, that in common parlance their occasional use "might" be found, they were decidedly never so employed in any legal instrument or charter, particularly in such an important document, as, in this case, the Conqueror's charter. But the two last statements of this writer are diametrically opposed, and only tend to confirm the case in favour of Gundreda being Queen Matilda's daughter. As the sister of Richard Guot, (had such been the fact), there would have been no relationship whatever, or any cause for interdicting a marriage between the two parties,

¹⁴ "Observations on the Parentage of Gundreda," &c.; (Society's Antiquarian Collection, XXVII.). We are under the impression that we ourselves anticipated the Author of the "Life of St. Anselm" in the discovery of the "key to the interesting puzzle," of which he ["Archæology," April 28th, 1831] claims the credit, in our previous application of it to "foster-parentage." The adaptation of the theory of "hospitium-amicitie" cannot be maintained, for "Sorel" is a solitary instance, and, perhaps, the only word in the whole vocabulary which admits of such conversion.

¹⁵ Authorities in support of "Comaster" —

"Natus paterfamilias comasteris annis duxere [in] uxorem" (Lex Langensia, lib. 2, tit. 8, §. 4. D). "Nati paterfamilias comasteris annis duxere" (Lex Langensia, lib. 2, tit. 8, §. 4. D). "Natus paterfamilias comasteris annis duxere" (Lex Langensia, lib. 2, tit. 8, §. 4. D).

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Those for "Filia" (and Filialis) are —

"Item lega eadem filia et filialis inter VII. VIII." (Testam. Delmaris Episcopi, ann. 1321; Ann. ab Anglorum. Moxon, p. 13). "Filiatæ aut filialis apud iudicium de fide" (Regulatore Atholice Episcopii, lib. 2, tit. 21). "Quomodo Anselmus filialis filie eadem eadem annis duxere, et illi eadem filialis et filialis; et comasteris annis duxere in filialis" (i.e., deinde quod filialis a comasteris subfertur) contra" (Lambertus Ardensis; Drenage in locis). "Glossary, hoc dicitur, qui sunt filialis filialis" (Hist. p. 361; Speculum).

Blond Man. IV. of England conferred the name of Christ on John de Norbery, he calls him his godson, "filialis uxor" (Charter in possession of a writer).

whilst St. Anselm's letter¹² is conclusive proof that such a marriage was in contemplation, but above all it proves the *consanguinity*, or relation in which each stood to the King and Matilda, as Gundrada's issue on the one hand, and that of King Henry her brother on the other. It is clear that Gundrada's son, William de Warenne II., until disproved to have been the Conqueror's and Matilda's grandson, would have been first cousin to Henry's daughter, and sprung from a common ancestor. But, if Gundrada were not sister to that King, they were no relations whatever; consequently the *relationship* endeavoured to be ignored by those who aver that she was not Matilda's daughter, is *thoroughly confirmed* by St. Anselm's letter, and the very authority cited as an argument against it, tends diametrically in the opposite way, to substantiate it.

The consanguinity existing between Gundrada's son and Henry I.'s daughter, referred to that which already had existed between the Conqueror and Matilda, in their common ancestor Duke Rollo, or very likely to some other source of consanguinity *still nearer*. As we understand it, William the Conqueror was in the fifth degree of descent from Duke Rollo, and Matilda was in a further degree from the same, through Adela, the wife of her great-grandfather, Hugh Capet. Other modes of tracing up to a common ancestor may have been shown, but the above, we think, suffices, inasmuch as the *consanguinity*, upon which the whole question hinges, is *proved* by St. Anselm's letter. As for the precise number of grades of

¹² St. Anselm's letter ("St. Anselmi Epistolæ," iv. 81) runs thus:—

"Henrico charissimo tuo domno, Dei gratia regi Anglorum, Anselmus archidiaconus fideles servitium tui preestitimus.

