MICHAEL OF HANSLOPE

Castellan of Rockingham, tenant in Rutland, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire

Archive of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick

Michael of Hanslope first appears in the early years of the reign of Henry I. He was the castellan at Rockingham (Northants) and may have held other offices in the county. He was closely associated with Queen Matilda, who gave him land in Rutland. His name disappears from Henry’s acts soon after her death.

Queen Matilda’s writ-charter of 1102 × 1103 granting Tixover (Rutl) to Bishop Robert of Lincoln, addressed to the abbot of Peterborough, Earl Simon, the sheriff of Northampton, and Michael of Hanslope, shows that Michael had acquired the manor of Hanslope (Bucks), and an official role in Northamptonshire by that time. He is similarly addressed in the king’s confirmation of the same date: he is witness to the queen’s act but not the king’s (000, Regesta 743–4). Both documents are dated at Rockingham, and it is not unlikely that Michael was already castellan there. It may have been at this time that the queen gave him land in Barrowden and elsewhere in Rutland, but her charter can only be dated to 1100 × c. 1113 (000, Regesta 818a). The queen’s writ for Tavistock abbey, given at Exeter in 1100 × 1105, is witnessed by William Warelwast and Michael of Hanslope (000, Regesta 632).
Michael was addressed, after the sheriff of Northamptonshire, in a writ-charter for Aubrey de Vere concerning Faxon and Old (Northants) datable 1100 × 1107 (000, Regesta 849). He was among those addressed in 1107 × 1120 by an act of Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, concerning a chapel subject to the church of Cottingham, within a few miles of Rockingham (Saltman, Theobald, 422, no. 200n; EEA 1 Lincoln 1067–1185, 7, no. 7). It is difficult to explain how he came to be the first of the witnesses for Maurice, bishop of London, in an agreement the bishop made in 1106 with Eustace the younger, count of Boulogne, concerning property near St Paul’s, London (Gibbs, Early Charters of St Paul’s, 156–8, no. 198). Michael of Hanslope’s signum is among those to a diploma for Colchester confirming gifts made by Eudo dapifer and his wife, dated at Rouen in 1119 (000, Regesta 1204). The diploma is inflated or fabricated, but its signa may preserve an authentic list of those with the king in Normandy in that year. Michael is not named in acts of Henry I after that date, but he was living in the 1120s. He last appears as the first witness to two charters of King David of Scotland for St Andrew’s priory in Northampton (D/23–4), one of which was given at Iherdelei, identified by Lawrie as Yardley Hastings (Northants). These were given after David became king in 1124, and almost certainly date from 1126–7, when he was in England for an extended period. David, Queen Matilda’s brother, had been made earl of Northampton c. 1113 on his marriage to Maud, widow of Earl Simon and daughter of Earl Waltheof. Whether these attestations and Michael’s absence from acts of Henry I in the latter half of the reign indicate he had ceased to serve the English king and had become one of David’s officers in Northamptonshire is a matter of speculation.

The editors of Regesta placed Michael’s death in 1130 × 1131, on the basis of Henry I’s gift of his land and his daughter Matilda to William Mauduit, apparently datable c. September 1131 (000, Regesta 1719) and their view that because ‘there is no trace of this transaction on the pipe roll of 1130, Michael was probably then still alive’. However, the roll provides evidence that William Mauduit was established in Rutland by 1129–30. The account for that county includes the entry ‘Willelmo maledocto liberauit ad cameram curie lxs, pro j palefr(ido) et j fug(atore) per breue regis’ (PR 31 Henry I, 134). Further, Henry’s act for William Mauduit is a forgery and so provides no evidence for the date he was given Michael’s daughter and her inheritance. We can therefore assign Michael’s death to 1126 × 1129, after the earliest likely date for
his attestation to David’s acts for Northampton priory and before the
start of Exchequer year 1129–30.

