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GUNDRADA DE WARRENNE.¹

By EDMOND CHESTER WATERS.

Few genealogical questions have been more widely discussed and more warmly debated than the parentage of Gundred, the wife of William de Warrenne, the Domesday Lord of Lewes, and the ancestor of the Earls of Surrey. The high rank and great number of her descendants, amongst whom are reckoned some of the greatest families in England, her presumed connexion with Royalty, and the recent discovery of her remains after a lapse of more than seven and a half centuries, have all contributed to increase and extend public interest in a question which affects so many pedigrees. Gundred and her husband were joint founders of the Cluniac Priory of St. Pancras at Lewes, and were buried there in the Chapter house. Her tombstone was removed at the time of the dissolution of monasteries to Ifield Church, where it was discovered in the earlier part of the last century. It is of black marble, and is inscribed with a Latin epitaph, the first line of which tells us that she sprung from Dukes :—

"Stirps Gundrada ducum, decus ævi, nobile germen."

There is nothing to show what Dukes are referred to, but it is always assumed that they would be the Dukes of Normandy or of Flanders. Gundred was a native of Flanders, if we may trust the only ancient historian who mentions her name,² for Orderic Vitalis says distinctly that she was the sister of Gherbod, the Fleming, who was Earl of Chester from Easter to Christmas, 1070, by the grant of William the Conqueror. Gherbod was the hereditary Advocate of St. Bertin's Abbey at St. Omer, and was, I expect, the son of another Gherbod who was Advocate of the same Abbey³ in 1026 and 1056. The advowsons of the greater Abbeys were reserved at this period to nobles of high degree, and the daughter of Richard II, Duke of Normandy, married without disparagement the Advocate of St. Valeri in Picardy. There is, therefore, no reason on the score of rank for doubting that Gherbod was descended from the reigning Dukes of Flanders. He enjoyed his English Earldom scarcely nine months, for at Christmas, 1070, he obtained the King's leave⁴ to make a short visit to his own country, which was convulsed by civil war, and he was taken prisoner on 20th February, 1071, at the battle near Cassel, in which William fitz Osbern was slain. The rest of Gherbod's career

¹ Read at the Lewes Meeting, August 3, 1883.

See also paper addressed by M. A. Lower to the British Archæological Association, November 19th, 1845.

² *Ordericus Vitalis*, Book iv, ch. vii.

³ *Cartulaires de France*, Tome iii. *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint Bertin*, publié par M. Guérard, 1840, pp. 176-184.

⁴ Dugdale's *Monasticon*. Lewes Priory, vol v, p. 14, No. vi.

was foreign to England, for when King William heard the news of his captivity, he treated the Earldom of Chester as vacant, and gave it to Hugh Lupus.

The evidences of Lewes Priory contain a very different account of Gundred's parentage, for it is stated, or implied, in three separate documents belonging to that religious house, that she was the daughter of William the Conqueror by Matilda of Flanders. The Leiger book enumerates amongst the benefactors, "Queen Matilda,¹ the mother of King Henry and of Countess Gundred;" and although this list is on the face of it the compilation of a later age, it is confirmed by two deeds in the Chartulary. King William's grant of the manor of Walton,² in Norfolk, is expressed to be made for the soul of William de Warrenne and his wife Gundred—"filie mee." This charter is somewhat discredited by the fact that the important words "*filie mee*" have been interpolated in a modern hand above the line; but it is assumed that these words were properly inserted, because William de Warrenne expressly calls Queen Matilda the mother of his wife—"Matris uxoris mee"—in his charter confirming the foundation.

These charters practically contradict Orderic's statement that Gundred was Gherbod's sister, because no one ever supposed that Gherbod was the son of William the Conqueror; nor do they tally with the language of Gundred's epitaph, for a king's daughter would scarcely be described as "*Stirps ducum*." Still, the genuineness of William de Warrenne's charter has never hitherto been questioned, and it convinced the majority of genealogists. Baron Maseres, Palgrave, Lappenberg, and Sir Henry Ellis, are agreed that Gundred was really the daughter of William and Matilda, although her name is never mentioned amongst the King's children by any ancient writer. Her descendants figure prominently in Burke's *Royal Families*, for in no less than eleven pedigrees out of the first ninety-five the descent from the blood royal of England is traced through Gundred.

