WILLIAM DE GLANVILL

King’s official,
landholder in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex,
and founder of Bromholm priory;
archive of Bromholm priory

King Henry’s writ ({1}) in favour of William de Glanvill shows him as holding the manor of Bacton (Norfolk), which in 1086 had been a part of the fee of Robert Malet, to whom it was worth £7 10s 0d (DB, ii. 155v; § 7. 18). It has long been assumed that William was the son of Robert de Glanvill, named in Domesday Book.¹ The family took its surname from Glanville in Pont l’Évêque (Calvados). Robert de Glanvill is named as Robert Malet’s tenant holding about one carucate of land in each of four Suffolk vills, Creeting St Peter, Bawdsey, Dallinghoo, and Horham, as well as various smaller parcels (DB, ii. 304r–v, 308v, 309r, 317v, 327r, 328v–329r; Suff § 6. 3, 5, 51, 54, 157, 291, 308–9); he also had two carucates in Honing, which he held of the abbey of St Benet Hulme (DB, ii. 219v; Norf § 17. 51); and he was a tenant of William de Warenne in Suffolk, holding one carucate in Burgh with some further small parcels of land (DB, ii. 400v; Suff § 26. 16–20). The value of the fee in 1086 appears to be no more than £8. If Bacton was acquired at a later date, it represented a real increase in the property, but it cannot be assumed that the subtenants’ lands are fully revealed in Domesday Book. Interest has

¹ For example, Blomefield & Parkin, Norfolk, xi. 17.
attached to the family chiefly because Ranulf de Glanvill, Henry II’s chief justiciar, belonged to its junior branch.² It is known that William de Glanvill’s son Bartholomew had an uncle Roger de Bertune, who is conjectured to be William’s brother, a younger son of Robert, and grandfather to Hervey de Glanvill, Ranulf’s father. The descent of lands is obscure for want of evidence, but it appears that William’s grandson, William fitz Bartholomew still held Dallinghoo in the 1190s (Copinger, Suffolk, iv. 247), while Bawdsey had passed to Ranulf de Glanvill (ibid. vii. 84). Bacton was the major property which, as part of Malet’s fee, belonged to what was known in the thirteenth century as the honour of Eye. Honing and Horham were next in value, which means that William de Glanvill derived by far the greater part of his modest landed income from property in Norfolk. A writ-charter (²), retained by the family until at least the thirteenth century, shows that towards the end of his life William succeeded his uncle in a minor serjeanty in Essex.

William de Glanvill is described by Henry of Huntingdon as his kinsman (consanguineus) in a passage found only in the earliest version of De Contemptu mundi, written around 1135–8.³

² Modern discussion includes J. S. Falls, ‘Ranulf de Glanville’s formative years’, Mediaeval Studies 40 (1978), 312–27, and R. Mortimer, ‘The family of Rannulf de Glanville’, BIHR 54 (1981), 1–16; both accept dating of deeds that is no more than guesswork. In particular a letter of Bishop Nigel of Ely addressed to Hervey de Glanvill and his son Ranulf, once dated c. 1144, thereafter 1144 × 1154, has been redated by Karn to ?1166 × 1169 (EEA 31 Ely 1109–1197, 73–4, no. 49).

³ BL MS Cotton Domitian A. VIII fols. 111r–119r (s. xii med), a booklet without provenance, bound by Robert Cotton with other material. The passage occurs (fol. 118v) at the end of a rollcall of powerful men now ‘dead’ (though lists of names, including abbots and archdeacons, sometimes include current office-holders on the grounds that the living will soon be dead, § 17, p. 614). It was presumably dropped because Henry decided that William was too obscure to mean anything to his readers. This was written after the death of King Henry I, since it includes a passage dealing with his exequies (a passage later moved into Book X of Historia Anglorum, Greenway, 608n), and possibly after the death of Louis VI, 1 August 1137, named as dead in § 13, p. 606, though Henry’s treating the living as if dead makes this not entirely secure. The treatise was incorporated (with the omission of the above passage) in the third recension of the Historia, which ends with 1138 and was presumably published in 1139. Quoted in the notes on Historia Anglorum, VIII 17, ed. Greenway, 616n.
I pass over that venerable and most devout man of illustrious memory William de Glanvill, my kinsman, who was so enthusiastic in his support of the monastic life that at God’s prompting he gave and granted all the churches of his barony to God and the church of St Andrew the Apostle and to the monks of Cluny who serve them. He also tithed most of his land for the salvation of his soul. Now however his son Bartholomew has succeeded to his place, the heir of his character and his honour, from whom by God’s graciousness we hope for good things and to whom also we wish good things.