"Gentis ego non pro bono voluntate quam vobis habet, et vobis qui eam servare studetis. Quærit oculatum cordis vestri quid sibi sciendum sit de hoc, quia pater est filium suum cum Gulielmo de Francia, cum ipso et filia vestra ex vobis parte sint cognati in quartâ generatione, et ex alterâ in secunda. Scitatis absque dubio quia nullum pactum servari debet contra legem Christianitatis. Nil actum, et hoc propterea, nullo modo legitime cognati possunt, neque sine dimittere nuptiarum vinculum, necque alio regno peccatis nocent, qui hoc ut hoc peccaverunt.—Propter quod et cum vobis vobis, et pater Dei, sicut clarissimo domino, ut nullatenus vos hinc peccatis inveniatis, neque filium vestrum Aldem Gulielmus pater legem et voluntatem Dei transgredietur. Denique Deus dignus vos et omnes solos vestros in beneficium eius."

descent, on which so much stress is laid, whether in the fourth or fifth degree, we hold it to be of no primary consequence in respect of the main argument. The relationship, so emphatically denied to Gundreda, is thus thoroughly established. Perhaps St. Anselm himself rather qualifies his own assertion as to the degrees of descent, when he says "*et ita propinqui sunt.*" The canonical consanguinity, whatever may have been its degree, which we know William and Matilda violated, would have extended to a further generation, for the Council of Rouen in 1072 decreed:—"Si infra septimam generationem aliqua consanguinitas inventa fuerit . . . non conjugantur." William of Malmesbury, also, states the same (lib. I de Gestis Pontificum Anglorum) "*ex alterutra parte,*" so that the question of relationship, whilst sufficing to prove who Gundreda was not, viz., the sister of Richard Guet, affords direct evidence, on the score of the interdicted consanguinity, of her being the Conqueror's and Matilda's daughter.

The assertion, in fact, that this person was her brother, is utterly fallacious. It is made on the strength of an entry in the "*Chronicle of Bermondsey,*"¹⁵ quoting the temporalities of the Priory, which reads thus:—

"A.D. 1098. Hoc anno Ricardus Guet, frater Comitissæ Warenne dedit manerium de Cowyk monachis de Bermondseeis."

Now, if reference is here made to any Countess of Warenne, it was assuredly not made to Gundreda, and further on it will be seen, that the *Liber Eliensis* is quoted by one of the reformed writers to prove a second Countess of Warenne.

Manning, the Historian of Surrey, in quoting the gift of Cowick in Essex (*locus Quickbury*) by Richard Guet to the monks of Bermondsey in 1098, justly observes, in reference to the then contemporary Countess of Warenne—having in his mind the wife of William de Warenne

¹⁵ Annals Abbatum B. Sacerdotum de Bermondseeis, ab anno D'ni 1042—usq. ad a. d. 1433; *Hand. B. B.*, 281. [There appears to have been an error in respect of 1042, being 40 years before the Abbey was founded (viz., in 1082).]

II.—that “*she had no brother*” (i., 189, “Hist. of Surrey”). But we know that Gundreda, as the Conqueror’s daughter, had several, and that she had been dead thirteen years when the gift was recorded—she died at Castle Acre in 1085. This palpable error in the “Chronicle of Bermondsey” is made manifest by one of the fraternity of that very house, William de Preston, who arranged the Book of its Charters in 1303.¹⁷ He clearly shows that no Countess of Warenne was sister to any Richard Guet, but, on the contrary that she was his “*Lady*,” under whom he held. Manning states that the estate, under which Guet held, was of her (the Countess of Warenne’s) inheritance. It was held, says he “by the service of one knight’s fee of the family of Warenne and their descendants, as of their manor of Overham in Metching, to the Lord of which it paid 100s. upon the death of every Abbot” (Cf. “Morant’s Essex,” ii., 500; Inquis. 4, 20 Edw. III.; 9 Rich. II.; 4 Hen. V.; 4 Hen. VI.; “Nova. Repertorium,” ii., 513). The Historian of Surrey further observes (i., 205) that Richard Guet—whose name appears also as Goet and Guel—who gave the manor to the House of Bermondsey, possessed a monk there at the same time (Chartul. Berw. MS.).