Dugdale, indeed, seems to put more faith in the chronicle than in the chartulary, for he describes Gundred in his *Baronage*³ as the sister of Earl Gherbod. But he stands almost alone in this view, and her royal parentage was in fact generally accepted as proved, until the late Mr. Stapleton published his well known paper, in 1846, in the *Archæological Journal*.⁴ Public attention had then lately been attracted to the subject by the discovery, in the preceding year, of two leaden chests, containing the remains of Gundred and her husband, which were found in the ruins of Lewes Priory by labourers excavating for the railway. Stapleton reconciles the conflicting statements of Orderic and the Lewes charters, by the assumption that Matilda of Flanders was a wife and a mother before she married the Duke of Normandy, and that Gundred and Gherbod were her children by an elder Gherbod, from whom she was irregularly divorced. Gherbod's being the step-son of King William would account for his mysterious promotion to the great Earldom of Chester, whilst the existence of another husband would explain the fact that Matilda's marriage with William of Normandy was inhibited by the Pope at the Council of Rheims in 1049. This inhibition has hitherto

¹ *Idem*, vol. v, p. 13, No. iv.

² *Idem*, vol. v, p. 12, No. ii.

³ Dugdale's *Baronage*, vol. i, p. 73.

⁴ *Archæological Journal*, vol. iii, p. 26.

been attributed to their alleged relationship within the prohibited degrees. But there is no proof of such relationship, and it is a remarkable coincidence that in the case of all the other marriages, which were inhibited at this Council, the canonical impediment was that one of the parties was not free to marry by reason of having a wife or husband living. It is true that Matilda's previous marriage is not mentioned in any of the chronicles, but the same might be said of Emma of Normandy, the mother of Edward the Confessor, and the wife, successively, of Ethelred II and of Cnut. Her first marriage, by which she had three children, is ignored altogether in the *Encomium Emmæ*, and her biographer positively styles her *virgo* at the time of her marriage with Cnut. This is not the only instance of the kind, for the marriage of Robert, Duke of Normandy, with Ulf's widow, is similarly left unnoticed in the chronicles.¹

The new theory was shaped with consummate ingenuity, for Stapleton was "*facile princeps*" of Anglo-Norman genealogists. But critics of the old school refused to be convinced, and when it was controverted at great length in the *Archæologia*² by the late Mr. Blaauw, he had for some time the credit of having completely demolished an ingenious paradox.³ This judgment, however, has been reversed by the next generation of historical critics, who are enthusiastic believers in Stapleton. The historian of the Norman Conquest led the way by declaring his belief that—"Stapleton has convincingly made out,"—that Gundred was the daughter of Matilda's previous marriage.⁴ The same view has been expressed by Mr. G. T. Clarke, Mr. A. S. Ellis, Mr. J. R. Green, Mr. Planché, and Mr. Pym Yeatman.⁵ In fact, so many writers of note have accepted this solution of the problem, that it is now commonly taken as settled that Gundred was Matilda's daughter, and the Conqueror's step-daughter.

I was myself amongst the believers; for a conclusion, which Stapleton suggested and Freeman approved, would scarcely be questioned without strong grounds, and I had none, until a fresh piece of evidence came to light which changed all the conditions of the problem.

I was reading some nine years ago the letters of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1093-1109, for the purpose of noting what information they contain in illustration or correction of contemporary biography, when I came upon a letter from the Archbishop to Henry I. which proves beyond doubt that Gundred was not the daughter of Queen Matilda by King William or any other husband. This letter, which has hitherto been strangely overlooked, is printed in all the editions of St. Anselm's letters, and in Dom. Bouquet's *Recueil des Historiens de la France*.

¹ Foss's *Judges of England*, vol. i. *William de Warrenne*.

² *Archæologia*, vol. xxxii, p. 117.

³ *Sussex Archæologia*, vol. xxviii, p. 114.

⁴ Freeman's *History of the Norman Conquest*, vol. iii. p. 651.

⁵ Amongst the writers of note and authority who have accepted as proved that Gundred was the step-daughter of William the Conqueror are—

Mr. A. S. Ellis in his *Notes on the*

Domesday Tenants of Yorkshire, p. 37.

Mr. G. T. Clark in his Paper on the Castles of England and Wales. *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxix, p. 159.

Mr. Planché, *Somerset Herald*, in *The Conqueror and his Companions*, 1874, vol. i, p. 135.

Mr. Pym Yeatman in his *History of the House of Arundel*, vol. i, p. 38, gives Queen Matilda another daughter in Matilda, wife of Roger de Busli.

LIBER IV. EPISTOLA LXXXIV.¹

ANSELMUS AD HENRICUM REGEM ANGLORUM.