William was clearly dead by 1138, perhaps by 1135. He witnessed a deed of Abbot William of St Benet Holme 1127 × 1134 (West, *Ct. St Benet Holme*, 74–5, no. 130). His son Bartholomew has taken his place on a list of the abbey’s knights, 1134 × 1149 (*Monasticon*, iii. 89; *Ct. St Benet Holme*, 34–5, no. 66).

As Henry of Huntingdon says, William founded a Cluniac priory of St Andrew. A deed of Count Stephen of Mortain and Boulogne, as successor to the estates of Robert Malet, confirmed the gift to the Cluniac monks of Castle Acre of the church of St Andrew of Bacton (Norf) ‘just as William de Glanvill gave’ (*Ct. Castle Acre, BL MS Harley 2110, fol. 61; Monasticon*, v. 63, no. ii). The dual title dates this confirmation to 1125 × 1135, but that does not help to date the primary business. This gift brought the monks of Acre to Bacton, where they established a priory a few hundred yards south of St Andrew’s church. It is usually said that the priory, named Bromholm and now written Broomholm, was founded in 1113 (*Monasticon*, v. 61; VCH Norf, ii. 359), but the date is unsupported by any evidence. The original deed of William’s son Bartholomew survives, confirming his father’s gifts ‘to the monks of [Castle] Acre at Bacton where my father rests, namely the land of Stannard the priest of Keswick and the church of the same vill with its appurtenances and the chuch of Bromholm where they dwell’, and a long list of properties (Napier & Stevenson, *Crawford Charters*, 32–3, no. 16; *Ct. Castle Acre, fol. 62; Monasticon*, v. 64, no. i). This

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4 The witnesses to this deed include other members of the Glanvill family, including Hervey de Glanvill and his son Ranulf, Roger de Glanvill, William de Glanvill, and Reginald de Glanvill. It provides direct evidence to connect Henry II’s chief justiciar Ranulf de Glanvill to this family, though the exact relationship is not explicit.
deed differentiates Bacton from Broomholm, but on the ground Bacton,
Keswick, and Broomholm are very close together, and William’s burial
in the parish church may be evidence that he had died before the priory
church was dedicated.

William de Glanvill, it appears, was also a donor to the monks of
Sainte-Trinité of Tiron, giving six ambres of salt himself and the services
of some of his men, also paid in salt (Merlet, Ctl. Tiron, i. 164–5, no.
139, dated by Merlet c. 1130). The deed was witnessed by his sons
Bartholomew and Anselm, his wife Basilia, Richard chaplain to the
count of Mortain and Alan chaplain to William himself, and others.

Two acts of King Henry survive in favour of William de Glanvill,
a writ protecting his rights in Bacton ((1)) and a writ-charter granting
succession by inheritance to William de Glanvill, ‘seruienti meo’, of the
office and land in Essex of his uncle William ‘de salt les dames’ ((2)),
which provided a half-virgate of land in Felsted. The evidence for dating
is imprecise but sufficient to determine priority between them. What
office William already held to explain his status of serjeant is not known.
He is not named in the pipe roll from 31 Henry I. The writ-charter
remained with the family for more than a century, for it was presented by
William’s descendant Adam de Glanvill for inspection in March 1253
(CalCh, i. 422). The writ relating to Bacton, however, passed into the
archive of Bromholm priory.

1 Writ instructing the sheriff and his officials that William
de Glanvill shall have his judicial privileges and his
warren in the manor of Bacton (Norf). August 1100 ×
1129, perhaps 1106 × c. 1113

CARTULARY COPIES: CUL MS Mm. ii. 20, Bromholm cartulary (s. xiv), fol. 1r (‘Carta
[[.. .]]’). The upper part of the leaf is badly rubbed, leaving the rubric and the first
words of the document illegible.
PRINTED: Not previously printed.
CALENDAR: Not in Regesta.
suo de Baketon’ sicud Edricus de Lexef[[e]]ld’ melius habuit. Et prohibeo ne aliquid ei inde injuriam faciat super forisfacturam meam. T(este) Goiff(rido) filio Pagani. Apud Sualisham.

[[ Henry king of the English to Ralph de Beaufeu and ]] Ralph Passelewe and his officials of Norfolk greeting. I command that William de Glanvill shall have his sake and soke and warren in his manor of Bacton as justly and well and fully as Edric of Laxfield well had them. And I forbid that anyone shall cause him injury in this matter upon my forfeit. Witness Geoffrey fitz Pain. At Sualisham.

DATE: The first line is impossible to read, but a writ of this kind would be addressed to the sheriff, here with the undersheriff as usual in East Anglia, and three names may be supplied for the sheriff. If it were Roger Bigod, then before his death in 1107. He was followed as sheriff by Ralph de Beaufeu, who was out of office no later than 1116. His successor was Robert fitz Walter who was out of office no later than 1129. See Address. The place-date points to an occasion when King Henry was in Norfolk, but his itinerary does not help to narrow the dating in this case. Arguably in the period when the honour of Eye was in the king’s hands, after the death of Robert Malet, not before summer 1106, and its grant to Count Stephen of Mortain, c. 1113. On that basis the name of Ralph de Beaufeu has been supplied.