But another consideration appears to present itself. Might not the genealogical confusion into which writers seem to have drifted in respect of the name of Guet, strengthened by the erroneous inference deduced from the Bermondsey Chronicle with regard to Gundreda, be traced to the family connection which manifestly did exist between a daughter of Henry I., by one of his concubines, and the family of Warenne, which we have on the authority of Junilda? This Chronicle states, that the fourth daughter of the King married William Guel (*sic*). (“Gemeticensis,” l., 8, c. 29.) Without

¹⁷ Liber chartarum &c per fratrem Willalatum de Preston editum et collatum: A.D. 1303, tempore regis et regine filii domini Johannis de Capetibus, tunc dicti domini pateris, olim pateris, Rob. Trappis de London. Excerpta ex hoc libro, Gualteri Cotton. Libr. A. viii, 14. &c. &c. [Cf. Innes’s Sottile.]

giving the authority, the "Annals of England" state the same thing, styling him, however, "Goet" (Gaut).

It is unnecessary, we think, to dwell further on the worthless theory of Richard Gaut as brother to the Countess Gondreda. That wild supposition is quite set at rest, as far as she is concerned, by an entry in the Liber Eliensis (ii., c. 119). It is quoted by the aforesaid writer in the "Academy" to prove that William de Warenne, the 1st Earl of Surrey, married a second wife. Whether founded or unfounded, the entry, quoted by Planohé¹⁸ is brought up again in the "Academy" (of 7th April, 1891), the writer, in repeating which, affirms (without, however, giving the authority) that the 2^d Countess¹⁹ was a daughter of a William Goet de Montmirail, a person discovered, in like manner with Gherbod, in Ordericus's Chronicle only. The statement (if a fact) would seem to coincide and harmonize very conveniently with the above "brothering" theory, leaving it open to imagine the possibility of Gaut being brother to the Countess of Warenne of the Harmondsey Chronicle. There appears, nevertheless, every possible reason to doubt the authenticity of the passage in the Lily Register.²⁰ The dis-

¹⁸ "The Conqueror and his Contemporaries," i., p. 106.

¹⁹ Gondreda is assumed by some never to have been a Countess. Against this assertion it may be said that she is called Countess in the Charter of Henry II., although she died before her husband was created an English Earl, and Watson, in his "House of Warenne" (i., 62), and Douglas & Ferguson's (i., 76), both show that W. de W., her husband, was Earl Warenne in Normandy before his arrival in England. The latter quotes an old MS. in the Harleian Office, from which it appears that Gherbod de France, Marquis was the father of Count de Warenne, who was the father of William, 1st Earl of Warren and Surrey. Furthermore, on a roll of "Quia Veniunt," about 7 Edw. I., John, Earl of Waren and Surrey, pleaded that his ancestors, with Earl of Waren in Normandy, and that they were dismissed of their lands there from adhering to the Kings of England, against those of France. The rank of Norman Count is unquestioned, from Domesday Book, in which WILL^{de} de Warenne is spoken of as "Comes" under Burgun in Norm; "Comes," "Comites," "Willelmo de Warren" and "Willelmo" all referring to him.

Lastly, the charter of William de Warenne in the Lily Register, gives him the name title — "Willelmo Comite Normanni."

All these facts seem clear that during his whole life he had ranked as a Count, and were prior to his creation as an English Earl, no longer a high, he survived but a very short time.

²⁰ Douglas, who appears to have been the first to notice this passage in the Lily Register, quite repudiates it. He observes: "If the first part of this story, as the abbott's hearing that since [sic, the case of] William de Warenne, on

covery of another Countess of Waronne, so soon after Gundreda's death in child-birth, in May, 1085, and so shortly preceding the death of W. de Warenno himself in 1088, requires special confirmation; especially when we know that dying on the 23rd of June in that year, having been only created, by William Rufus, Earl of Sarrey in the preceding year, viz., 1087, he was interred in the Church of St. Pancras at Lewes Priory, side by side with Gundreda; whilst the epitaph, according to the Register of the Priory, would not seem to imply that he had married a second wife:—"Of your charitye praye for the sowles of William de Warrenne and Gundreda his wife;" a belief quite entertained by Dugdale. Different entries, so far from alluding to two wives, point expressly to one only."