"Henrico charissimo suo domino, Dei gratia regi Anglorum, Anselmus Archiepiscopus, fidele servitium cum orationibus.

"Gratias ago Deo pro bona voluntate, quam vobis dedit, et vobis qui eam servare studetis. Quaerit consilium celsitudo vestra quid sibi faciendum sit de hoc quia pacta est filiam suam dare *Guillelmo de Vuarenne*: cum *ipse et filia vestra ex una parte sint cognati in quarta generatione, et ex altera in sexta*. Scitote absque dubio quia nullum pactum servari debet contra legem Christianitatis. Illi autem, si ita propinqui sunt, nullo modo legitime copulari possunt, neque sine damnatione animarum suarum neque sine magno peccato eorum qui hoc ut fiat procurant. Precor igitur et consulo vobis ex parte Dei sicut charissimo domino, ut nullatenus vos hinc peccato misceatis, neque filiam vestram eidem Guillelmo contra legem et voluntatem Dei tradatis. Omnipotens Deus dirigat vos et omnes actus vestros in bene placito suo."

In this letter the Archbishop judicially inhibits Henry I. from proceeding with a marriage which was then contemplated between the King's natural daughter and Gundred's son William de Warrenne II, on the ground that the intended husband and wife were related to each other, in the fourth generation on one side, and in the sixth generation on the other. The law of the Church at that period absolutely forbade marriages between persons related in blood, until after the seventh generation of descent from the common ancestor was passed, and it was the bounden duty of the diocesan, who was in the case of the royal family the Archbishop of Canterbury, to maintain discipline by inhibiting such marriages without fear or favour of persons. St. Anselm does not explain how William de Warrenne and his proposed wife were related in the sixth and fourth degrees. But it is easy to see how the relationship was reckoned, for his friend and contemporary Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, addressed a similar letter of inhibition to Henry I,² when a marriage was in contemplation between another of the king's daughters and Hugh de Neufchatel, and in this letter the pedigree is set forth, showing that the daughters of Henry I were descended in the sixth degree from the parents of Gunnora, wife of Richard I, Duke of Normandy.

EPISTOLA CCXXV.

IVONIS EPI(SCOPI) CARNOTENSIS AD HENRICUM REGEM.

Genealogia autem ut dicitur sic se habet:—Gonnora et Senfria sorores fuerunt. Ex Gonnora exivit Ricardus; ex Ricardo, Robertus; ex Roberto, Gulielmus rex; ex Gulielmo Henricus rex; ex hoc rege ista, qua datur filio Gervasii. Item, ex Senfria exivit Joscelina; ex Joscelina, Rogerius de Monte Gummeri; ex Rogerio, Mabilia soror Roberti Bellimensis; ex Mabilia, Mabilia uxor Gervasii; et ex ista Mabilia, Hugo filio Gervasii cui ista datur.

It is well ascertained that Gundred's husband, William de Warrenne I, was the grandson of a sister of the Duchess Gunnora, so that it will be seen at a glance from the pedigree below that her son was fourth in descent, whilst his proposed wife was sixth in descent from their common ancestor:—

¹ I quote from Migne's *Patrologia*, vol. clix; Epistolæ S. Anselmi, Cantuar liber iv, Ep. lxxxiv.

² Idem, vol. clxii, Epistolæ Ivonis Carnotensis Episcopi, lib. ii, Ep. ccxxv.

³ *Archæological Journal* vol. iii, p. 6.

Bishop Ivo's letter shews that the method of reckoning consanguinity used by St. Anselm and contemporary Bishops of the Roman obedience, was to count the number of generations from the common ancestor to the intended husband and wife, by which computation persons related in the sixth degree are fifth cousins. It need scarcely be said that if Gundred had been the daughter of Queen Matilda, her son and King Henry's daughter would have been first cousins, and it is absurd to suppose that the Archbishop would have judicially inhibited first cousins from marrying on the ground that they were fifth cousins. We may therefore safely take it as proved that Gundred was neither daughter nor near relation of Queen Matilda.