Michael of Hanslope’s estates comprised the lands in Rutland
that Queen Matilda gave him, and all that had been held in chief in 1086
by Winemar of Hanslope, also called Winemar the Fleming. In
Northamptonshire Winemar held of the king in Cosgrove, Hantone,
Ashton and two unnamed holdings (DB, i. 226d; § 40); in
Buckinghamshire he held Hanslope (DB, i. 152b; § 46. 1), on the
boundary with Northamptonshire and adjoining Cosgrove. From entries
in the Northamptonshire survey, Round identified the unnamed holdings
as Easton Maudit and Strixton, and Easton Neston (VCH Northants, i.
342a n).

Most of Winemar’s Domesday undertenancies passed to Walter
son of Winemar, also known as Walter of Preston, i.e. Preston
[Deanery], which was held by Winemar of Bishop Odo in 1086 (DB, i.
220d; Northants § 4. 16). These circumstances caused antiquaries such as
Lipscomb, Buckinghamshire, iv. 165, and Baker, Northamptonshire, ii.
129, to place Michael as another son of Winemar. Round was more
circumspect, and wrote ‘it is quite possible that this was so, but, though I
have gone through the evidence on Michael in the Beauchamp cartulary .
. . I have found no actual proof of the fact. The difficulty is that Michael
and his heirs ought . . . to have succeeded also to Winemar’s under-
tenancies’ (VCH Northants, i. 290).1 Modern opinion, surely correctly,
sees Michael as having displaced Winemar’s son Walter in his fief.2

As far as can be ascertained, all of Michael’s estates passed to
William Mauduit and his descendants.3 The return of William Mauduit,

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1 The situation with regard to Winemar’s two subtenancies in Wootton, one of two and
a half hides held of Walter the Fleming and the other of one hide held of Countess
Judith (DB, i. 226c, 229a; Northants §§ 39. 16, 56. 57f), is not easy to establish. The
Northamptonshire survey lists two holdings: no tenant is named in that of two hides and
two-thirds of half a hide; in the other, of one hide and the third part of half a hide,
‘Michael’ is tenant (VCH Northants, i. 375a). The account of the manors in VCH
Northants, iv. 292b, 294b, however, suggests that the larger holding was at one point
held by the Mauduit family, but the smaller went to Walter son of Winemer.

2 This view is advanced by Mason, Ctl. Beauchamp, p. xxvii; idem, ‘Magnates
“Curiales” and the wheel of fortune’, ANS 2 (1979), 118–40, at p. 133. The dubious
charter in the name of Duke Henry confirming the office of chamberlain to William
Mauduit confirms also ‘totam terram Michaelis de Hamslap sicut rex Henricus eam illi
dedit’ (DH/582). Winemer is not mentioned in any of the acts confirming Michael’s
estates and rights to members of the Mauduit family.

3 The marriage of William Mauduit to Michael’s daughter and heir is discussed in the
headnote for William Mauduit. For the descent of the estates in Rutland, see the
chamberlain, in 1166 states that ‘William Mauduit, chamberlain, found
these knights enfeoffed in the tenement of Michael of Hanslope when
King Henry gave the foresaid tenement to him: Robert de Haiso, one fee;
Robert fitz Warin, three parts of one fee. Afterwards the same William
foresaid enfeoffed from his demesne . . . .’ The names of five men and
their fees, amounting together to 2¼ fees, follow. Altogether, his return
states, there were ‘4½ fees of old and new feoffment’, but those specified
amount only to 4 fees (RBE, 313–14).

The three acts printed below have been preserved solely by their
inclusion in the late-fourteenth-century cartulary, now BL MS Add.
28024 (Davis 1189), of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick, descendants of
William Mauduit. This cartulary is discussed in the headnote for Walter
and William de Beauchamp.

See also WILLIAM MAUDUIT, WALTER AND WILLIAM DE
BEAUCHAMP.

00 Writ of Queen Matilda giving to Michael of Hanslope
the lands of Barrowden, Luffenham, Seaton, and Thorpe
(Rutl). 1100 × c. 1113, probably 1100 × 1111

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Add. 28024 (Beauchamp cartulary, s. xiv), fol. 49r, formerly
fol. 45r [B].