ADDRESS: The sheriff of Norfolk (see Date), Ralph Passelewe as under-sheriff, and the king’s officials in the county. The reading ‘Passelewa’ is certain, but what precedes is not secure. Ralph is addressed alongside Roger Bigot in eleven acts, but there is space in the line for more than ‘Rog(ero) Big(ot)’. He is addressed alongside Ralph de Beaufeu as sheriff only once, 0000, Regesta 954 for Ramsey, and he also witnesses an act addressed to him, 0000, Regesta 1144 for Eye. He is addressed in one act alongside Robert fitz Walter who was sheriff in the 1120s, 0000, Regesta 1306 for St Benet Holme. He is also addressed in two acts from before 1100 (W2/000, 000, Regesta 385 for Norwich, Regesta 448 for Ramsey), which do not help

WITNESS: Geoffrey fitz Pain, perhaps his earliest attestation, if the sheriff were Roger Bigod.

PLACE: Sualisham is unidentified, but the reading appears secure. N. C. Vincent proposed with a query Aylsham, Norfolk (‘New charters of King Stephen’, EHR 114 (1999), 901). This was a valuable royal manor in 1086, Elesham (DB, ii. 132r, § 1. 192), whose church was said to have been given to Battle abbey by William II at the dedication of the abbey church (W2/000, Regesta 348). It is some twelve miles from Bacton and Broomholm.

CONTEXT: Bacton in Tunstead hundred, Norfolk, was part of the large estate of Edric of Laxfield in 1066 (DB, ii. 155v, § 7. 18). In 1086 Robert Malet held much of Edric’s lands and commended men in Norfolk and Suffolk; Robert’s fee was forfeit in William II’s reign and given to Roger the Poitevin, but it was restored to Robert by Henry I in 1102. When Robert Malet died—he last appears in August–September 1106 alongside Queen Matilda (0000, Regesta 674 for Abingdon)—his fee was probably retained by King Henry, who in or soon after 1113 gave it to his nephew Count Stephen (as argued by C. P. Lewis, ‘The king and Eye’, EHR 104 (1989), 579–80).
This text is followed in the Bromholm cartulary by a writ of King Stephen for William’s son Bartholomew, which provides a clue to the source of difficulty that caused William to seek the writ. It was not the sheriff’s men but the abbey of St Benet Holme, a substantial landholder in Tunstead hundred in 1086. The writ orders Abbot Hugh of St Benet Holme to permit Bartholomew to enjoy his liberties in the manor of Bacton ‘sicut rex Henricus auunculus meus illas concessit Willelmo patri suo in eodem manerio’ (CUL MS Mm. ii. 20 (s. xiv), fol. 1r, datable 1146 × 1150; N. C. Vincent, ‘New charters of King Stephen’, EHR 114 (1990), 922–3, no. 5). This does not explicitly attest but may well imply a lost act of feoffment by King Henry in favour of William de Glanvill as tenant-in-chief. Such an act could only have been made after Robert Malet’s death. Yet Count Stephen’s confirmation of the gift of Bacton to the monks of Castle Acre (Monasticon, v. 63) points to William’s continuing to hold of Malet’s honour of Eye rather than of the king himself. There is a case, therefore, for thinking that the writ was given after Malet’s death and before Count Stephen was enfeoffed, but that must be deemed speculative.

2 Writ-charter granting to William de Glanvill succession to the office and land in Essex which his uncle William God Save the Ladies held. Probably 1129 × 1133

CHANCERY ENROLMENT: Charter Roll 37 Henry III, C53/45, mem. 10, in an inspeximus in favour of Adam de Glanvill, dated 13 March 1253 (CalCh, i. 422).
PRINTED: CalCh, i. 422.
CALENDAR: Farrer 595c; Regesta 1835.