My discovery of St. Anselm's letter, with some remarks on the importance of this new evidence was published in the *Academy* of 28th December, 1878. But the case was not stated as clearly as it might have been, for the pedigree was not worked out in a tabular form, and it was assumed that being related in the sixth and fourth degrees implied a double relationship. This mistake, however, did not affect the main point at issue. Mr. Freeman's answer was published in the same journal¹ on 1st February 1879, and the gist of his reply is, that whilst St. Anselm's testimony is not to be gainsaid, Stapleton's theory remains the only feasible explanation which has yet been suggested of the Lewes charters. The genuineness of these documents is taken for granted, and I must admit that if they are genuine, I can see only one flaw in Stapleton's argument. He explains the words in Gundred's epitaph, *Stirps ducum, nobile germen*, as referring to her maternal descent from the Dukes of Flanders. But her supposed mother, Matilda, is in her

¹ My letter was printed in the *Academy* of 28th Dec. 1878. Mr. Freeman's answer

appeared on 1 Feb. 1879, and my rejoinder on 24 May 1879.

own epitaph styled not ducal but royal, although she was a duke's daughter, on the score of her maternal descent from the kings of Frnace,

"Germen *regale* Matildem
Dux Flandrita pater."

I can scarcely think therefore that Gundred's royal blood would have been ignored, if she had been Matilda's daughter.

This, however, is a minor criticism, and my real answer to Mr. Freeman is, that in my belief the charters, which Stapleton's theory was invented to explain, are (in their present form at least) mere fabrications, which need not to be taken into account. Such forgeries are common enough, as every one knows who is conversant with monastic chartularies: for it was a pious fraud to secure the Church against spoliation and glorify the founder by forging charters to replace missing title deeds. I had no suspicion that the Lewes charters were not genuine until the discovery of St. Anselm's letter put me on my guard, but further research has made it so clear to me, that two of them have been garbled, and the other is a forgery, that I now scarcely understand how so transparent an impcsture has misled so many generations of antiquaries.

There are three documents, each differing from the other in date and character; and I now proceed to examine them seriatim.

I begin with the Book of benefactors, which contains the following entry:—

"In Norfolkia , Karletuna, quam dedit Matildis regina mater Henrici regis et Gundredæ comitissæ; et ipsa Gundreda dedit nobis."

This entry is quoted as evidence that Queen Matilda was the mother of Gundred as well as of Henry I, and, as the text stands, this is undoubtedly its meaning. But I have a strong suspicion that the word "et" has been interpolated between the words "regis" and "Gundredæ," for the express purpose of conveying a false impression, and that the text originally stood,

"quam dedit Matildis regina mater Henrici regis Gundredæ comitissæ" etc.
meaning—

"Carlton, which Queen Matilda mother of King Henry gave to Countess Gundred and the same Gundred gave to us."

Every Latin scholar must allow that this is a more natural reading, and that from a grammatical point of view it is more probable that "Gundredæ comitissæ" is the dative case governed by "dedit."

It is, however, of no great importance, whether I am right in supposing that this entry has been garbled, except of course so far as it implies bad faith; because the Leiger book, from which it is taken, is on the face of it a compilation from the Chartulary, when it was transcribed in the fifteenth century.

I now pass to the charters. King William's grant of the manor of Walton is beyond all dispute authentic, and the autograph charter has been preserved among the Cottonian MS. in the British Museum.¹ But it is in bad condition and has been tampered with to such an extent, that no reliance can be placed on it. The grant is expressed to be made by William, King of the English, for the soul of William de Warrenne and his wife "Gundredæ [filæ meæ.]" But the ink has faded so much that the words originally written immediately after "Gundredæ," which may

¹ Cotton MS., Vespas, F. iii, fol. 1.

(or may not) have specified her connexion with the grantor, are illegible, whilst the words "*filiae meae*" have been inserted in a modern hand above the line.¹ This reading, however, is justified by the language of what is called the foundation charter, in which William de Warrenne distinctly asserts that Queen Matilda was the mother of his wife Gundred. So that, in fact, the whole story ultimately rests on the authority of the charter, which I now proceed to examine.

This so called charter of foundation is the most important in the whole chartulary, for it was the only title deed which the monks could show to the lands given them by their founder. The original grant was to the mother house, and was deposited in the Archives at Clugni; but this deed of confirmation was given to the monks in England for their greater security after the Priory was completed, inhabited, and endowed. It is not dated, but is expressed to be made by William de Warrenne in the short interval between the date of his advancement by William Rufus to the Earldom of Surrey, and the day of his death, 24th June, 1089. He begins with a narrative of the visit which he and his wife Gundred made to Clugni, in the course of their religious tour through France and Burgundy, and after reciting the promises of endowment, by which the Abbot of Clugni was induced to send a colony of monks to England, he proceeds to confirm, by this second charter, his gift of all the lands and tithes, which formed the endowment of the Priory. He makes this grant—

"Pro salute animæ meæ, et animæ *Gundredæ uxoris meæ*, et pro anima domini mei Willielmi regis, qui me in Anglicam terram adduxit, et per cujus licentiam monachos venire feci, et qui meam priorem donationem confirmavit, et pro salute dominæ meæ Matildis reginæ, *matris uxoris mee*, et pro salute domini mei Willielmi regis, filii sui, post cujus adventum in Anglicam terram hanc cartam feci, et qui me comitem Surregiæ fecit, et pro salute omnium hæredum meorum et omnium fidelium Christi."