ANTIQUARIAN COPY: BL MS Add. 28024 (Beauchamp cartulary, Dugdale’s list of
principal charters, 1640), fol. 197rb (brief abstract, incorrectly assigned to Empress
Matilda); Bodl. MS Dugdale 6, p. 462a (as Beauchamp cartulary, fol. 197rb).

Context note for 000, Regesta 818a below. The Northamptonshire survey, first
compiled in the middle years of the reign of Henry I, but with many later additions and
alterations, shows Michael holding in Wootton, Easton Mauduit, and Strixton and
William Mauduit holding in Easton Neston and Ashton (VCH Northants, i. 374b, 375a,
376b). Robert Mauduit, king’s chamberlain, was holding Hanslope in 1208–9 (Fees,
20); part of Cosgrove was still held ‘as of the manor of Hanslope’ in 1328 (CalIPM, vii.
105–6, no. 128). In 1242–3 William Mauduit held in chief in Ashton and Easton
[Mauduit] (Fees, 934, 945). For the descent of these holdings, see the headnote for
William Mauduit and VCH Bucks, iv. 349 (Hanslope), VCH Northants, iv. 12b (Easton
Mauduit), 55a (Strixton); ibid. v. 62 (Ashton), 82 (Cosgrove), 108a, 111a (Easton
Neston). Hantone does not subsequently occur: F. and C. Thorn place it as ‘an
unidentified village on the river Nene’ (DB, i; Northants § 4. 14 note).
M(atildis) Ang(ie) regina omnibus hominibus suis francis <et anglis> salutem. Sciatis me dedisse Mich(aeli) de Hamsclape [ha]s terras\(^a\) quas habebam in Bergendona Luffeha(m) et in Segentona et in Thorp <* * *> honorifice teneat. Teste Dau(id) fratre r(egine). In festiuitate sancti Albani.

\(^a\) s’ terre B

Matilda queen of England to her men French and English greeting. Know that I have given to Michael of Hanslope those lands which I had in Barrowden, Luffenham, and in Seaton, and in Thorpe [by Water], <* * *> he shall hold honourably. Witness David brother of the queen. On the feast of St Alban.

DATE: Dated on the feast of Saint Alban (22 June); before the the queen’s brother became earl of Huntingdon, c. 1113. Assigned to 1105 × 1107 by the editors of Regesta on unspecified grounds, perhaps their view of the dates when David was in England. It is not possible, however, to prove David’s absence from England at any specific date during the period. The king was in Normandy on 22 June in 1112 and 1113: these dates are unlikely, but not perhaps impossible.

ADDRESS: All her men French and English, presumably intended to mean those who served the queen directly, rather than all men of the realm.

WITNESS: David, brother of queen Matilda.

PLACE: No place date.

CONTEXT: According to Geffrei Gaimar, Winchester, Rutland, and Rockingham had been held by Queen Ælfthryth, who died in 1000 or 1001. She had presumably been given the estates in dower by her husband Edgar, king of England 959–975. Her son King Æthelred gave them to Emma of Normandy in dower on his marriage to her in 1002 (Geffrei Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis, ed. Short, ll. 4133–40). It seems, then, that Rutland had traditionally been held in dower by the Queen. Queen Edith, wife to Edward the Confessor, had held land in Rutland, presumably until her death in 1075 (DB, i. 219b; Northants § 1. 3). There is no evidence that Rutland was held by William I’s queen Matilda. She died in 1083, and in 1086 the king held Barrowden in demesne, assessed at four hides. Its outlying members included Luffenham, four hides, § 1. 2f; Seaton, a mill with woodland and spinney § 1. 2b, and Thorpe (by Water), where there was land for four ploughs § 1. 2c. There were other members in Morcott, Bisbrooke, and Glaston (DB, i. 219b; § 1. 2); there is no evidence that these passed to Michael of Hanslope by this act. It is possible, as pointed out by Mason, Ctl. Beauchamp, p. xxviii, that Michael’s Rutland estates reverted to the king on the death of Queen Matilda, although it is important to note that William Mauduit was active in Rutland in 1129–30 (PR 31 Henry I, 134). A dubious act in the name of Empress Matilda, of apparent date 1141, restored (reddidi et concessi) Barrowden with the soke (Wergedunam cum socha) to William Mauduit ‘as well and honourably as Queen Matilda, my mother, gave it to
Michael of Hanslope his predecessor, which William d’Aubigny used to hold of King Henry for £20 at farm’ (EM/581). For what can be ascertained of the descent of these estates in the Mauduit family, see the headnote for William Mauduit and VCH Rutl, ii. 169–70, 204, 216–17.