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum) iustic(ie) baronibus uic(ecomiti) et omnibus ministris et fidelibus suis francis et anglis de Essexia salutem. Sciatis me reddidisse et concessisse hereditarie Willelmo de Glaunuill’ seruienti meo ministerium et terram que fuit Willelmi de Salt les dames auunci sui. Quare uolo et firmiter precipio quod ipsi et heredes sui terram illam teneant bene et in pace et libere et quiete in bosco et plano et pratis et pasturis et aquis et stagnis et uuis et semitis cum soca et saca et tol et them et infangenethef et cum omnibus libertatibus acquietanciis et rebus que ad terram illam pertinent cum quibus predictus Willelmus unquam melius uel liberius tenuit. T(estibus) Ingelr(amo) de Say et Willelmo Mart(el) et Gohero de Alneto et Roberto Auenell. Apud Windr(esoram).
Henry king of the English to justices barons sheriffs and all his officials and sworn men French and English of Essex greeting. Know that I have restored and granted heritably to William de Glanvill my serjeant the office and land which was held by William God Save the Ladies his uncle. Wherefore I will and firmly command that he and his heirs shall hold that land well and in peace and freely and quietly in wood and plain and meadows and pastures and waters and ponds and ways and paths with sake and soke and toll and team and infangthief and with all liberties acquittances and things which pertain to that land with which the foresaid William ever well and freely held. Witness Ingram de Say and William Martel and Goher de Aunay and Robert Avenell. At Windsor.

DATE: Formally datable only before the king’s final crossing to Normandy, July 1133. Farrer entered it with no stated reason under 1130, Regesta as c. 1131 × 1133. The witnesses point to a date in the second half of the reign and probably to the years 1129 × 1133. William de Glanvill does not pay a relief in 1130, which may further argue for a date 1130 × 1133.

ADDRESS: Presumably the shire court of Essex, despite the omission of the bishop. The word-order is unusual. While the general address by this date sometimes has barones given precedence over justices and sheriffs, it makes no sense in the shire context to put them in front of the officers of the shire. Here barones are oddly placed between the justice(s) and sheriff(s) of the shire. This is seen also in 0000, Regesta 1788 for Ramsey abbey, ‘iustic(ie) baronibus ui(ecomiti) et fidelibus suis francis et anglis de Hunted(on) schire’. The usual abbreviations for officers were, as often, silently and incorrectly expanded in the printed Calendar as ‘justiciariis, baronibus, vicecomitibus’, as if in a general address; a decision between singular and plural is insecure in Essex at this date, one of the many shires where Richard Basset and Aubrey de Vere were installed as joint sheriffs in 1130, continuing for an uncertain period, during which they may also have acted as justices. Outside this period, one would expect one justice and one sheriff in the shire.

WITNESS: Ingram de Say also attests 0000, Regesta 1749 for Thomas Malesoures, 1131 × 1133, and he continues to attest King Stephen’s acts; William Martel too attests 0000, Regesta 1749 for Thomas Malesoures, and several other acts of King Henry, while in Stephen’s time he was the king’s steward and a very frequent witness; Goher de Aunay attests two acts in the early years of King Stephen (Ste/749, Ste/921); Robert Avenel attests three other acts of King Henry, 0000, Regesta 1768 for Chertsey, 1129 × 1133, 0000, Regesta 1714 for St Benet Holme, 1133, and 0000, Regesta 1719 for William Mauduit, 1131 × 1133, and he appears in a per-clause in a writ for the canons of Cirencester, 0000, not in Regesta, 1131 × 1133, and he continues to attest occasionally in Stephen’s charters. These attestations point towards the years 1129 × 1133.

PLACE: Windsor.

CONTEXT: Roger ‘deus saluet dominas’ held three manors in Rivenhall, Felsted, and Great Baddow in 1086 (DB, ii. 96v; Essex § 72. 1–3). The name ‘deus saluet dominas’ appears here in its original Anglo-Norman French form as ‘de salt les dames’ (dé and dee are common Anglo-Norman spellings of deu, deus ‘God’; on his deathbed Tristan cried, deus salt Ysolt e me!' ‘God save Ysolt and me’, Thomas’s Tristan, ed. S. Gregory in Early French Tristan Poems, ed. N. J. Lacy (Woodbridge, 1998), ii. 140, line 3029).
William de salt les dames is presumably Roger’s heir. As uncle to William de Glanvill, it seems likely that his sister was William’s mother.

In 1219 Adam fitz Nicholas held one half-virgate of land in Felsted ‘per seriantiam custodiendi unum palefridum domini regis, et uaela terra v s.’ (Fees, 275). In 1250 the serjeanty was held by (the same?) Adam de Glanvill, ‘pro qua debuit custodire unum palefridum domini regis ad custum domini regis, que alienata est in parte. De Ada predicto qui tenet caput predicte seriantie pro tenentibus suis qui tenent de alienatione predicte seriantie x acres et tres rodas terre, per annum ij s. vj d. Et faciet seruicium quadragesime partis unius feodi’ (Fees, 1174, 1218). In Essex assize rolls from 1227 and 1235 the serjeanty of Adam de Glanvill is said to be twenty acres held by the service of keeping two palfreys at the king’s livery (Fees, 1348) or sixty acres for the service of keeping one palrey (Fees, 1360). His name does not occur in connexion with Rivenhall or Great Baddow.