After enumerating the various possessions, privileges, and exemptions, bestowed on the monks of St. Pancras, the founder records in detail the stipulations made with the mother house for their future government by their own prior, free from all control, taxation, and interference. He winds up by invoking the curse of God on all who venture to infringe the provisions of this charter, which he solemnly confirmed at Winchester, in the presence of King William Rufus and his council.

It is significant that the original of this remarkable charter is not forthcoming, and that our only knowledge of it is derived from a MS. chartulary in the Cottonian Library, which was transcribed for Prior Auncell in 1444. In the absence of the original, the genuineness of a charter can only be determined by internal evidence, and I cannot think that this pretended deed of confirmation will deceive any one who is familiar with monastic charters, when his suspicions have once been aroused. It is notorious that the monks thought it no sin to protect themselves against unjust claims by forging deeds of confirmation, when their title to lands was endangered by the loss of the original grant. These spurious charters can generally, however, be detected, because a forger is seldom skilful enough to escape falling into some anachronism, which betrays the generation to which he really belongs. He either

¹ Mr. W. H. St. John Hope was kind enough to examine for me the charter at the Museum, and he assures me that if

Gundrede was really followed by *pro me et heredibus meis* there was no room for *filiae meæ* in the line.

brings together witnesses who were not contemporary, or he antedates events, and provides against claims and contingencies proper to a later age. William de Warrenne's charter embodies the traditions of the foundation and the founders as the story was current at the period when it was written: and although the forger was too discreet to attempt any list of witnesses, or to recite the deed of foundation, which he had never seen, he excites suspicion by dwelling so prominently on the claims of the Priory to be independent of the mother-house. Such stipulations of immunity from interference and taxation would be of little value to an infant community of foreign monks poorly endowed, who regarded Clugni as their home. But it was very different in later times, when it was of vital importance to a wealthy Priory of English monks, after the separation of England and Normandy, that they and their revenues should be free from the control of a foreign house. The critical reader will not be reassured by the violent imprecations of Divine vengeance against all who disturb these stipulations, for such maledictions are not found in charters of the eleventh century, whilst this is precisely the language employed by the pseudo-Ingulf in the spurious charters of Croyland Abbey. It is a still more suspicious circumstance that a charter, which was on the face of it the most important title deed which the monks possessed, was altogether ignored by Henry I, when he confirmed the privileges and liberties of the Priory soon after his coronation, and that it is neither recited nor referred to in any genuine charter of subsequent date.

The charter is narrative in form, but long as it is, William de Warrenne makes only two distinct averments of fact, which can be tested by independent evidence. They are—1, That Queen Matilda was the mother of his wife Gundred; 2, That he was created Earl of Surrey by William Rufus.

The first of these statements is proved by St. Anselm's letter to be false, and the second is contradicted by Orderic Vitalis,¹ who is corroborated in this instance by the incontrovertible evidence of charters. The Historian assures us that the earldom of Surrey was conferred on William de Warrenne by the Conqueror before 1080; and it is certain that William styles himself Comes in 1076 and 1086, when he witnessed at Winchester charters of King William in favour of Battle Abbey.² It may be said that in both these charters he describes himself as *William Comes de Warrenne*, but the Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury is styled in like manner *Roger Comes de Montgomeri*. It is almost superfluous to remark that William and Roger could not style themselves earls until after they had been invested with English earldoms, because there were no earls in Normandy outside the pale of the reigning family, and the sovereign himself was properly styled *comes Normannie* until after the conquest of England. It is true that William de Warrenne is not described as an earl in Domesday, but the four earls mentioned in that record were all palatine earls, and Surrey was never a palatine earldom. It must be remembered, too, that if William de Warrenne was not created earl by the Conqueror, the Countess Gundred was never a countess at all, for it is certain that she died in 1085.

¹ Ordericus Vitalis, lib. iv, cap. vii.

² Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. iii, p. 245; *Battle Abbey*, Nos. ix and x.