AUTHENTICITY: The writ has been carelessly copied, like much else in the cartulary (Mason, *Cil. Beauchamp*, p. xi), but there are no clear indications of forgery. The address to ‘omniaus hominibus meis’ is indicative of forgery in Henry I’s acts, but may be more appropriate here.

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00 Writ ordering that Michael of Hanslope’s goods should be free from toll, passage, and custom. 1100 × 1129

**CARTULARY COPY**: BL MS Add. 28024 (Beauchamp cartulary, s. xiv), fol. 21v, formerly fol. 18v (no rubric) [B].

**ANTIQUARIAN COPIES**: BL MS Add. 28024 (Beauchamp cartulary, Dugdale’s list of principal charters, 1640), fol. 197ra (brief abstract); Bodl. MS Dugdale 6, p. 461b (as Beauchamp cartulary, fol. 197ra).

**PRINTED**: *Regesta*, ii. 370 (no. ccxiv) [from B]; Mason, *Cil. Beauchamp*, 100 (no. 169) [from B].

**CALENDAR**: *Regesta* 1674.


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*a petunt B b Deur’ B

*Henry king of the English to all sheriffs and officials and his reeves of all England and of the seaports greeting. I command that all the household goods and all the things of Michael of Hanslope that his men can swear are in his demesne shall be quit of toll and passage and all custom. And upon this (my writ) no one shall unjustly disturb them on £10 of forfeit. Witness William Peverel of Dover. At Windsor.*

**DATE**: Before Michael’s death in 1126 × 1129.

**ADDRESS**: Sheriffs and officials and reeves of all England and of the seaports, an address used routinely in grants of freedom from toll.

**WITNESS**: William Peverel of Dover.
PLACE: Windsor.

CONTEXT: Henry gave a very similar writ for Michael’s successor William Mauduit (Regesta 1846). There are several examples of Henry’s writs granting freedom from toll to religious houses or boroughs, using very similar wording, but these are the only examples in favour of individuals.

AUTHENTICITY: This and the associated act mentioned above are the only examples of freedom from toll being granted to individuals by Henry I. There are no examples from Stephen’s reign, nor apparently from the reign of Henry II. It might be argued that this is the result of the poor survival rate of lay archives, and that such documents may well have been discarded if Henry II and subsequent kings refused to renew the exemption. We know, however, that the Mauduit family resorted to forgery of royal charters to preserve its position, and there must be some suspicion about these acts. If they are forgeries they are closely copied from authentic acts, for the wording is entirely convincing.

00 Writ commanding all barons and undertenants who perform castle-ward at the castle of Rockingham to be in the castle at the summons of Michael of Hanslope.

1100 × 1129

CARTULARY COPIES: BL MS Add. 28024 (s. xiv), fol. 53v, formerly fol. 49v [B].

ANTIQUARIAN COPY: BL MS Add. 28024 (Beauchamp cartulary, Dugdale’s list of principal charters, 1640), fol. 197va (brief abstract); Bodl. MS Dugdale 6, p. 462b (as Beauchamp cartulary, fol. 197va) [from B].

PRINTED: F. M. Stenton, English Feudalism, 283 (no. 44) [from B]; Mason, Ctl. Beauchamp, 102 (no. 174) [from B].

CALENDAR: Farrer 544; Regesta 563.