From no point of view, however, can the question of Gundreda's parentage be freed from the mystery, which is made to surround it—in the absence of further testimony, such as the Chartulary of Clugni might afford—save by a rigid adherence to unrefuted, and (except by a few) undisputed evidences.

The first of these, in order of importance, is the well-known Charter of the Conqueror, giving to the monks of St. Pancras the manor of Walton in Norfolk. It is uncontestedly clear, and sufficient to silence any doubt on the subject. He gives it—"pro animâ domini et antecessoris mei Regis Edwardi . . . et pro animâ Gulielmi de Warenno, et uxoris sue Gundredæ filie marquet hereditum eorum" ("Intro. Domesd.," i., 807).²⁰

The next is the Foundation Charter of Lewes Priory, which expressly states Gundreda (its co-foundress) to have been the Queen's daughter. William de Warenne,

being carried away by the Devil after his death) he no longer than the last, that the lady sent them (the Monks of St.) one hundred shillings, I shall show it to be a mere fiction, in regard to the lady [i.e., Gundreda] was certainly dead about three years before."

²⁰ Tats (William de Warren) fecit in capite law sui iuris d'nom Gundredam conuictam suam, et filiam predicti Regis Conuictorie. Ash. 108. 21-4, C. 32.

²¹ Domina Gundreda, filia Conuictoria, et uxor Willmi primi, et patris cardinalis quid Oseluere, obiit 4 Kal. Junii, Anno Gracie 1096. anno 8 post obitum suum, successit regnia in capite Lewensi cum conjugio suo.—(Ashmole)

1085

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A. 1085
had not yet
1085

folio 108. 21-4. . . .

Ⓐ folio 108. 21-4. . . .

who founded that House in conjunction with Cundreda—the original deed of gift being with the mother-community at Clugni—enters, in his second charter, with the greatest possible minuteness and detail into their reasons for so doing, and in a way which no other charter can equal.²⁰ He unquestionably proves Queen Matilda to have been *his wife's mother*. The words can be taken in no other sense. They are—"pro salute domine mee Matildie Regine matris unice mee."²¹

Again, in the Register of the Priory, are words to the same effect:—"Iste (William de Warenne), primo non vocabatur nisi solummodo Willelmus de Warenna, postea vero processu temporis à Willelmo Rege, filio Regis et Conquestoris Angliæ, cuius filiam desponsavit, plurimum honoratus est."²² (Cf. "Watson's Memoirs of the House of Warren," i., 36; Ashmolean MS. 841, fo. 32).

A further instance we have in another evidence of that House (Mon. r., 14). Among the original benefactors of the Priory of Lewes, Cundreda is named conjointly with her brother, Henry I. of England:—"In Norfolkis (with other possessions) Karletona, quam dedit Matildis regina, mater Henrici Regis et Cundredæ Comitissæ [Ex Libro Computorum, olim Prioratui de Lewes spontanea] (Dugdale).

Independent of the positive and affirmative statements of these records, nothing, perhaps, proves the thorough fallacy of the hypothesis under consideration more than the wording of the Epitaph on Cundreda's tomb at Lewes, still in perfect preservation, and

²⁰ See note on p. 19, post.

²¹ See text page 9, 2, ante.

²² The entire passage, giving the date of his death and place of interment, may be quoted:—"Ex libro Registrarij de Lewes. Willelmus de Warenna, primus Comes Burtopie, et Burdake ecclesie Lewens, filius unicus et heres de Gul. Jubi Anno d'ni 1088, et fundacionis oratoris proleto in hoc anno, à Conquisto R. Iste primo vocabatur solummodo Willelmus de Warenna, postea vero processu temporis à Willelmo Rege filio Regis et Conquestoris Angliæ cuius filiam desponsavit, plurimum honoratus est. Tunc inest in capelle Lewens iuxta d'nam Gundredam Comitissam unam et filiam predicti Regis Conquestoris. Ducis tunc Comes tunc postea Rex. Willelmus Prior Conquestoris per 88 annos, et comes Willelmus Rex Secundu Regis per unum annus" (Ashm. MS., fo. 32).

XXXV.