St. Anselm's testimony requires no corroboration, but since my discovery of his letter, I have often thought that the subsequent marriage of Gundred's son, William de Warrenne II, ought to have given me something more than a hint that Gundred was not the daughter of Queen Matilda.

William married in 1118 Elizabeth widow of Robert Count of Meulan and daughter of Hugh Count of Vermandois, who was a younger son of Henry I, King of France, and therefore first cousin to Queen Matilda. Now, if Gundred had been Matilda's daughter, her son would have been so nearly related to his wife, who was third in descent from Matilda's grandfather King Robert of France, that their marriage was impossible without a dispensation from the Pope. There are special reasons in this case why we should be sure to have heard of such an impediment if it had existed. Because this same lady was for a long time inhibited from marrying her first husband, on account of a much more remote relationship. That crafty statesman, Robert Count of Meulan, who was reputed "the wisest man in his time between London and Jerusalem,"¹ was foolish enough to insist, after he was fifty years of age, on marrying a young wife in defiance of the laws of the Church. The county of Meulan lies within the diocese of Chartres, and so soon as Bishop Ivo heard that the marriage was in contemplation, he addressed the following letter to his clergy, forbidding them to celebrate it, and specifying the precise relationship which subsisted between the count and his intended wife.

"EPISTOLA XLV.³

"*Ivo Dei gratia Carnotensis episcopus, clericis Mellentinis, et omnibus in Pisiacensi archidiaconatu, salutem.*

"Perlatum est ad aures nostras quod Mellentinus comes ducere velit in uxorem filiam Hugonis Crispeiensis comitis; quod fieri non sinit concors decretorum et canonum sanctio dicens: (Conjunctiones consanguineorum fieri prohibemus). Horum autem consanguinitas nec ignota est, nec remota, sicut testantur et probare parati sunt praeclari viri de eadem sati prosapia. Dicunt enim quia Gualterius Albus genuit matrem Gualeranni comitis, qui genuit matrem Roberti comitis. Item supradictus Gualterius genuit Radulphum patrem alterius Radulfi, qui genuit Vermandensem comitissam, ex qua nata est uxor comitis Hugonis, cujus filiam nunc ducere vult Mellentinus comes. Si autem praedicta genealogia ita sibi cohaeret, legitimum non poterit esse conjugium, sed incestum contubernium, nec filios poterunt habere legitimos, sed spurios. Unde vobis ex apostolica et canonica auctoritate praecipimus, ut tam calumniosum conjugium in ecclesiis nostri episcopatus nec ipsi consecratis, nec ab aliquo, quantum in vobis est, consecrari permittatis, nisi primum in praesentia nostri consanguinitas haec septimum gradum excessisse legitime fuerit comprobata. Valete, et has litteras Mellentino comiti transmittite."

This letter was evidently written in the beginning of the year 1096, for in April of that year Hugh Count of Vermandois started for the Crusade, and we know that his last act before he set out on his voyage

¹ *Ordericus Vitalis*, liber viii, cap. ix.

² Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury.

³ Migne's *Patrologia*, vol. clxii, Epistolae Ivonis Carnotensis Episcopi, liber ii, ep. xlv.

was to give his daughter Elizabeth in marriage to the Count of Meulan. It was not disputed that they were related within the prohibited degrees, but Pope Urban was then in France, and was induced by the Crusader to grant a dispensation.

The Count of Meulan lived to regret that the laws of the Church had been relaxed in his favour, for his wife, although she was the mother of eight children deserted him in his old age for William de Warrenne II, whom she married immediately after her husband's death. No objection was ever made to her second marriage on the ground of consanguinity, which makes it clear that her second husband was not the grandson of Queen Matilda. For it will be seen from the pedigree below that a grandson of Matilda would be more nearly related to Elizabeth of Vermandois by two degrees than the Count of Meulan was.

PEDIGREE OF ELIZABETH OF VERMANDOIS AND HER HUSBANDS.

Those who have followed me so far, and are prepared to accept my estimate of these Lewes charters, will be amused to read what far-fetched explanations have been devised from time to time by ingenious genealogists.

Stapleton's suggestion that Matilda of Flanders was the mother of children by an irregular union before her marriage with William of Normandy, has been already disposed of. His argument is so plausible and so ingeniously framed, that one is apt to forget the audacity of inventing for Queen Matilda, without a particle of evidence, a new biography to her discredit. We have now the evidence of St. Anselm,

that her supposed maternity of Gundred and Gherbod is false, and it will be reckoned hereafter amongst the curiosities of literature, that so unfounded a scandal should have passed current as history amongst critics and writers of note for a whole generation.