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum) omnibus baron(ibus) <et> uauassoribus qui wardam debent facere ad castellum de Rochingeham salutem. Precipio uobis quod sitis residentes in castello meo de Rochingham ita bene et plenariea per summotioninem Michaelis de Hampslap’ qui custodit castellum sicut iuste esse debueritis. Et nisi feceritis ipse iustificet uos per pecuniam uestram donec ita sitis. Et si ipse uos non poterit iustificare, uicecomites mei in quorum ministeriis terras habetis donec hoc faciatis. T(este) <* * *> Gloc’. Apud †Ryllyngham.

a planarie B
Henry king of the English to all barons and undertenants who are bound to do wardservice at the castle of Rockingham greeting. I command you that you shall be in my castle of Rockingham so well and fully by the summons of Michael of Hanslope who has charge of the castle just as you are justly bound to be. And if you not do this he shall compel you by your cattle until you are there. And if he cannot compel you, my sheriffs in whose shrievalties you have lands (will) until you do this. Witness ** * * > Gloucester. At Ryllyngham.

DATE: Before the death of Michael of Hanslope. Following Farrer’s suggested emendation of the place-date to Gillingham, the editors of Regesta associated the act with three other documents place-dated there, which they tentatively assigned to a date in January 1102. These three acts all concern the reseisin of Bishop Flambard after the truce following Duke Robert’s invasion (000-00, Regesta 560–62). Despite this, and the remoteness of the castle from the coast, the editors speculated that it was the invasion that had caused the need for the writ.

ADDRESS: The barons and undertenants who owed wardservice at Rockingham castle. Only one other act of Henry I includes uuausores in the address, i.e. 000, Regesta 1771 for Lincoln, which addresses ‘omnibus baronibus et uuausoribus et omnibus dominis qui terras tenent intra Welle wapentac’.

WITNESS: Either Walter of Gloucester or his son Miles, who succeeded in 1126.

PLACE: Farrer, followed by the editors of Regesta, suggested the place-date Ryllyngham was an error for Gillingham. Fourteen of Henry’s acts are place-dated at Rockingham, but it is unlikely that the copyist would have mistranscribed Rockingham in the place-date after recognizing it in the tenor.

CONTEXT: Geffrei Gaimar notes that when King Æthelred married Emma, sister of Duke Richard II of Normandy, he gave her Winchester, Rockingham, and Rutland in dower. This was in 1002. The places had previously belonged to his mother Queen Ælfthryth, who died in 1000 or 1001 (Geffrei Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis, ed. Short, ll. 4133–40). It is clear from Queen Matilda’s gifts to Michael of Hanslope and to Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln (000, Regesta 743), that Rutland was part of her dower. It may be that she also held the one hide manor of Rockingham (DB, i.220a; Northants § 1. 27) in dower, if not the castle itself, and that Michael became castellan through her influence.

Hist. King’s Works, ii. 815, notes that Rockingham castle is ‘one of the few castles known to have been founded by William the Conqueror elsewhere than in the immediate vicinity of a town. Its site on a steep hill overlooking the Welland valley was in fact uninhabited until King William “ordered a castle to be made there”’. Such a position was more usual for a baronial than for a royal castle, and the Conqueror’s purpose in selecting it is by no means clear. The river crossing which it controlled was not one of major significance, nor did it have any obvious strategic significance in relation to the medieval English road system. Close by there was good hunting country which William made into a royal forest, but the size of the motte and the elaborate arrangements for the performance of castle-guard at Rockingham show that the Conqueror regarded the castle as something more than a fortified hunting-lodge’.

For the service of guarding the king’s castles, see J. H. Round, ‘Castle Guard’, Archaeological Journal 59 (1902), 144–59; Stenton, English Feudalism., 210–14. Distraint by impounding cattle is frequently threatened in the king’s writs: examples are found in acts for the abbot of Ramsey (000, Regesta 1387, 1860a), the abbot of
Abingdon (000, Regesta 576), the abbot of Bury St Edmunds (000, Regesta 1812), the monks of Blyth (000, Regesta 588), the bishop of Winchester (000, Regesta 805) and the bishop of Lincoln (000, Regesta 1771).

In 1155 × 1158 Henry II gave a writ for William Mauduit in almost identical terms, replacing the word ‘pecunia’ with ‘catalla’ (H2/1776).

AUTHENTICITY: The wording of the writ is entirely convincing, and it is unlikely that it was produced as part of the Mauduit campaign of forgery intended to secure the inheritance of Michael’s lands and rights.