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conclusive of her affinity to the *Dukes* of Normandy, and her relationship to the Conqueror. What are we to understand by "*Stirps Gundrada Ducum*" in this Epitaph, save that of "issue" or "offspring;" and, furthermore, of what Dukes could she be the issue but of those of Normandy?

Even only lately at Lewes, during the recent meeting of the Archaeological Institute, a somewhat novel construction was put on this inscription, which might well speak for itself. *Stirps Ducum* was there declared to mean "*Stirps Comitum*" (i.e., Flandria). Now we know that although the Norman Dukes were styled *Comites*, some undeniable authority is required for the assertion that the "*Comites*" of Flanders were also styled "*Ducos*."

The incident, at any rate, shows how people with a strong bias wrest everything to suit their purpose.

But the wording of the following passage in a letter to us from a friend in relation to this question, very much seems to sum up the whole matter:—"I think," says he, "that the fallacy in the opinions of later writers on this subject arises from the want of satisfactory canons of criticism; in the absence of which they weigh the statements of different writers by a patent process of their own, and arrive at the wrong conclusion."

Since the foregoing was partly in type, the following forcible reasoning has been addressed to "*Notes and Queries*," and is too important to be overlooked. The strongest argument hitherto adduced, in disproof of the new-fangled fallacy respecting the Gundrada descent, has been brought forward in a communication to that paper by Dr. Sykes (*Sib S.* xi., April 18, 1885), and that it should have remained unanswered, speaks for itself. We allude to the first of the following paragraphs:—

"Why," says the correspondent (Dr. Sykes), (in reference to King William's grant of Wulton to the Monks of Lewes), "should William the Conqueror have given a

manor for the repose of the souls of *two people so distantly related to him* as Do Warrene and Gundrada are stated by Mr. Waters to have been? Is there another example of the Conqueror's having bestowed a manor on the names of any other Norman baron as *indifferent to him*? Surely, allowing the '*filie mee*' to be an interpolation, the grant itself speaks the same words!"

But Dr. Sykes's observations on the further accusation of forgery set up by Mr. Waters ("Notes and Queries," 6th S. xi., 140), are not less appropriate and confirmatory:—

"Mr. Chester Waters, in his pamphlet on Gundrada de Warranne, charges the monks of Lewes with having forged the Confirmation Deed of their founder; but as the original grant was in the archives of the mother-abbay at Clugni,²¹ surely it is not likely the monks would have been so stupid as to forge a document, which, interfering as it did (or as Mr. Waters suggests it did) with the right of the mother community, could have been easily shown to be a false charter by the production of the original grant. Even allowing the document to be forged, is not the fact of the tradition that Gundrada was the daughter of Matilda some proof that she was? Is it not probable that she is so stated to be in the original grant, and that the monks got their information on the subject from this source? Certainly, too, the monks would only have put in their (forged) charter that which they believed to be true; and the presence of a tradition in an unobscuring community like the Priory of Lewes, even of so old date as three hundred years, is (to me) strong proof of its verity."

"To what extent was the Priory of Lewes independent of the mother-community? Was it sufficiently so to make the crime of forgery against the interests of the latter likely? I ask this, since the Lewes Priory was threatened with destruction on several occasions as an 'alien Priory.'

²¹ The original deed of gift, and its confirmation by the Conqueror, have been obtained since these pages were printed. They will be found under a separate article in this volume, on the charters of the Abbey of Clugni.

Mr. Waters' note
is a small
pamphlet
①
which produces
nothing in vol. 140
②
which is of course
a little better.
The original
which is in
Clugni, but has
a little better!

no original
1271-2

"Is Mr. Waters quite consistent in resting part of his claim to Burgundian descent for Gundrada, at p. 22, on her visit to Olegni, if the proof of this rests on a charter which he says, at p. 14, was a forgery? Or, if there is other proof of her visit, does this not show that the charter is *not a forgery?*"

Finally, as regards the quibble raised in respect of the Benefactors to the Priory, Dr. Sykes remarks:—"What proof other than grammatical can Mr. Waters bring that the *et* in the 'Book of Benefactors' is interpolated? Is there irregular spacing of the words, as there would be if it were?"