Stapleton and his disciples, however, are not further from the truth than antiquaries of the old school, who refused to be persuaded that Gundred was not the daughter of William the Conqueror. Sir George Duckett for example, who is an implicit believer in the Lewes cartulary, and in Gundred's Royal parentage, proposes an explanation of Orderic's statement that Gundred was the sister of Gherbod, Earl of Chester, which had best be described in his own words¹ :—

"I feel convinced that the term *soror* is used by Orderic without respect to consanguinity. A very singular application of the word in this same sense may be found in the *Collection of Latin Inscriptions* by Jo. Gaspar Orellius, published at Zürich, in 1828, and in support of our hypothesis we lay considerable stress upon it—

Julia Hellas Hygie *Dominæ et sorori* benemerenti fecit.

Here we have combined mistress and sister; the one owing allegiance to the other, her superior in blood, though equal on the score of fosterage."

I will not stop to inquire how far Sir George is justified in his interpretation of this ancient inscription; but it is certain that a precisely similar expression was used in a Monastic charter, when the relationship was beyond all question of blood and not of fosterage. For example, the confirmation of Robert de Toden's grant to the monks of Belvoir² by his eldest brother, under whom his lands were held, is thus expressed—"hauc donationem confirmat Willielmus de Albeneio *frater meus et dominus*."

In the face of this charter, it is difficult to understand how Sir George's hypothesis is assisted by the inscription, upon which he lays so much stress. Besides, when he is unable to point out a single other passage in all the thirteen books of Orderic's *Ecclesiastical History*, in which *soror* or *frater* bears the meaning of foster sister or foster brother, the improbability of its use in this instance is too glaring to require serious comment.

The latest and worst writer on the subject of Gundred's parentage is Mr. Martin Rule, who has reopened the controversy in his *Life and Times of St. Anselm* by a fierce denunciation of Stapleton and Freeman and all other writers who maintain that Gundred was Queen Matilda's daughter. He quotes St. Anselm's letter as a proof that "there was not a drop of Matilda's blood in the veins of Gundred," and then proceeds to explain, in his own way, the words of the Lewes Charters, which he accepts as genuine and beyond suspicion. He challenges criticism by deliberately writing to the *Academy* that he³

"has cleared up the difficulty, which had been the perplexity and the despair of learned England from time out of mind."

This explanation, which is heralded with such a flourish of trumpets, shall be stated in his own words. He says :—

"The first Earl William de Warrenne calls the Conqueror's Queen '*Mater uxoris meæ*,' and the Conqueror writes of Gundred as '*filia mea*.' Precisely so. Matilda was

¹ *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. xxviii, p. 124.

Belvoir Priory, No. vi.

² Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. iii, p. 290,

³ Mr. Rule's letter, printed in *Academy*, 14 April 1883.

Gundred's '*mater*,' and not her '*genetrix*;' and Gundred was the Conqueror's *filia*, not his *nata*. Gundred was Matilda's godchild. *Pater, mater, filius, filia*, were the ordinary appellations of god-parents and god-children. Nothing was more common."¹

My own experience of the language of charters compels me to doubt the assertion that the words *pater, mater, filius, filia* are so commonly used in legal documents to express spiritual relationship; and I should like to see some examples in proof. But a writer, who professes to be familiar with canon law, ought to have known that if he is right about the meaning of the words, the charters contradict each other. If Mr. Rule's interpretation of the charters is true, King William calls Gundred his god-daughter in his grant of Walton, whilst William de Warrenne's charter says with equal distinctness that Gundred was the god-daughter of Queen Matilda. Now one of these statements must be false, because it is canonically impossible that a man and his wife could ever be both sponsors of the same child. The spiritual relationship created by the act of sponsorship was so close, that a marriage between sponsors was not only prohibited but invalid. Divorces on this ground were scandalously frequent in the Middle Ages, for when two persons wished to dissolve the bond of matrimony, they had only to allege that they had previously contracted ties of spiritual relationship as sponsors, and by an easy collusion they were enabled to get rid of their marriage. It was for the purpose of testing the truth of such allegations that Cardinal Ximenes devised the system of baptismal registers recording the names of the sponsors. This is so notorious, that I cannot imagine how Mr. Rule failed to see that as Gundred could not possibly be the god-child both of the King and the Queen, either one of the charters is unworthy of credit, or else his explanation of their meaning is not true. I leave him on the horns of the dilemma.

Mr. Rule is still less fortunate in the genealogical speculations, for which he claims special credit. For, if we may trust *L'Art de verifier les dates*² the Marquis never existed, whose brother figures in Mr. Rule's pedigree as St. Anselm's grand-father. The same great authority ignores altogether the marriage of Hugh Capet to Adela, daughter of Duke Rollo, on which Mr. Rule relies to prove the relationship between William of Normandy and Matilda of Flanders. If, therefore they were related, and it is quite likely that they were, it was not through any such marriage. But the most characteristic blunder of all is his confusing account of Gundred's genealogy, which shall be quoted in his own words.

"I willingly concede that Gherbod and Gundred were brother and sister." "Should the reader really care to inquire, Who then was Gundred? I would refer him to this passage in the '*Registrum de Bermundesei*,' A D. 1098.

"Hoc anno Ricardus Guet frater Comitissæ Warrenne dedit manerium de Cowyk monachis de Bermundesei.

When the Domesday survey for Essex was made, Cowyk was held of William de Warrenne by Ricardus, who was, I presume, Richard Guet (Wet or Wette?), his brother-in-law."

If these passages have any meaning, we are called upon to believe that Gundred was the sister both of Gherbod the Fleming and of Richard Guet. It is possible that Mr. Rule supposes that Guet was the family

¹ *Life and Times of St. Anselm*, by Martin Rule, M.A., 8vo, 1882. vol. i, p. 420.

² *L'Art de verifier les dates*, 8vo., vol. xvii, p. 162.

name of the hereditary advocates of St. Bertin's Abbey, for it is clear from his suggestion that the name might be Wet or Wette, that he had never heard of the well-known family in Perche, to which Richard Guet (*rectius* Goet) evidently belonged. He might easily, however, have learnt that this brother of the Countess Warrenne would be a cadet of that noble family, who were sovereign lords of Perche Goet, a territory comprising five baronies, of which Mont Mirail (Mons Mirabilis) was the chief. The Countess Warrenne mentioned in the Bermondsey register would not assuredly be Gundred, who died in 1085, and therefore according to the Lewes Chartulary never was a Countess at all, because her husband was not created an Earl until after the accession of William Rufus. The Countess referred to must be William de Warrenne's second wife, who seems from this entry to have been a sister of that William Goet, of Mont Mirail, whose son William married one of the natural daughters of King Henry I. She is not mentioned elsewhere, but there is no doubt about the fact that William de Warrenne did marry a second wife after Gundred's death, because when he died in June, 1089, we know that his widow the Countess sent an alms of 100 shillings to the monks of Ely¹ to pray for the soul of her deceased husband, and to make amends for his spoliation of that religious house. It seems however, that the genealogical acumen displayed in these and similar blunders has found favour with the Master of the Rolls, for the author of *St. Anselm's Life* was lately selected to edit Eadmer's *Historia Novorum* at the public expense.

This paper would be incomplete without some reference to the question of Gundred's Ducal descent, which has puzzled so many generations of antiquaries. I have little doubt that the chartulary of Clugni contains evidence to clear up all the difficulty, if we could refer to the charter by which Lewes Priory was originally founded and endowed. Considering that Clugni Abbey had no less than 42 dependent Priors and Cells in England, and that the Order exercised in former times a considerable influence on English politics, it almost amounts to a scandal that no attempt has been made to explore archives, which must be rich in materials for English History. Until such materials are made fairly accessible to students, history proper cannot be written. There is, however, little hope that the Chartulary of Clugni will be printed in this generation, and in the meanwhile we are reduced to guesswork; but if conjecture is permitted in cases where direct evidence is absolutely wanting, I should guess that Gundred's title to be called *Stirps ducum* was derived from the Ducal House of Burgundy who were the founders and patrons of Clugni Abbey. Flanders and Burgundy were intimately connected at this period, and all that we know about Gundred points to a Burgundian connexion. Her second son, who was old enough to command an army² in 1090, bore the Burgundian name of Reynold; whilst Gundred and her husband, when they made their pilgrimage to Rome in 1076, went out of their road to visit Clugni. I cannot think too that their devotion to the Clugniac order which they introduced into England, is accounted for by mere gratitude for hospitality shown to travellers on a pilgrimage. It seems much more likely that the Abbey, from which William and Gundred transplanted to England spiritual directors for their household, was endeared to one of them by the stronger tie of ancestral associations.

¹ Liber Eliensis, lib. ii., C. 119.

² Ordericus Vitalis, Lib. viii. Cap. 15.